

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

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

<https://zoom.us/j/3326833563>

Meeting ID: 332 683 3563

Password: townhall

One tap mobile

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

Board of Finance Members Present: Jerilyn Corso (Chair), Nichole DeSousa, Tom Lansner, George Michna, Bill Syme, Tom Talamini

Alternate Members Present: Karen Turley

Advisory: Amy O'Toole, Treasurer/Finance Director, Jason Bowsza, First Selectman, Dr. Patrick Tudryn, Superintendent of Schools, and, Sabo Maniscalco, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Corso called the Public Hearing to Order at 7:00 p.m.

2. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:

Wednesday, March 23, 2022, 7:00 p.m. & Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

3. ATTENDANCE/APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES:

All members are present.

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to receive comment and input from the public on the FY 2022-2023 proposed Board of Selectmen and Board of Education Budgets.

TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUDGET PROPOSAL FY 22/23:

Jason Bowsza, First Selectman presented the Town's budget to the Board and public. He has emphasized that the source of reference for his presentation comes directly from the ClearGov Connecticut Data Collaborative that provides illustrative information on what and where East Windsor's taxpayer money gets allocated by defined breakdowns. Moreover, it provides a strong confidence on how the Town spends public money. So, the demographics of the town shows that the median household income is \$216,000 as of 2019. Current median household property tax obligation is 5,216 per 2021 and 2022. The proposed median household property tax obligation is projected to be \$5,314 for 2022 and 2023 and it excludes motor vehicles.

The total households in the town is 4,855. The family households comprise of 46 percent; the married households is 46 percent; the singles is 4 percent and, the seniors living alone is 18 percent.

The population breakdown by age based on the ClearGov shows that the town has 682 people under the age of five years old; whereas, the school-aged population is 1,365 people. The population under the age of 65 years old is 7,412; and senior population over the age of 65 is 1,986.

The chart illustrating the multi-year trend by the department shows where the tax dollars went over the time. The pink triangle spikes up due to the voter approved expenditure in town's spending. This chart shows three-year growth in town's grand list with \$1,018,158,648. To put it in perspective, the comparative growth in the grand list with the other towns shows that East Windsor change is 22.28 percent resulting in 4.18 of positive increase with other towns being 2.45 percent on the low according to the Journal Inquirer.

The next chart shows the growth in grand list by type in 2021 where the real estate net total came to 79.17 percent, the motor vehicle net total came to 12.49 percent, and the personal property is 8.34 percent. Obviously, the grand list for motor vehicles fared well compared to the real estate and personal property. As one can see, it is about the high demand and low supply. Furthermore, East Windsor has a good growth in the grand list.

The town is now in the process of our revaluation. The graph shows the same information compared to other town's revaluation grand list. Real estate, motor vehicle, and personal property. So, this is where total growth and the money is going to go. This is consistent with the distribution in East Windsor and real property valuation.

In the current year, the average homeowners spend 60 percent on Board of Education compared to 40 percent on the Town. The pie chart shows what percentage is appropriated accordingly. The Town's Government Breakdown shows that the 14

percent goes to the General Government, 24 percent goes to Public Safety, 22 percent goes to the Public Works, 6 percent goes to the Community Services, 7 percent goes to Debt Service, 6 percent goes to the Capital Outlay, 20 percent goes to the Benefits, and 1 percent goes to Contingency.

The Town and Board of Education have entered into mutual agreement to purchase the power for oil and heating. The Employee Benefits are expected to decrease. The contractual obligations and worker's compensation, health insurance annual renewal rates. The town has not received the final quote from them yet. The average East Windsor mill rate goes up by 0.65 mills that is \$1,585,722 in new dollars. The average taxpayer will pay \$98 more in taxes than they did last year.

BOARD OF EDUCATION PROPOSED BUDGET FY 2022-2023:

Randi Reichle, Chair of the Board Of Education, introduced the Board of Education budget to the Board of Finance. She has emphasized that the mission of the East Windsor Public Schools is to provide the high-quality, comprehensive, and the meaningful education for all the students within a safe and nurturing environment. She has also emphasized that each student will be treated as an individual and taught to function as a member of a group and as a productive member of the society.

Therefore, the Board of Education is required to provide the learning environment for all students so they strive to be proficient in all curricular materials, including the staffing, facilities, and the technology.

They have a new central office leadership team focused on improved student outcomes. The reorganization of business office aims to improve overall operation and efficiency and expand the curriculum to address their highest learners by providing new curriculum to retain East Windsor students. They have also introduced the new curriculum that is already showing the results.

Dr. Patrick Tudryn, Superintendent of East Windsor Public Schools presented the Board with the Board of Education budget proposal and stated that the entire budget proposal could be found on the website at <https://www.eastwindsork12.org/board-education/budget-information/>

In his presentation, he emphasized how the pandemic impacted the day-to-day operations that resulted in some unaccounted costs. There is one contingency for the private education spending and in the matter of staffing, within the special education, they have the contractual position. They have a business teacher at high school to add the business course to equip the students with competitive education. The additional staff members would be able to co-plan the learning plans and curriculum based on the individual student needs. They are reorganizing the business office. They have a food supervisor and they will continue to have someone in staff with increased

responsibilities. They are trying not to outsource these services but still continue improving our operations.

The pie chart shows the overall local budget needs, and it is not taking into account of their grants. 1.4 million includes choice fund and tuition reimbursements. FTE – Full Time Employees. PTE – part time employees.

The cafeteria does generate the revenue. The last totals on the bottom 26 million reflects local contribution. Just like any budget one could see the budget variables. The medical insurance shows an increase of 5 percent. The maximum is 8 percent. They are expecting it to be lower. The final number will come at the end of May. This budget does not include the retirement. They are currently in negotiations with nurses' salaries.

The budget request by the department shows that each of the building has technology line like smart viewing online instructional tool for teachers. They also have district wide technology. The worksheet refers to local budget. The description of the grants is on Pages 38 and 43. Within each workshop, the budget commentary is dollar by dollar. The larger account lines show those that have higher priority. So, the costs are indicated by the local budget or the grant money. The lines grant for the last six years have been exact amount. No increase or decrease have occurred. They also have expiring COVID grants and their description is on page 38. He truly believes that the budget reflects their immediate needs and demonstrate fiscal responsibility.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Paul Anderson, 89 Main Street, Broad Brook – He was impressed by the presentations and the hard work that went to it. According to him, the numbers are well within the reason. He would like to recommend for the budget to be approved by the public as presented. He has stated his preference for having a public hearing and account for their input, accepting it as is. He suggested some method for the public to be able to vote on it as presented and then for the Board of Finance to adjust it afterwards if needed.

Frances Neill, 153 Melrose Road, Broad Brook – She is the mother of three children of school age and is also on the Board of Education. She did see all the information and being a parent of three kids in public school she would agree with Paul Anderson's suggestion to put the budget forward for the residents to vote and then deal with the changes as needed. She believes her children deserve everything that the Board of Education's budget offers and hopes that the Board of Finance agrees.

Marie DeSousa, Broad Brook – She agrees with the Board of Education budget as presented but she still has some questions that need to be answered. There was 1.5 million dollars returned from the last year's budget. The explanation she has received that the money came in and then was spent on the students attending the school from the other towns. However, those expenses were taken out of the wrong line item. She emphasized

the importance of 1.5 million dollars not being spent last year. She would like to have a breakdown of 1.5 million dollars being spent and its appropriation in the budget. She understands that there were some offsets due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, she insists that the town deserves to obtain clarification with budgeted breakdown to show how much of 1.5 million dollars were spent.

Bill Loos, 44 Melrose Road, Broad Brook – He has strong objections to the Board of Education budget. He believes that 4.35 percent increase is way too high for the budget. As senior citizens on fixed income, he believes it is difficult due to the cost of living going up and the town cannot afford 4.35 percent increase on just education. He would like to see what the cost per student is. The town used to graduate 100 or over 100 students. However, last year the town has graduated 54 students compared to 100. The town's school population keeps going down but the budget keeps going up every year. He does not believe it is right and that there is something wrong with the town's school system. He is requesting to get the information on the cost per student. Therefore, he advises the Board of Finance to reduce the school budget and that he agrees with the Town's budget. He thinks that the school budget is twice more than it should be.

Elise Spielberg, 244 Rye Street, Broad Brook Via Zoom – She is also speaking on behalf of the Library Association Warehouse Point and she is also on the Board of Trustees for the Library Association Warehouse Point. First, she wants to thank the Board of Finance for their support of the library and their commitment to the Town of East Windsor. Over the past few years, the library has grown and the library has added more resources exciting opportunities for the town. With the COVID, the library was able to develop unique ways for the residents to access the materials and they have purchased digital resources to meet the needs of the town. The Association is proud of how the library contributes to the East Windsor community and so, they hope the Board of Finance will fund the library's budget request as recommended by the First Selectmen. This budget approval would enable the library to provide more materials, services and technology that support the pursuit of lifelong learning of East Windsor residents. She thanked the Board of Finance. She has also expressed her support for the Board of Education budget as she has been a long resident of the town having her children go through the school system. She has witnessed the school program being cut and now she is happy to see that these programs might be brought back. These programs address the needs of all learners. She thinks that it is very important and she appreciates that there is a chance to look at that opportunity. She also stated that the Board of Education presented was clear and that she supports it.

The Public Hearing was closed at 8:10 p.m. by Chairman Corso.

Board of Finance

Public Hearing

March 23, 2022

Respectfully Submitted,

Sabo Maniscalco, Recording Secretary, Board of Finance