

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**SPECIAL MEETING
BUDGET WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS
February 22, 2022
7:00 p.m.**

***DUE TO THE INCREASE IN
COVID ACTIVITY THIS MEETING
IS BEING HELD REMOTELY ONLY***
via ZOOM Teleconference

**Meeting ID: 332 683 3563
Passcode: townhall**

MEETING MINUTES
*******Minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting*******

Board of Selectmen
Jason E. Bowsza, First Selectman
Marie DeSousa, Deputy First Selectman
Alan Baker, Selectman
Sarah Muska, Selectman
Charles Nordell, Selectman

ATTENDANCE: First Selectman Bowsza hosted the remote meeting.
Also present were: Selectman Baker, Selectman Muska, and Selectman Nordell.

.GUESTS/SPEAKERS in-person: None; remote access only.

GUESTS/SPEAKERS related to Budget Presentations (Remote access only): **Finance Director:** Amy O'Toole; **Capital Improvement Planning Committee:** Adam Mehan; **East Windsor Cemetery Association:** Robert Rybick, Chairman; **Veterans Commission:** D. James Barton, Chairman; **Broad Brook Library:** Paul Anderson; **Warehouse Point Library:** Lois Hillerman, Librarian; **Warehouse Point Library Board of Trustee Members:** Richard Ross.

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Budget Presentations Workshop
SPECIAL MEETING – February 22, 2022
REMOTE ACCESS ONLY
ZOOM Teleconference
Meeting ID: 332 683 3563
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WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

1. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:

First Selectman Bowsza called the Board of Selectmen Special Meeting/Budget Workshop Presentations of the East Windsor Board of Selectmen dated February 22, 2022 to order at 7:02 p.m. via remote access.

2. ATTENDANCE:

First Selectman Bowsza noted Selectman Baker, Selectman Muska, and Selectman Nordell have joined him remotely; Deputy First Selectman DeSousa has another commitment this evening and will not be able to attend this meeting. The Board has a quorum with four members participating tonight.

3. PRESENTATIONS:

Capital Improvement Planning Committee - #10054138
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Adam Mehan, representing the Capital Improvement Planning Committee, joined the Board remotely.

Mr. Mehan reported the CIP Committee requested \$1,402,000 which is just below their request for the previous year. During the previous year they were funded at a little over \$900,000. Mr. Mehan referenced a letter sent to First Selectman Bowsza in October, 2021; he indicated the \$1.4 million is the number needed to make some impact on the proposed projects.

Mr. Mehan referenced a section of his report highlighted in green – the first table –noting these are projects they recommended some type of funding for, whether it was the full funding request, or seed money to get a project started. He noted some of the projects are repetitive/recurring, such as the Police Department replacing vehicles, and Public Works represents \$1 million of the project requests. Mr. Mehan reiterated the projects highlighted in green are Fiscal Year projects requests, and the amount highlighted in red is the recommended funding by the CIP Committee.

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Budget Presentations Workshop
SPECIAL MEETING – February 22, 2022
REMOTE ACCESS ONLY
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WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Mehan noted the letter was sent in October, 2021; he understands there have been some changes to the funding requests since the report was sent to the Board.

Mr. Mehan reiterated the CIP funding request is \$1.4 million vs. requested projects totally upwards of \$17 million.

First Selectman Bowsza requested Mr. Mehan explain the scoring system used to evaluate projects. Mr. Mehan suggested they use the scoring system to remove emotion or bias from consideration of project requests. They consider if projects are mandated, or State law, they also consider if requests are safety or liability issues regarding equipment replacement, or is it a health issue – such as ADA or Asbestos. They rank projects by about 6 categories, assign a number for each of the categories, and at the end come up with an overall number. Finance Director O'Toole noted the CIP requests are included in the back of the Budget book.

QUESTIONS:

First Selectman Bowsza: Questioned the cost of requested cruiser replacements? Mr. Mehan recalled the requested replacement of 2 cruisers; Finance Director O'Toole suggested it worked out to 2 ½. First Selectman Bowsza questioned if that included the cruiser which they recently received Grant money for? Finance Director O'Toole indicated the cruiser funded via the Grant is never included in the replacement request. She noted the money is kept in the CNR fund which carries over year to year, rather than in Operations where the money would lapse before the last vehicle could be purchased.

First Selectman Bowsza suggested he felt he would have questions after reviewing the requests again.

Mr. Mehan indicated he, and other CIP members, would like to be included in discussions on bonding.

<p>Cemetery Association - (listed under Activities, Fees and Organizations under the First Selectman's Budget)</p>

Robert Rybick, representing the East Windsor Cemetery Association, joined the Board remotely.

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Budget Presentations Workshop
SPECIAL MEETING – February 22, 2022
REMOTE ACCESS ONLY
ZOOM Teleconference
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Pascode: townhall
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Rybick reported this year they requested \$45,000, most of that money will go to lawncare and maintenance, and snowplowing. He noted they had issues last year when the contractor for the mowing increased his price \$5,400 for this year. That increase is reflected in the \$42,000 groundscape/lawn maintenance number.

Mr. Rybick cited additional repairs that should be done, such as pavement repair to extend the life of the driveways; that budget request is \$10,000. He's also requesting \$2,000 for fence repair. He noted they do tree work as necessary, they don't trim trees unless something is dead or a safety issue; they don't have the budget to be pro-active.

QUESTIONS:

Selectman Nordell: Questioned what the organization was funded vs. their budget request for last year? Mr. Rybick cited maybe 15 years ago the organization was funded at \$40,000 but when he took over the funding was around \$15,000. He recalled some issues about an audit, which they now provide to the Town. He cited a funding history of \$15,000 and \$17,500 and \$20,000, and during COVID when the Boards weren't meeting the funding was cut back to \$15,000. Mr. Rybick cited the current budget request is necessary because of the increase of the lawncare. At this point they're just trying to do the basic maintenance.

First Selectman Bowsza reviewed a funding history of Fiscal Year 2017, 2018, and 2019 in which they received \$20,000, in Fiscal Year 2020 they received \$15,000, and in Fiscal Year 2021 they received \$20,000. He noted their request is \$45,000. Discussion continued regarding the interest earned from the Perpetual Care Fund; Mr. Rybick noted that account must continue perpetually forever. First Selectman Bowsza noted he's impressed by the management the organization is demonstrating over the resources that you have.

Veterans Commission – #10054166
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D. James Barton, Chairman of the Veterans Commission joined the Board remotely.

(Department Expenses)

- Recording Secretary – increase to \$1,500

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Budget Presentations Workshop
SPECIAL MEETING – February 22, 2022
REMOTE ACCESS ONLY
ZOOM Teleconference
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Pascode: townhall
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Barton indicated the Budget request is pretty much the same, although they're requesting an increase in the Recording Secretary fees from \$1,200, or \$100 per meeting, to \$1,500 for a per meeting cost of \$125. Chairman Barton reported the compensation has been the same for the 6 years they've had a recording secretary. It's a workload in the middle of the pack, and deserving of the new figure.

Memorial Day - (listed under Activities, Fees and Organizations under the First Selectman's Budget)

Chairman Barton reported they also deal with the Activities fund for Memorial Day, which includes the purchase of over a 1,000 small flags and holders, and the large flags for each cemetery.

QUESTIONS:

First Selectman Bowsza: Noted Chairman Barton raised a good point about the recording secretary rates. He's flagged that for the Selectmen to consider across the board. While the Veterans Commission has had a recording secretary for about 6 years its been 25 years since those fees have been reviewed in a meaningful way. He noted one of the Department Heads reviewed the fees and found East Windsor to be low; he suggested the Board will have to consider if they want to take any action across the board. Discussion followed regarding the research, and recommendations made.

Hearing no further questions First Selectman Bowsza thanked Chairman Barton for what the Commission does.

Broad Brook Library - (listed under Activities, Fees and Organizations under the First Selectman's Budget)

Mr. Paul Anderson, representing the Broad Brook Library, joined the Board.

Mr. Anderson reported he felt they've listed their current funding requests as best as they could establish them. He noted they are now buying event passes so people can get free, or discounts at various places.

Mr. Anderson suggested their Budget request of \$25,000 is the same as it's been for the past 2 years; they are requesting the same amount this year.

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Budget Presentations Workshop
SPECIAL MEETING – February 22, 2022
REMOTE ACCESS ONLY
ZOOM Teleconference
Meeting ID: 332 683 3563
Pascode: townhall
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

QUESTIONS:

Selectman Nordell: Noted they list the hourly rate for the librarian at \$13 per hour, and then at \$14. Mr. Anderson indicated they are reflecting the increase in the minimum wage.

Hearing no further questions, First Selectman Bowsza thanked Mr. Anderson for his time.

Warehouse Point Library - - (listed under Activities, Fees and Organizations under the First Selectman's Budget)

Lois Hiller, librarian for the Warehouse Point Library, joined the meeting, and requested to share the screen for her presentation (See video of Budget Meeting for PowerPoint presentation).

Librarian Hiller noted the library added “Hoopla” in 2021, which gives instant access for more than one person at a time to e-books, music, comics, and other materials. She noted use has steadily increased, with over 120 people using this service this past month.

They also collaborated with the schools to provide library cards at the school for the students, and they’ve moved the Young Adult section up to the front of the library and painted the area.

Librarian Hiller noted they offer curbside pick-up and delivery to homebound residents.

Librarian Hiller noted “pick-up craft programs” have been popular this year.

Librarian Hiller noted the library association received the following Grants:

- The E.R.A.S.E Grant, which they’ve used for high-quality new titles for adults and children.
- A CEN Grant which provides WiFi for the parking lot behind the library. They also received an ARPA Grant, which enabled them to install a solar charger at the picnic table to also access the WiFi.

Librarian Hiller also noted the following contributions:

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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SPECIAL MEETING – February 22, 2022
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WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

- Funding from the Christine Ross Memorial Fund for Children's Materials and Programs funded outside Summer programs with animals.
- Lions Club donated funding for 24 picture books with diverse characters.

Librarian Hiller then compared operating income for East Windsor with surrounding towns of similar size. The surrounding towns average \$43 of operating income vs. \$42 for East Windsor. Librarian Hiller noted \$24.63 of the \$42 is funding received from the Town. She suggested that represents about half of their budget, and essentially pays the staff. It represents 6/10ths of 1% as municipal revenue, while the standard is 1% of municipal revenues. Librarian Hiller reported the library is low on its staffing level;

she's the only full-time employee, with 8 part-time employees. Librarian Hiller suggested an average town of East Windsor's size has 4 full-time people, and 9 part-time people.

Librarian Hiller reported circulation at the library last year was 35,091, which is a 32% increase over the previous year.

Librarian Hiller reported the Library Association is requesting a Budget allocation of \$299,750, for an increase of 5%.

QUESTIONS:

First Selectman Bowsza: Referenced the slide comparing per capita income, he questioned when Librarian Hiller is comparing East Windsor to other similar sized communities on a Statewide average, are you using the new Census numbers? Librarian Hiller indicated the information was taken from the Connecticut Libraries Statistical Report for 2021, which incorporated information from July of 2020 to June of 2021. Each library submitted the Census information for their own library.

First Selectman Bowsza requested clarification that the information also assumes last year's income number, not the requested increased number for this year. Librarian Hiller concurred, noting she submitted 11,167 for the population figure, which is what it was at the time she did the report. First Selectman Bowsza agreed, noting that's the new Census number, which is a slight reduction.

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Budget Presentations Workshop
SPECIAL MEETING – February 22, 2022
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ZOOM Teleconference
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Pascode: townhall
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

First Selectman Bowsza questioned that the dollar amount you're dividing against, that's the \$299,750 number, or is that the current year's \$285, 500? Librarian Hiller indicated the \$24.63 received from East Windsor times the 11,167 people is the \$285,000+ that they received last year.

Board of Trustees Board Member Richard Ross: Wanted to advise the Selectman that they think Librarian Hiller is doing a great job. She and the staff have done so much for the Town and the children of the Town under these COVID restriction. He felt any money that we ask for we should get it. They've done a lot with limited funds.

Librarian Hiller acknowledged other Board members signed in as well.

Selectman Baker: Noted the progress the Library has made in spite of some headwinds he would have expected to impact their services. He felt it's pretty impressive; he felt we have a pretty good library. We're getting closer on the support level that you need.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

First Selectman Bowsza queried the remote participants for comments. No one requested to speak.

First Selectman Bowsza noted all Budget presentation have been completed. On March 3rd the Board will deliberate on changes. His intention is to vote on the Selectman's Budget that evening as well. He noted that any changes that are made to the Budget Presentation that he filed with the Town Clerk in January – that's the document the Board is working off of. That's the document you'll be working from in regards to changes that you want to make. Finance Director O'Toole will have the Excel spreadsheet available on the 3rd as well. First Selectman Bowsza indicated the Board will also need to consider how we'll address the issue of recording secretary compensation, and salary compression amongst part-time employees with the minimum wage increase. If Board members need any additional information from department heads send those request in to the Selectman's Office to be passed on as necessary.

Finance Director O'Toole reported she sent everyone the Excel spreadsheet today.

Selectman Nordell: Referenced the research done for recording secretaries for other

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Budget Presentations Workshop
SPECIAL MEETING – February 22, 2022
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WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

municipalities, will that be presented to the Board as well? First Selectman Bowsza felt it wouldn't be a formal presentation but he'll share it with the Board, hopefully tomorrow.

Selectman Baker: Thanked Finance Director O'Toole for sending the Excel spreadsheet and Revenue information to the Board. He loves the Excel spreadsheet; it works for him.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Move to Adjourn

Baker moved/Nordell seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

**VOTE: In Favor: Baker/Muska/Nordell
(No one opposed/No abstentions)**

First Selectman Bowsza noted the meeting is adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, -----
Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Selectmen