

TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR BOARD OF SELECTMEN

PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR BROAD BROOK FIRE DEPARTMENT 2021-2022 BUDGET

Thursday, March 4, 2021
7:00 p.m.
East Windsor, Connecticut

Meeting held via ZOOM Teleconference
Meeting ID: 332 683 3563
Town Hall closed to the Public by
Executive Order of First Selectman Jason E. Bowsza
Due to Coronavirus pandemic

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

ABSENT: All Selectmen were present this evening.

GUESTS signing in to teleconference: Department of Public Works: Joseph Sauerhoefer, Operations Manager; James Barton, Chief, Warehouse Point Fire District; Planning Department: Clark Chapin, Director of Planning and Community Development;

GUESTS/SPEAKERS: Town of East Windsor – Broad Brook Fire Department Commissioners: John Madigan, Chairman; Nick Macsata, Vice Chairman; Broad Brook Fire Department: Tom Arcari, Chief;

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Treasurer’s Office: Amy O’Toole, Town Treasurer; **Board of Finance:** Noreen Farmer; Tom Lansner.

Public (as identified in the Meeting participation list): Chief 3939; Heidi Alexander, Cathy, Ian Neill,

TIME AND PLACE OF PUBLIC HEARING:

First Selectman Bowsza called the East Windsor Board of Selectmen March 4, 2021 Public Hearing for the Town of East Windsor – Broad Brook Fire Department 2021-2022 Budget to Order at 7:03 p.m. The Meeting is being held via teleconference due to closure of the Town Hall to the public as the result of the coronavirus pandemic.

First Selectman Bowsza recognized Chairman John Madigan, Chairman of the Broad Brook Fire Department Commission, and other Commissioners signed in virtually as well.

Chairman Madigan opened his remarks by recalling that in November of 2020, at the annual election, the people voted in a separate taxing entity for the Town of East Windsor – Broad Brook Fire Department, and the corresponding Fire Commission was formed. We’ve worked over the past weeks on a budget that’s feasible and represents what we believe are the best options for fire protection and emergency medical services and overall emergency services. We’re here to present the budget for the fiscal year 2021 to 2022. The highlights of the new budget are:

Total budget for the new year is \$957,327. This is the first budget that the newly formed and separate taxing entity has developed. Chairman Madigan explained what’s in this budget.

Items that were previously covered by the Town’s budget include:

\$123,201 for items like the Fire Marshal’s expenses, FICA and Workman’s Comp for the part-time employees, and Tolland County Dispatch fees. These amounts are expected to be reduced from the Town Budget as they’ve been added to the Broad Brook District’s Budget.

Additionally, the **Capital Improvement Budget** was handled directly by the Town. As a consequence of the Broad Brook Fire Department being a separate taxing entity it’s appropriate that we establish a reasonable budget that covers the cost of maintaining significant fire and emergency services equipment. For that, we’ve added \$200,000. This will establish, on an ongoing basis, a process for apparatus and equipment replacement. The people of Broad Brook deserve equipment that responds appropriately and in accordance with prescribed times for replacement by the National Fire Protection Association. Additionally, this is fiscally responsible and avoids having to pay significant costs of repairs as the apparatus grows in service age. Without the ability to bond for a new truck adding this amount into the budget

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every year puts the Department on a regular schedule to replace outdated fire apparatus with a scheduled replacement on a 5-year basis. With 3 main apparatus, this gives us an approximate lifecycle of each engine, which is well worth the investment and forethought.

Regarding **personnel**, Chairman Madigan suggested it should be noted that the Broad Brook Fire Department has traditionally been a volunteer organization. Frankly speaking, times have changed recently, and with call volumes averaging 700 calls annually, and with many people working outside of the community, that strictly volunteer model is not sustainable to provide adequate personnel for emergency response. As a result, the Broad Brook Fire Department has been employing part-time personnel to supplement the volunteer staff with very good results. There are currently 3 part-time firefighters that provide station coverage during the day, 5 day a week, and 2 part-time firefighters that provide station coverage on the weekend evenings. The benefits of this coverage have reduced times to emergencies, and consistency to maintaining apparatus and equipment following emergencies. To adequately maintain this model, we recommend an expansion of the coverage to 4 part-time personnel during the day, and 2 personnel during the evening 7 days a week. This additional cost is \$167,496. This expansion program will provide a valuable service to our town and community.

Chairman Madigan turned the presentation over to the Vice Chairman, Nick Macsata.

Vice Chairman Macsata wanted to point out foremost is that this budget that they've reviewed and are presenting today represents what we feel is necessary to establish the Broad Brook Fire Department appropriately for success delivering a full range of emergency services. As this is the first budget that's ever stood alone from the Town's budget Vice Chairman Macsata suggested he's secure in the belief that this provides the coverage that he, personally, expects as a resident, a husband, and a father. When the Fire Department responds to a call for cardiac arrest, a car accident, or a structure fire the residents should reasonably expect excellence. With times and costs increasing this budget represents appropriately what meets those demands. It should be noted that this budget will cost the average taxpayer less than \$5 per week. For first rate emergency services we believe that's a very good deal, and that this budget establishes this model for long-term success. Vice Chairman Macsata suggested as a for instance, today we had a car accident involving injuries. Imagine that you were in that car, or, at the same time, your wife, your mother, your husband, or your child had a medical emergency on the other side of the district. This budget best positions the Department for that inevitability.

Vice Chairman Macsata turned the presentation over to Fire Chief Arcari.

Chief Arcari noted that 95% of their volunteers/members are all taxpayers in the Broad Brook section of town. We're feeling this just as everyone else is.

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Chairman Madigan indicated this is the culmination of their presentation; they're opening discussion to anyone who has questions.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

First Selectman Bowsza noted this is a duly noticed Public Hearing. If there are any members of the public who would like to address the Board please unmute yourself and give the Board your name and address for the record, and then state your business. Any questions or comments from the members of the public? No one requested to speak.

First Selectman Bowsza thanked the Commissioners for their presentation. He requested a motion from the Selectmen to adjourn the Public Hearing.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To ADJOURN the Public Hearing on the Town of East Windsor – Broad Brook Fire Department 2021-2022 Budge at 7:09 p.m.

**Muska moved/DeSousa seconded/DISCUSSION: None
VOTE by rollcall: In Favor: Baker/Nordell/DeSousa/Muska**

Respectfully submitted

Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Selectmen