

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

REGULAR MEETING

February 17, 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. Deputy First Selectman DeSousa, Selectman Baker, Selectman Muska, and Selectman Nordell were present remotely as well.

ABSENT: All Selectmen participated remotely in this meeting.

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

GUESTS/SPEAKERS participating in the Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting:
(Remote access only): Finance Director: Amy O'Toole;
American River Heritage Commission/Lions Club: Barbara
(Dick) Sherman.

Additional remote participants identified under their sign-in signature: Alam; Tom Lansner, Melissa LaBelle; Joe Sauerhoefer; Peg (Margaret) Hoffman, Recording Secretary.

1. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:

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First Selectman Bowsza called the February 17, 2022 Regular Meeting of the East Windsor Board of Selectmen to Order at 7:00 p.m. via remote access.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

First Selectman Bowsza requested Selectman Muska to lead everyone in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ATTENDANCE:

See Attendance noted at the beginning of the meeting.

First Selectman Bowsza requested a motion to take out of order Agenda Item 9A under **NEW BUSINESS** to continue discussion of Budget Workshops.

MOTION: To TAKE OUT OF ORDER Agenda Item 9A under NEW BUSINESS to continue discussion of Budget Workshops.

Nordell moved/Baker seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

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

9. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Budget Workshop continued (Assessor and Board of Assessment Appeals – Building Department – Planning and Development, P&Z, ZBA, EDC, IWWA- Tax Collector, Tax Revenue – Town Clerk – Registrars – Selectman, Activities and Fees, Legal, Ethics – Treasurer, Board of Finance, Insurance, Pension – Revenue:

Treasurer, Board of Finance, Insurance, Pension – Revenue:

Revenue

Finance Director O'Toole continued to discuss Revenue.

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Finance Director O'Toole suggested the analysis sent to the Board today indicates the State has told us there will be no changes in State assistance, and we don't have any significant changes in any of the Town Departments. The only increase that we have is the Grand List growth at our current Mill Rate which is an anticipated \$900,000 increase in Revenue leaving the Mill Rate at 34.5, and collection at 98.5%.

First Selectman Bowsza suggested the Board can continue discussion of the Revenue side of the budget as the e-mail sent earlier in the day hadn't reached all the Selectmen in a readable form.

First Selectman Bowsza questioned if this was all General Fund Revenue? Finance Director O'Toole replied affirmatively. She noted one of the questions previously raised was the Park and Recreation Revenue, the things covered are food and beverage, pavilion rental, swim lessons, season tickets, and park admissions. Those are expenses paid out of the General Fund; expenses related to the camp are paid from their Program Account.

Finance Director O'Toole suggested this is all General Fund Revenue which makes up our \$42 million budget. Revenue would be an increase of 3.23% currently, with having the tax being the only change.

QUESTIONS: None.

First Selectman Bowsza noted the next Budget Workshop is scheduled for February 22nd, which will give the Board some time to consider his recommendations vs. the Department Head's requests. Deputy First Selectman DeSousa noted she has a previous commitment on the 22nd, and may not be able to attend that workshop.

4. **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:** None.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

First Selectman Bowsza noted the first opportunity for anyone signed in remotely to offer comments or questions. No one requested to speak.

6. **COMMUNICATIONS:**

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A. Request From Police Union Regarding ARPA Funds for Hazard Pay:

First Selectman Bowsza noted this communication request was received on February 10th.

B. 2022 Vegetation Control Program:

First Selectman Bowsza reported this is a Vegetation Management Strategy Report submitted from the people who operate the rail line behind the Town which continues up through Melrose. He noted this report is similar to the document submitted by the Connecticut Trolley Museum regarding vegetation management along their rail line.

C. Community Development Block Grant Public Hearing Notice:

First Selectman Bowsza reported this is the Public Hearing Notice for March 3, 2022 on the Community Development Block Grant Award, and a Public Hearing on the Broad Brook Fire Department Budget submission; the Board will also be working on our own budget recommendations. That meeting will be held in person.

D. Thank You Note from the Lions Club for Kentucky Disaster Relief:

First Selectman Bowsza acknowledged a thank you from the Lions Club for allowing them to use the John Daly Meeting Room and the Town Hall Annex to collect items to send to the families in Kentucky who have suffered from the loss of their homes during the recent tornados.

First Selectman Bowsza acknowledged Barbara Sherman was signed in to the meeting, he questioned if she had any additional comments. Mrs. Sherman reiterated her thanks for the Town facilities to be used for drop off points for donated items; she suggested it made their efforts that much easier.

7. BOARD AND COMMISSIONS RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS:

A. Resignation: None

B. Reappointments: None

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C. New Appointments: None.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

*A. South Road Ownership Option Update:

Any starred (*) items will not be discussed but will remain on the agenda pending receipt of additional information.

*B. Polling location Change:

Any starred (*) items will not be discussed but will remain on the agenda pending receipt of additional information.

*C. Broad Brook Fire Memorandum of Understanding:

Any starred (*) items will not be discussed but will remain on the agenda pending receipt of additional information.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Budget Workshop continued (Assessor and Board of Assessment Appeals – Building Department – Planning and Development, P&Z, ZBA, EDC, IWWA- Tax Collector, Tax Revenue – Town Clerk – Registrars – Selectman, Activities and Fees, Legal, Ethics – Treasurer, Board of Finance, Insurance, Pension – Revenue:

See previous discussion earlier in the meeting, or during the Board of Selectmen's Budget Workshop which preceded this meeting.

B. Discuss and Approve Payroll Change for Part-Time Building Clerk:

First Selectman Bowsza noted February 4th was the last day of employment for Rand Stanley, East Windsor's Building Inspector, and Ginny Powers, the Building Clerk, retired on February 7th. The part-time Building Clerk, Lori Coulter, has stepped up and has taken on additional responsibilities to keep the office going. First Selectman Bowsza noted part-time employees have a cap of 1,000 hours per calendar year that they can work, he would like the Board to consider increasing her part-time

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salary while she's in that elevated capacity to \$27.55 per hour effective February 7th. Mrs. Coulter has significant institutional knowledge, and works well with the public; the staff covering from South Windsor have raved about her organization and knowledge of the department responsibilities. First Selectman Bowsza indicated he would like to increase her from her current salary of \$17.80 to \$27.55.

Deputy First Selectman DeSousa: Questioned if the raise would be temporary or permanent? First Selectman Bowsza suggested the raise would continue while Mrs. Coulter is doing the additional hours.

Selectman Baker: Questioned how this approval would affect the Town unionwise? First Selectman Bowsza suggested this action shouldn't affect us regarding the unions at all. The job has been posted and is open, we're in the union notification period, in the contract anyone in the bargaining unit has a period of time to show their interest, if no union member expresses an interest in the position the Town will then be doing its recruitment functions. We have an emergency need now, the \$27.55 comes from the contractual salary line for the previous Building Clerk less the 10% the contract would require if Mrs. Coulter would fill the position permanently. We can recognize someone who's stepping up while filling our contractual needs.

MOTION: To INCREASE the part-time Building Clerk's salary from \$17.80 to \$27.55 until the permanent position is filled.

DeSousa moved/Baker seconded/DISCUSSION: Nothing further.

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

First Selectman Bowsza noted it's nice to recognize someone when they're stepping up, and she is.

C. Discuss Building Official Shared Services Agreement:

First Selectman Bowsza noted this is the agreement the Board discussed and authorized him to enter into at the previous Board of Selectmen's meeting. This is an agreement for shared services between the Towns of

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East Windsor and South Windsor for Building Inspection Services. It's a short-term MOU that expires on June 30, 2022; it's been executed, and he's signed it as authorized. As agreed to, First Selectman Bowsza has returned the executed document to the Board for review. First Selectman Bowsza requested a motion to ratify the agreement.

MOTION: To RATIFY the agreement for professional services for the Town of East Windsor and the Town of South Windsor as presented.

DeSousa moved/Baker seconded/DISCUSSION: Nothing further.

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

D. Discuss Flag Flying Policy:

First Selectman Bowsza noted that he had been asked to discuss with the Town Attorney if the Town has an existing policy regarding flying other than Government issued flags. The Town currently does not have a policy. First Selectman Bowsza has provided the Board with policies existing in other Towns for consideration. He asked for comments from the Board.

Selectman Baker: Noted after the previous discussion he viewed recent Supreme Court arguments on C-Span. One of the arguments was Shurtleff vs. Boston, which is included in the referrals tonight. Boston didn't have a policy and denied under the Establishment Clause a religious organization's request to use a flagpole that they used for other than Government flags, a majority of the Justices didn't think the Establishment Clause was a reason to deny the request.

Selectman Baker suggested Berlin, South Windsor, and Bloomfield look good, they all have the Establishment Clause denial in their policies. He felt East Windsor should go with one of those Towns' policy, or a variation of their policies.

Deputy First Selectman DeSousa: Indicated she agreed with a policy as identified by Selectman Baker. Selectman Baker suggested it boils down to Government speech; he suggested the Town could have a separate flagpole and could deny something the Government didn't agree with.

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Selectman Muska: Agreed the Town should establish a policy, maybe it should be the American Flag or other flags as Deputy First Selectman DeSousa discussed earlier. She cited concern to opening a can of worms regarding Government speech. Selectman Muska would like to consider this a bit more, but agrees the Town needs to create a policy.

Selectman Nordell: Suggested it's a touchy situation no matter which way the Board goes with a policy. He felt sticking with what's there and what's expected is the way the Town should go. He would be ok if a separate flagpole were erected for other requests. He agreed for the need to establish a policy.

First Selectman Bowsza requested direction from the Board.

Selectman Nordell: Suggested First Selectman Bowsza should work towards establishing a policy, and to keep this discussion as an open Agenda item.

Selectman Baker: Felt as a representative of Government the Board shouldn't be afraid of what we may not want to speak about. Regarding the can of worms argument, Selectman Baker felt the Board should be able, as Government, to stand up and say what we support. Regarding the request to honor Black History Month, Selectman Baker felt those flags should be on a separate flagpole because he felt the respect that is due the American Flag and State flag shouldn't be modified. He felt Government should be able to stand for something now and again, or to say no and this is the reason why.

First Selectman Bowsza agreed to adapt one of the policies and provide a copy for the Board's review at a future meeting.

E. Discuss Eminent Domain Process Regarding MMCT Property:

First Selectman Bowsza indicated he had hoped to have the Town Attorney present to discuss the process, but the Town Attorney had a scheduling conflict. He requested a motion to postpone this discussion. First Selectman Bowsza advised the Board he may call a Special Meeting for this item.

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MOTION: To POSTPONE Item E, Discuss Eminent Domain Process Regarding MMCT Property, under NEW BUSINESS.

DeSousa moved/Muska seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

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

F. Tax Refunds:

MOTION: To APPROVE Tax Refunds in the amount of \$2,434.68.

Muska moved/DeSousa seconded/DISCUSSION: First Selectman Bowsza noted the Tax Collector has made notes regarding what the refund represents; he questioned if this was what the Board was looking for? Deputy First Selectman DeSousa indicated this was what she wanted.

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

10. SELECTMEN COMMENTS AND REPORTS:

A. Jason Bowsza:

First Selectman Bowsza reported we have a new Assistant Planner, Danielle Miller comes to us with a Masters in Urban Planning from Louisiana. She's spent the last few years of her career working in a town called Gretna, Louisiana. She's got an interest in environmental issues and a Masters in Urban Planning. Gretna is a town similar in size and population to East Windsor, a couple thousand people difference but we're pretty close. When we did her reference checks a number of her references asked if they could please have her back. She's going to complete a refill that's going to happen in the Planning Department Staff. I think it's going to be a very strong department now. She's hit the ground running. When you get a chance welcome her. I'm very excited to have her on board, and I know Ruth is, too.

I mentioned there have been some changes in the Building Department. Within two working days both the long time Building Official and the Building Clerk left municipal service. One resigned, the other retired. There was a fair amount of scrambling last week to figure out what the

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solution was to both of those things long term. I want to thank this Board for their support during that process, and for their recognition of the part-time Building Clerk and the way in which she stepped up. I know she'll appreciate that.

As part of the Supervisors contract that was adopted in July Performance Evaluations were part of the new contract language, as well as a merit component based on performance. So, shortly after ratification of that contract I sat with all of the Supervisor union members who were my direct reports and we jointly established goals together – performance measures against which they would be measured for the course of the year. I don't think it's fair to simply set a goal and then not revisit it. So, over the last two weeks I've met with all of my direct reports about the goals they have set, to just check in with them to see how they're coming with them, what roadblocks are in the way, how can I be supportive of them accomplishing what they've set out to do, what they see for a timeline – because performance reviews are not supposed to be a negative thing. They're supposed to be a communications tool. So, I wanted to make sure we're using that as a communications tool. And, I have to say, I've been pretty pleased with the results that I've heard from the folks that are at least my direct reports so far. That, I believe, will be very informative as we get to the tail end of the fiscal year, where we actually do the evaluation process. But I just wanted you guys to know that that was something that was built into this contract. It was done for an intended purpose and I think that it's important. So, hopefully when we get to the review period I'll be able to share the accomplishments that that goal setting has lead to with the Board.

Lastly, this is another lingering issue that's been lingering for I'll say several years but it's probably longer than that. The folks who are on the Scout Hall Building Committee have an interest in revisiting certain terms of their lease so, I have had a preliminary meeting with them about what exactly they're concerns, or their issue may be. The Town Attorney is doing a review of their lease at Scout Hall, and we're going to be meeting again next week to talk about what Josh's assessment of the lease is, as well as what their goals are. Once I have an understanding of what it is they're asking for if there is an amendment to the lease that will be coming back to the Board of Selectmen for you guys to review, modify, and ultimately decide.

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So, those are the things going on, but I didn't have time with the workshop tonight to actually sit down and write out my report as I typically do. I'll be doing that later on.

B. Marie DeSousa:

Deputy First Selectman DeSousa noted she attended the Police Commission Meeting held on February 9th. It was a short meeting because they went into Executive Session. The one thing that she would consider of value out of that meeting was Bob Leach took it upon himself to put in a proposal to the Commission in regards to certification of weapons training. He spoke with the owners of the Hartford Gun Club to allow on Mondays and Tuesdays for a fee of only \$1,500 for East Windsor to utilize that facility for training. The Police Chief wasn't at that meeting but has now indicated that they were looking into that and will hopefully come up with some type of agreement.

That's all she has to report.

C. Charlie Nordell:

(See Attachment A)

D. Alan Baker:

Selectman Baker reported he attended the Broad Brook Fire Department Commission Meeting but they were having technical issues with their sound system, and it was difficult to make heads or tails of anything they were saying. They did get it cleared up towards the end of the meeting, but both Peg and he were scratching our heads. It was a very quick meeting, and it didn't seem there was much out of the ordinary.

The Planning and Zoning Commission had a quick meeting with a pretty light schedule again. One important thing that we should probably be aware of that came out of that is that they are reviewing a new Bond Policy. Selectman Baker noted he did have a couple of suggested edits for them, most specifically the way the last part of the Bond Policy specifies how this policy could be modified, and the way it currently reads is that the Commission may consult the Town's Finance Department, Commission, or other Town Staff. Selectman Baker noted he suggested

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that if there is any variance from this policy that it needs to be signed off by the Finance Department, and the First Selectman, and it's up to the First Selectman if he wants to share it with the Board of Selectmen. Because of the history of this, and you obviously remember when we took office in our first terms there were a lot of outstanding issues, and the Town has had some troubles with getting completion of roads without the Town having to actually kick in. So, until we get on our feet with this and make sure we really know what we're doing that any changes from the final adopted policy, which I feel is pretty good, needs to be signed off by people who actually have some skin in the game. And, the First Selectman is ultimately answerable to the taxpayers who are the ones who have had to foot the bill for the problems we've had in the past. Selectman Baker indicated he really strongly felt there should be some additional checks there. He indicated he made that suggestion, and he wanted to bring it to the Board's attention.

Selectman Baker indicated that's all he has for a report.

E. Sarah Muska:

(See Attachment B)

11. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

First Selectman Bowsza noted this is the second opportunity for anyone signed in remotely to offer comments or raise questions; no one requested to be acknowledged.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Pursuant to C.G.S. 1-200 (6)(b), negotiations, (6)(e) discussion of any matter which would result in the disclosure of public records, or the information contained therein described in subsection (b) of section 1-210. Action possible:

First Selectman Bowsza requested a motion to go into Executive Session. He indicated he didn't expect any action after the Executive Session.

MOTION: To GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION Pursuant to C.G.S. 1-200 (6)(b), negotiations, (6)(e) discussion of any matter which would result in the disclosure of public records, or the information contained therein described in subsection (b) of

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section 1/210 at 7:43 p.m. Attending the Executive Session will be First Selectman Bowsza, Deputy First Selectman DeSousa, Selectman Baker, Selectman Muska, and Selectman Nordell.

Nordell moved/Baker seconded/DISCUSSION: None

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

First Selectman Bowsza cited the Board is in Executive Session at 7:44 p.m.

LET THE RECORD SHOW the Recording Secretary signed out of the Meeting at 7:44 p.m.

First Selectman Bowsza reported the Board had exited the Executive Session at 8:24 p.m. He noted no action was taken.

First Selectman Bowsza called for a motion to adjourn.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 8:24 p.m.

DeSousa moved/Muska seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted, -----
Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Selectmen
13/4373

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Selectman Nordell's Report
- B. Selectman Muska's Report

First Selectman Bowsza, Deputy First Selectman DeSousa and Selectman Baker's Report transcribed in the Meeting Minutes.

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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN – FEBRUARY 17, 2022 REGULAR MEETING
ATTACHMENT A**

Selectman Nordell's report for February 17, 2022

On February 7th I attended the Warehouse Point Fire Commissioners meeting. The new Aerial pumper truck has now been put into service. The Department reported 65 calls during the month of January. The Department's financial audit has been completed with no significant findings. The budget for 2022/23 was discussed but not yet finalized. The Commission is pushing for a zero mil rate increase. The Commission also discussed unequal taxation that still exists between the tax payers of WHP and BB and what is paid for by the whole town for the fire department on the Broad Brook side. It was discussed on how the town could possibly separate these costs and effectively make these costs equal for both sides of town.

On February 9th I attended the Board of Education meeting via zoom. The East Windsor Middle School did a presentation on activities they do with the kids and current teaching methods.

Students made Valentine's Day Cards that were distributed to people at the senior center and the area nursing homes.

Another presentation was given on Illustrative Math. In this program students are given a Math problem and then break into groups and discuss and work on the problem together. In this instance the teacher acts more as a facilitator why the students work out ways to solve the problem. In short it is like debate class with the debating subject being a math problem.

Policy updates were made and voted on for Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco-Free Workplace, Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers, Basic Instruction Program and the FAFSA Completion Program.

The Board discussed the possibility that there could be changes upcoming in the mask mandates and how they will make decisions whether to continue or drop the mask mandates in East Windsor schools.

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The board is also continuing budget workshops in preparation of the 2023 budget.

Enrollment in the East Windsor School system shows a loss of one student from the Elementary school and gained one student in the High School. Current enrollment still stands at 1,026 students.

On February 15th I attended a Board of Selectman budget workshop in which we discussed Social Services, Parks and Rec., Elderly Commission, Public Works, Sanitation, Town Property, Roads, IT Building Commission, Police and Emergency Management.

On February 16th I attended the Board of Finance meeting. The audit is expected to be completed very soon. A request from the Board of Selectmen was tabled upon explanation as to why the request to fund a CIP item ahead of other CIP items. They also discussed their Budget expectations and schedule. Overwhelmingly the Board was in agreement they wished more people participated and attended the budget process.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving of East Windsor is looking for members to serve on the commission.

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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN – FEBRUARY 17, 2022 REGULAR MEETING
ATTACHMENT B**

Selectmen's Report - February 17, 2022

I attended the Warehouse Point Fire Commissioners meeting that Selectman Nordell reported on.

On February 8, 2022 the Arts and Culture Commission met via Zoom. They received only one submission for their logo contest and have decided to extend the deadline to the end of March to encourage additional participation. Submissions can be sent to: ewartsandculture@gmail.com.

The Commission obtained six wooden bunnies from the Parks and Recreation Department that they will be refurbishing. There was discussion of a potential fundraising opportunity for them and the Commission will explore the option of having businesses advertise on them.

The Commission is compiling an "Artist's Bank," which is a list of local artists: ranging from pottery to painting that the Commission can reach out to for various events that they are planning. There was discussion of partnering with the Parks and Recreation Department to incorporate a craft fair with the Summer Concert Series this year.

Pending funding approval, a few potential projects on the horizon include: wrapping approximately ten telephone boxes around Town with photos from the East Windsor Historical Society, a Solar Festival; possibly including a spin on dinosaur fossils, since East Windsor was one of the first places where they were discovered and murals on two sights in the Warehouse Point section of Town.

There is still room for new members on the Commission, so if you or someone you know might be interested, please fill out an application and return it to the First Selectman's Office. If you need assistance or have any questions, please reach out to me and I would be happy to help!

Submitted With Sincerity,

Sarah A. Muska, Selectman
smuska@eastwindsorct.com