

**BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
11 RYE STREET
BROAD BROOK, CONNECTICUT, 06016**

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, May 29, 2019

*****These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting*****

Regular Members Present: Jerilyn Corso (Chairman), Kathy Pippin, Sarah Muska, Bill Syme, Karen Christensen, Barbara Petano

Regular Members Absent: None

Alternate Members Present: Alan Baker

Alternate Members Absent: Danielle Godeck

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Corso called the Public Hearing to Order at 7:00 p.m. Everyone stood and said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. TIME AND PLACE OF HEARING:

Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 7:00 p.m. at the East Windsor Town Hall Meeting Room (11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, Connecticut, 06016)

3. ATTENDANCE/APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES:

The whole Board was present so no alternates needed to be appointed.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Jim Barton, 158 South Water St. – Stated that a few weeks ago the Board proposed a budget and that was a good first step to properly funding the fire services in the Town by bringing the Warehouse Point Fire District back into the Town budget after three years. Two weeks after the first budget failure you took a step back from there and removed a lot of the funding. He stated that now the Board has an opportunity to restore it and he was wondering if the Board would do that. He stated that the Town has two fire departments and they provide fire services to all of the residents in Town. The Town can't get along without either one of the fire departments. The two units work together and provide service for the entire town and all of the people in town benefit.

For three fiscal years now Warehouse Point taxpayers have shouldered the burden of about three quarters of the cost of fire services and the Broad Brook taxpayers one quarter. This needs to stop, the fire services have to be fund equitably and all of the beneficiaries of the services need to pay for them. The Board needs to recognize what the fire services cost and who is responsible for them.

Bill Loos, Melrose Rd. – He would like to speak about the school budget. He stated the state average for cost per student is \$16,259 and East Windsor is \$22,218, he stated that was way over the state average. He stated that the Town is not getting benefits from raising the budget every year. The last four years the increase has been a 28% increase. He said that they just can't afford that, there is something wrong with the school system in East Windsor, the students are not ranked anywhere near the top. They are ranked 113th way towards the bottom, Ellington is 44th, Suffield is 33rd, and South Windsor is 30th. We are not getting benefits and are increasing the budget every year for the school system. He urges the Board to cut it down to 2%, the voters in the town don't want this by showing this in two votes already. He said they are sick and tired of having the school budget increased every year which takes away from the rest of the town's benefits.

Charlie Szymanski, 57 Rockville Rd. – Stated he wanted to discuss the cut made to the Warehouse Point Fire District, he thinks the cut is not correct. He stated that there are people in this town that don't have children and they are still paying a tax on the schools. No one complains because it is the right thing to do, everyone contributes to the education of the town. The same is with the fire department that the people that live in the Warehouse Point District are paying for a percentage of the cost for the Broad Brook Fire Department. In addition to that, since there has been no funding they are paying 100% of the Warehouse Point District. He thinks that making this appropriation back to them is the right and fair thing to do for the taxpayers throughout the town.

Charlie Nordell, Grandview Terrace – He agreed with Jim Barton and Charlie Szymanski and stated that one of the problems is when the Board first put Warehouse Point Fire into the budget it wasn't put in for enough to offset the tax difference. If it was put in for the full amount then what the Warehouse Point Fire would have charged for tax on the people would have offset the difference made what you would have put in. Since it was put in at \$232,000 it didn't meet that difference so it still cost the East Windsor taxpayers more money if they voted yes in favor of that vs. voting no.

Jim Barton, 158 South Water St. – He stated that the Board works hard and long during budget season to come up with a budget, you go through hearings, you go through meetings, receive budget requests, deliberate, think about it and then you propose a budget to the voters. That budget seems to him should be something solid, a foundation. If it is rejected by the voters, instead of going back and playing with numbers again and picking winners and losers maybe you should go back and do something across the board. It should be reduced across the board with certain exceptions, flat lines, new lines and lines that can't be changed. Everything else should be reduced across the board by whatever percentage it takes for the Board to become comfortable

with whatever will pass next time. He feels that if after a rejection the Boar goes back and just moves things around then it wasn't as solid of a foundation of a budget as it could have been.

Kathy Biledeau – The Board of Education has not received a 28% increase for the past few years. She believes that the members of the Board are aware that that was not an accurate statement. They have received 2% or they have received a little bit more than that last year. They have contractual obligations, insurance premiums, and all of the other things that everyone else has. They also have the highest number of employees because that is just the nature of what the Board of Education does. She very firmly believes that there should be an equal percentage across the board, not equal dollars but equal percentage. This is what she thinks is the proper way to do it. She is hoping, not for this year but next year, to reduce costs the Board should look at maybe going to every other week garbage pick-up. Also, she was wondering if the Board could increase revenue in other places like dog licensing fees and permits as a way to offset so they are not just hitting the exact same groups over and over.

Bob Lyke, Rye St. – he would like to think philosophically that this would be the last year that we all have this 2% burden hanging over our head during every budget referendum. He would like to think that he for one can stay on track for tonight's hearing and making recommendations and giving his thoughts is all about subtracting and adding and dollars and cents. It is not about policy or about the administration or anything else. He would like the Board to restore the budget to Warehouse Point Fire Department.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Corso adjourned the Public Hearing at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca D'Amicol, Recording Secretary