

TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

BUDGET WORKSHOP SPECIAL MEETING

February 15, 2024  
5:30 p.m.

THIS MEETING IS BEING HELD IN-PERSON

EAST WINDSOR TOWN HALL  
11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT 06016  
John Daly Jr., Meeting Room  
AND  
REMOTELY via ZOOM  
<https://zoom.us/j/3326833563>  
Meeting ID: 332 683 3563  
Passcode: townhall

SPECIAL 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  
Keith Yagaloff, Selectman

**ATTENDANCE:** Board of Selectmen: First Selectman Bowsza hosted the in-person meeting. Deputy First Selectman DeSousa, Selectman Muska, Selectman Baker, Selectman Yagaloff were present in person.

**ABSENT:** All members of the Board of Selectmen were present this evening for the Budget Workshop in person.

**GUESTS/SPEAKERS signing in to meeting remotely:** Anne, Jim and Gail.

1. **TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:**

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First Selectman Bowsza called the Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop Special Meeting to Order at 6:04 p.m. in the John Daly Jr., Meeting Room, 11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT 06016.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

First Selectman Bowsza asked Deputy First Selectman Marie DeSousa to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ATTENDANCE:**

All members of the Board are present at the workshop.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

None.

4. **PRESENTATIONS:**

**MOTION:** To **AMEND** the agenda to begin the presentation with the American River Heritage Commission's budget request.

Baker moved/Muska seconded/**DISCUSSION:** None

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

I. **AMERICAN RIVER HERITAGE COMMISSION:**

The Commission requested \$4,280 for the FY 2024-2025 budget year with a two percent increase.

A. **ASSESSOR:**

Helen Totz, Assessor, presented the budget for the Town of East Windsor. She has a new Assistant Assessor who has taken most of the exams and wants to take additional refresher courses. She wants to take all the classes before she sits for the required exam. Her office requests \$223,598 to cover personnel and department expenses with an increase of \$3,187.

First Selectman Jason Bowsza inquired about the Board of Assessment Appeals.

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Helen Totz, Assessor, stated that the BAA has been given extra money required for dues and fees. With the addition of two new Board members, the budget increased by \$125 for their training and classes. The advertisement also resulted in an increase of the budget.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: Can you tell me if the Casino is assessed at pre or post demolition process?

Helen Totz, Assessor: It is assessed at the current market value.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: I appreciate your presentation and your work.

Deputy First Selectman Marie DeSousa: The worksheet under dues and fees seems to have extra money.

Helen Totz, Assessor: It is the training costs along with dues and fees.

**B. BUILDING DEPARTMENT:**

Ken Rich, Building Official, presented the budget for the Building Department

Selectman Alan Baker: The full adobe suit is in the regular budget line, but it should be in the IT budget.

Question: The aim of reducing the wait time, what are you planning for it?

Ken Rich, Building Official: We are aiming to process within a week, or a week and a half in average to make it efficient.

Selectman Alan Baker: What is the goal?

Ken Rich, Building Official: One week.

First Selectman Jason Bowsza: What is your plan for a review period?

Ken Rich, Building Official: I do not have any. I usually try to get here very early and get through my work and usually get it done by noon or 1pm - working through the lunch. In the summer, it takes a day or two to review the applications. If I have any questions, I email the applicants, and they may not get back to me on time. Therefore, we make a phone call to reach them and address it in a timely manner.

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Selectman Keith Yagaloff: Your permitting system is really great, and robust for commercial properties. For the solar construction, what are you looking at?

Ken Rich, Building Official: Up until recent, it was underground work due to cables. So, I had to track it every day. They are doing the last few trenches for the Plantation Road. It should be there no later than Monday and will continue through the month of April. They are going to start within couple of weeks.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: What is the building code for that—panels, structure and etc.?

Ken Rich, Building Official: So, I look at their model and work to make necessary changes. I also work with their engineer to address any issues. For instance, there are screws that are sticking out that need to be covered. So, I have to make sure that they were covered, and they have cooperated.

Selectman Sarah Muska: I have received a lot of positive feedback on your customer service.

**C. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT:**

Ruth Calabrese, Town Planner, briefed the Board on the department's budget in the amount of \$282,341 with 1.5 percent increase or \$1,371. The Planning and Zoning Commission is still the same amount of \$5,250. Zoning Board of Appeals is also the same in the amount of \$2,150.

Selectman Sarah Muska: The FOIA requirements for advertising—is there any change. Is it related to requests or advertising?

Ruthanne Calabrese, Town Planner: Just for the required advertising.

First Selectman Jason Bowsza: So, the rates went up?

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: I have watched the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting recorded videos and it was interesting to see how they do their job and how they need support to get the job done. The Economic Development Commission has not met for the past year. Is there any budgetary constraints?

Ruthanne Calabrese, Town Planner: We have constraints on having volunteers for the Commission.

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Selectman Keith Yagaloff: So, the First Selectman must find them and appoint them?

Deputy First Selectman Marie DeSousa: We do not find and force people to serve on Boards and Commissions. We advertise for the volunteers to serve on them.

Selectman Alan Baker: How is the scanning of the plans going?

Ruthanne Calabrese, Town Planner: They have changed how they are doing the coding to make it efficient. So, we have been working together to come to an agreement to meet the deadline.

**D. TAX COLLECTOR:**

Patricia Kratochvil, CCMC, Tax Collector: The majority of the increases are coming from requesting part-time employee for the office and the OPM requires that in order to hold the certification, the Tax Collector must continue maintaining the educational units. In order to meet these requirements, we have to go to the classes, but it has been quite challenging to get it all done. Heidi Vane, CCMC, has been busy with the work in my absence therefore, we must get a part-time help while we get our trainings completed. We also have a slight increase in vendor costs. And all the seminars, hotel stays have gone up impacting the increase of our budget. Total is \$155,516 with an increase of \$5,591.

Deputy First Selectman Marie DeSousa: How many hours are you utilizing the part-time staff.

Patricia Kratochvil, Tax Collector: 2,580 hours for the year that will be spread out as needed basis.

Selectman Alan Baker: What kind of training would the part-time person need?

Patricia Kratochvil, Tax Collector: We must train them the right codes and have them go to the first two classes to understand the State Statutes and financial obligation. It is between 12 to 15 hours. They must be fully vested in doing their job.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: For the operations – lots of mail come through the bank, what is the form?

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Patricia Kratochvil, Tax Collector: People come in person and pay via credit card or check in the envelope through the drop box. It has become a typical tax payment.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: Are people angry or unpleasant?

Patricia Kratochvil, Tax Collector: 99 percent of the time they are good.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: Your department is highly ethical due to the high volume of handling the money. So, is that why you are asking to have the well-trained staff. I have high respect for your department.

Patricia Kratochvil, Tax Collector: Yes.

First Selectman Jason Bowsza: I am pleased that the workforce is highly ethical and professional serving our constituents well.

Patricia Kratochvil, Tax Collector: The revenue is updated for the motor vehicle.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: Is the revenue estimate for this year or next year?

Patricia Kratochvil, Tax Collector: Next year.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: Do you have one for this year?

Patricia Kratochvil, Tax Collector: Not yet.

First Selectman Jason Bowsza: We get the numbers when every department submits and presents their budget requests.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: I do not agree with you; I will wait to hear from the revenue. I read the Town Charter regarding this revenue.

E. **TOWN CLERK:**

Amy Lam, Town Clerk: The requested budget is \$161,174 with an increase of \$6,431. We get audited every month. The difference of increased change is the requirement of our educational training (to keep up with our certificates), and fees and dues for Spring and Fall conferences. They have gone up due to the economic inflation.

Selectman Sarah Muska: With the upcoming election do you need any help?

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Amy Lam, Town Clerk: It would mostly fall on the Registrars of Voters. My staff have done really well; and I have a good team for getting the job done especially with the influx of the ballots. We have a well-trained staff. In the plan, the ballots must be secured and the Registrars of Voters has to be able to keep them separate. The Office of the Secretary is good with the process.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: I have been in your office many times, and you and your staff are like busy-bees and have been really good and calm with people. The staff are patient and I really appreciate your work.

Amy Lam, Town Clerk: We also handle a lot of money for land transfers and so on. My staff has been very ethical and professional.

Deputy First Selectman Marie DeSousa: I greatly appreciate the office of the Town Clerk.

**F. SELECTMAN, AUTHORITIES & FEES, LEGAL, ETHICS:**

First Selectman Jason Bowsza presented the budget for FY 2024-2025 in the amount of \$309,230 with an increase of \$9,406. He listed the professional services, supplies and equipment, travel, education and dues in addition to personnel and department expenses.

**G. TREASURER, BOF (BOARD OF FINANCE), INSURANCE, PENSION:**

Amy O'Tool, Finance Director/Treasurer, presented the budget for FY 2024-2025 in the amount of \$281,427 with an increase of \$5,245.

**E. REVENUE:**

Amy O'Toole, Finance Director/Treasurer, commented on the budget and how the fees went up.

Deputy First Selectman Marie DeSousa: Do you do payroll for Water Pollution Control Authority?

Amy O'Toole, Finance Director/Treasurer: Yes. We pay the fees.

Question: Clarification on the Board of Finance budget?

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Amy O'Toole, Finance Director/Treasurer: The BOF has three changes – audit is going up, budget mailer has gone up by 50 dollars; the annual report has gone up. Total is 3.5 percent due to the audit. The property insurance has no changes in the budget.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: So, do you have a projection for the last fiscal year 2023 and 2024?

Amy O'Tool, Finance Director/Treasurer: I do not have it yet.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: It sounds like we may have a contract for a three-year plan.

Amy O'Tool, Finance Director/Treasurer: The rate is locked.

**PENSION & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:**

Amy O'Tool, Finance Director/Treasurer: We have budgeted for a 10 percent increase based on the last year's number.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: What you are budgeting for the pension is it the same amount for the employee?

Amy O'Tool, Finance Director/Treasurer: Yes.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: Is there a pension item for an employee contribution as well as a contribution for the plan?

Amy O'Tool, Finance Director/Treasurer: The actuaries tell us based on the current employees for the current services.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: I went to the last meeting and heard that the number was quite large. Should the actuary adjust the number?

Amy O'Tool, Finance Director/Treasurer: The numbers are adjusted. And we do not base our numbers for one good year as there are definite numbers for everything like health insurance.

**REVENUE:**



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Amy O'Tool, Finance Director/Treasurer: The use of Fund Balance is up to the BOF. And the estimate for ESC number goes to the Board of Education. I do not have current year taxes - revenue and no fund balance.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: So, on the Pequot money, I looked up the statute and when we received the money do we remove it.

Amy O'Tool, Finance Director/Treasurer: The state gave us \$1 million this year and \$1 million last year.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: The statute states that Pequot grant is in lieu of taxes.

Amy O'Tool, Finance Director/Treasurer: I have no idea if they charge the tribes.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: The charter of the East Windsor Town Budget states that on or before the budget shall include annual budget, revenue so right now we have insufficient budget revenue and looking at 2.2 million dollars from the general budget. So, I will calculate the amount myself, we are short of 2.2 million dollars in the budget?

Amy O'Toole, Finance Director/Treasurer: The Pequot money is granted by the State in one million and fourteen dollars.

The Board of Selectmen deliberated the actual revenue.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: I will calculate it myself what the numbers are going to be and do the math. How much tax revenue do we need to pay for the budget? And, I have no idea how we can make the decision without the real numbers. I have contacted the Treasurer to get the numbers but did not get any.

First Deputy Selectman Marie DeSousa: Please, send the updated budget when you get it to Amy.

Amy O'Toole, Finance Director/Treasurer: Conference of Connecticut Municipalities (CCM) is really good at getting back to us.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUDGET:**

First Selectman Jason Bowsza: My department budget is structured the same way as the other departments. Professional services and the cost of Recording Secretary and all the equipment for the Town including the Annex. The community outreach

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funds. Postage costs for the Town Hall department including of Tax Collector and advertising budget plus travel expense and First Selectman's budget. We have computer supplies and dues and fees sponsored by CCM, CREG and CIRMA.

Selectman Keith Yagaloff: They amplify the services to do the background checks, and once passed they were able to utilize the services for them. The background checks are also two-way. The legal budget increased slightly in labor and general council as they would be full-blown negotiations.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

Paul Anderson, 89 Main Street: I am concerned about the premature information getting out to the public. I believe we should be careful about the information posted on a public domain. Moreover, this information must be vetted for clarity, accuracy and consistency. I also want to emphasize that there is a process for this budget season. The Board of Finance also goes through the budget hearing per the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Calendar Cycle. We follow the process as required by the statute.

Jimmy (via Zoom) commented on the budget process.

6. **ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION:** To ADJOURN Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop  
Special Meeting.

**VOTE:** Baker moved/Muska seconded/**DISCUSSION:** None  
In Favor: DeSousa/Baker/Muska/Yagaloff  
(No one opposed/No abstentions)

The Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Sabohat Khalilova, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Selectmen