

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
AND
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Budget Public Hearing – Fiscal Year 2020-2021

Tuesday, February 4, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Auditorium, East Windsor High School
76 South Main Street, East Windsor, CT. 06088

Meeting Minutes

**** These 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
Charlie Nordell, Selectman

ATTENDANCE: **Board of Selectmen:** Jason E. Bowsza, First Selectman; Marie DeSousa, Deputy First Selectman; Alan Baker, Selectman; Sarah Muska, Selectman; Charlie Nordell, Selectman

Board of Education: Cathy Simonelli, Chairman; Fran Neill, William Raber, Randi Reichle, Courtney Sevarino, Kate Carey-Trull.

SPEAKERS/GUESTS: **Public:** Noreen Farmer, Jillian Hubbard, Rick Leborious, Bill Loos, Heather Spencer, Bill Towers,

Press: No one from the Press identified themselves.

TIME AND PLACE OF PUBLIC HEARING:

First Selectman Bowsza called the February 4, 2020 Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021 Budget hosted by the East Windsor Board of Selectmen to Order at 6:00 p.m. in the Auditorium of the East Windsor High School, 76 South Main Street, East Windsor, CT.

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ATTENDANCE: All Members of the Board of Selectmen were present at this Public Hearing. They were joined by six members of the Board of Education.

First Selectman Bowsza reported the Public Hearing is being held to take comments from the public on the 2020 – 2021 Budget. He began the Public Hearing by introducing Cathy Simonelli, Chairman of the Board of Education.

Cathy Simonelli, Chairman, Board of Education: Mrs. Simonelli thanked the public for attending this meeting. She reported the Board of Education (BOE) began by asking the Superintendent to provide them with a budget plan to maintain current services, and to include any critical services to assist the students to be successful. Mrs. Simonelli noted the previous budgets have been cut to the point that students have lost programs and services; the budget being submitted is what the students need for tools to succeed.

First Selectman Bowsza then opened discussion to the audience.

Bill Loos, Melrose Road: Mr. Loos noted the handout provided to the audience (See Attachment A) contains nothing with regard to the BOE; the public can't discuss the budget until they have something to review.

Jillian 40 Mill Street: Mrs. Hubbard reported one of the first meetings she attended was the BOE "cutting meeting". Mrs. Hubbard suggested it was extremely challenging for the members of the BOE to make their decisions. They lost administrative positions, JV sports for the students; Mrs. Hubbard suggested many of the schools in other towns have these opportunities for the kids to learn and grow. The BOE supports our children, which are our future. Many families have left town because of the cuts to education. Mrs. Hubbard felt that from what she saw there's nothing left to cut. Mrs. Hubbard felt the kids shouldn't have to worry about their programs, or how to pay for graduation. Mrs. Hubbard also cited the "bashing" on social media; if anyone is disgruntled they should go to the BOE meetings; the meeting twice a month and the meetings are open to the public.

Heather Spencer, Reggie Way: Ms. Spencer indicated she wanted to speak in support of the BOE. She noted that in the past her son experienced some trauma; because of the support of the school system he has improved his situation. The staff need tools; you need to support the school system. Ms. Spencer also noted the programs and sports that have been cut from the budget; she noted it was her son's involvement with sports that got her son to return to school. Ms. Spencer hopes everyone will support the school budget.

Bill Towers, 14 Maple Avenue: Mr. Towers suggested the bottom line – if you go anywhere near a 4.5% budget increase it won't pass. Mr. Towers indicated he understands the budget is a "wish list"; he supports education and the Town budget but 4.5% is too much. Many people

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don't want their taxes to go up. Mr. Towers indicated he would suggest putting out a 3% budget first; 4.5% won't make it.

Karen Stavalone: The resident indicated she was speaking as the parent of two kids, and also as an art teacher who works in another school district. Ms. Stavalone referenced Mr. Towers comments regarding the percentage of the budget increase. She reported she and her family moved to East Windsor from Wethersfield, in part because of the lower taxes, although Wethersfield provided more services for their tax rate. Ms. Stavalone felt East Windsor has gotten to the point by cutting their budgets that they're risking her ability to sell her home if she chooses to move when she gets older.

Ms. Stavalone offered the following comments in regard to the education budget:

- Keep the technology part of the budget intact, if not increasing it. They're having problems currently with the computers/technology.
- Improve community involvement – she was involved with bringing the sign outside the building to fruition; we need to encourage more involvement by the people.
- We must remain competitive with the teachers' contracts to maintain the level of education. The resident suggested she's heard complaints on both sides – there are those people who think staff is too heavy at the top, and others who think there are too many teachers and administrators.
- We need to keep the programs, such as the band and the arts, and sports.

Noreen Farmer, 247 South Water Street: Mrs. Farmer reported she's pleased to see this Board's positivity. Mrs. Farmer feels it will take many years to recover, but there seems to be many more people willing to get involved, or talk, or vote. Mrs. Farmer hopes we can continue to build on the current enthusiasm.

Regarding education, Mrs. Farmer reported she's lived in Town for 25 years. When her children got to Middle School she sent them to a Magnet School which provided better services. She brought them back to East Windsor for High School, and that worked well. Now she has a granddaughter, who would be attending pre-kindergarten. Mrs. Farmer reported parents shouldn't have to pay for their children to attend pre-kindergarten; there are a lot of parents who can't afford the cost. She noted that many other towns offer pre-kindergarten to residents; our students are starting their education behind other students because of the lack of Town funded education. Pre-kindergarten isn't an option; it's a necessity.

Rick Leborious, 16 Church Street: Mr. Leborious is thrilled at the composition of the current BOS/BOE. He is very confident that these Boards will be able to work in a bipartisan manner and things will move ahead.

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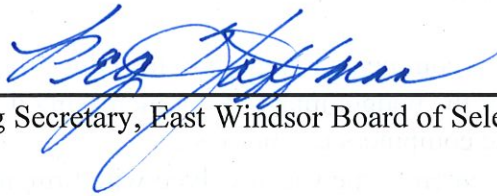
First Selectman Bowsza queried the audience again for further comments; no one requested to speak. He called for a motion to adjourn this meeting.

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Public Hearing at 6:32 p.m.

DeSousa moved/Baker seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

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

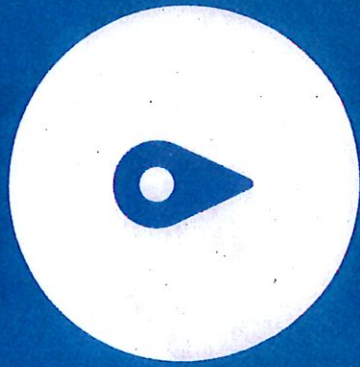
Respectfully submitted



Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Selectmen

ATTACHMENTS:

A – Town of East Windsor – 2020/2021 Initial Budget Requests and Recommendations

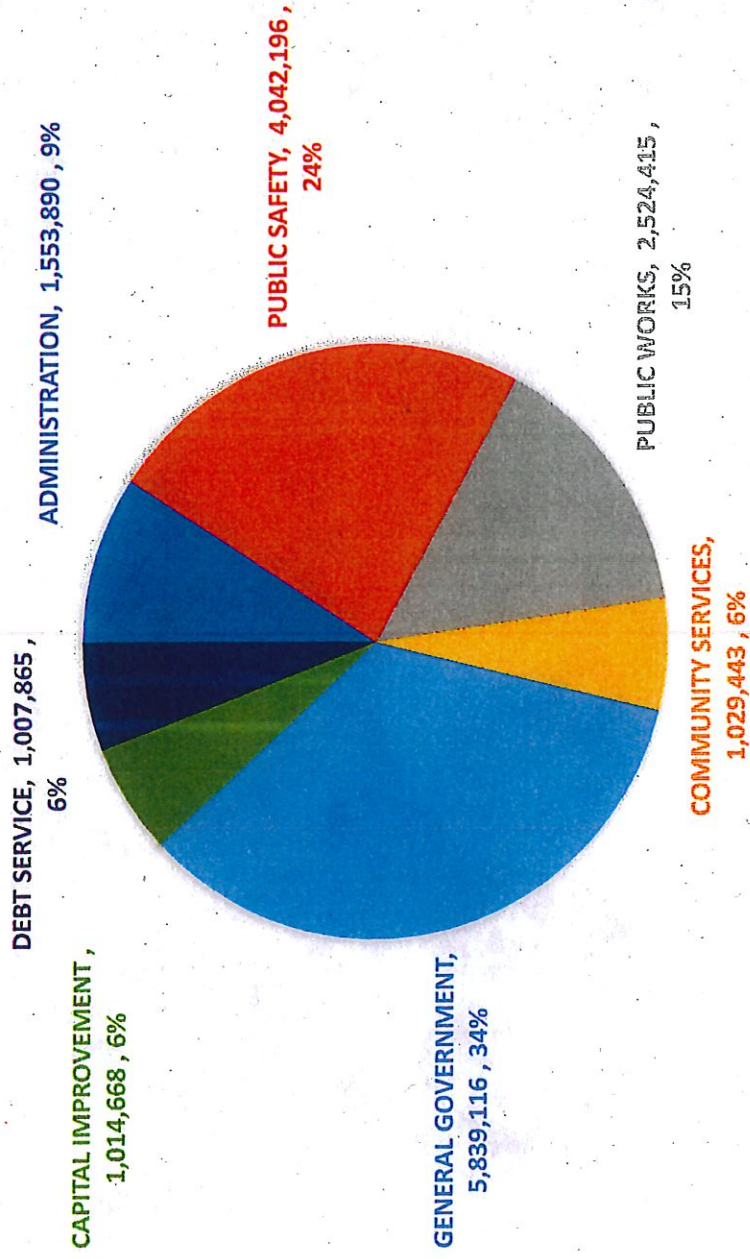


Town of East Windsor

2020/2021 Initial Budget Requests and Recommendations

for Public Hearing - 2/4/2020 - Attachment 9

TOWN GOVERNMENT FY 2020-21 BUDGET



BN Public Hearing - 2/4/2020 - Attachment A

	19-20	FY 20-21 BUDGET						
	Approved Budget	Dept Head	\$ INC (DEC)	% INC (DEC)	1st Selectman	\$ INC (DEC)		% INC (DEC)
ADMINISTRATION	\$ 1,517,507	\$ 1,663,172	\$ 145,665	9.60%	\$ 1,553,890	\$ 36,383		2.40%
PUBLIC SAFETY	\$ 4,003,045	\$ 4,776,714	\$ 773,669	19.33%	\$ 4,042,196	\$ 39,151		0.98%
PUBLIC WORKS	\$ 2,431,901	\$ 2,724,415	\$ 292,514	12.03%	\$ 2,524,415	\$ 92,514		3.80%
COMMUNITY SERVICES	\$ 977,544	\$ 1,046,635	\$ 69,091	7.07%	\$ 1,029,443	\$ 51,899		5.31%
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	\$ 5,352,469	\$ 5,775,898	\$ 423,429	7.91%	\$ 5,839,116	\$ 486,647		9.09%
TOWN GOVT OPERATIONS	\$ 14,282,466	\$ 15,986,835	\$ 1,704,369	11.93%	\$ 14,989,060	\$ 706,595		4.95%
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	\$ 995,328	\$ 1,579,978	\$ 584,650	58.74%	\$ 1,014,668	\$ 19,340		1.94%
DEBT SERVICE	\$ 988,103	\$ 1,007,865	\$ 19,762	2.00%	\$ 1,007,865	\$ 19,762		2.00%
	\$ 16,265,897	\$ 18,574,678	\$ 2,308,780	14.19%	\$ 17,011,593	\$ 745,696		4.58%

2020 Public Hearing - 2/4/2020 - Attached