

EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING
BUDGET REVIEWS
MARCH 27, 2014

Present: Steve Kelley, Chairman
Beth Hogan
Camille Alberti
Steve Carpenteri
Lisa Picarazzi
Steve Harney

FILED IN EAST LYME
CONNECTICUT
Mar 31 20 14 AT 11:00 AM/PM
Kenneth A. ...
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also Present: First Selectman Paul Formica
Anna Johnson, Finance Director
Nancy Burdick, Business, East Lyme Board of Education
Robyn McKenney, East Lyme Board of Education
Kim Davis, East Lyme Board of Education
Michael Susi, East Lyme High School Principal
Judy A. DeLeeuw, East Lyme Middle School Principal
Melissa DeLoreto, Niantic Center Principal
Linda Anania, Flanders School Principal
Tim Hagen, East Lyme Board of Education Chairman
Barbara Senges-Murphy, East Lyme Board of Education
Brian Reas, Assistant Superintendent Special Ed & Pupil Personnel Serv.
Don Meltabarger, Director of Business & Facilities

A. CALL SPECIAL MEETING TO ORDER. Chairman Kelley called the East Lyme Board of Finance Special Meeting for Budget Reviews to order at 7 p.m.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE. The Pledge of Allegiance was observed.

C. DELEGATIONS. There were no delegations.

D. NEW BUSINESS

a. Contingency Transfer \$6,870 - Police Department CAD System. Since the Board of Selectmen did not have a quorum, this matter was tabled until a future meeting of this Board.

b. Budget Reviews
Board of Education #999

Mr. Formica was pleased with the budget of the Board of Education.

Mr. Hagen replied the Board has considered "pay to play". Parents already spend money for their youngsters to play sports. There would administrative costs of collecting the money. The East Lyme culture prides itself on teaching a child as a whole. Student activities are part of what makes up the East Lyme school system. Ms. Picarazzi replied we all want the best for our youngsters, but we cannot pay for some of these activities. She was told the advertising program is expected to be a good source of revenue.

Mr. Harney asked what are your hopes? Mr. Hagen replied approximately \$1,000 per year. Mr. Hogan stated we are hoping the business community and parents will find new ways to raise money.

Mr. Meltabarger asked are you aware of booster activity? Many sports are funded through them. Ms. Hogan asked do you have a revenue line item to show an offset? He replied its in the budget under student activity funds. Mr. Reas added there is a flower sale, but the money goes into the booster's account. Senior graduation night goes into their account. These are not funds that we house or draw off of. Mr. Reas stated if it is a parents organization the parents manage it. In year's past at the High School there was activity fees and lab fees. We are not allowed to use those fees. The Booster Club raises money and then pays for lunches or team dinners from it. We have "pay to play" for Freshman Lacrosse. Through the Booster Club we can afford to pay for the Freshman Coach. For Hockey we coop with other schools, but the families pay a fee. The philosophy behind this is we have 1100 at our school and 850 participate in some activity at the High School. Six hundred students participate in more than one sport. Research has been done that the more students are involved in sports there is higher attendance and lower discipline rates. The same parents are also paying taxes. Ms. Picarazzi stated these are hard choices, but we need to try to make improvements. Mr. Kelley reported last year we spent \$50,000 for equipment for the High School. Mr. Susi stated we have safety procedures we need to follow. Helmets need to be reconditioned. We need to keep high ropes safe. We have 1100 students using the equipment every year.

Mr. Harney noted under tuition there was a \$223,000 decrease. Mr. Meltabarger replied it is not all tuition. We received \$105,000 in a security grant and \$139,000 in a technology grant which are one time grants.

Ms. Hogan asked if there are any grants coming from this year's budget? Mr. Formica replied we have nothing in terms of grants only for matching capital expenditures grant. We will receive \$65,000 from the state, and we need to match it. Ms. Hogan asked will we receive additional seed money for OPM? Mr. Formica replied the Appropriations Committee was to forward a budget out of committee today. There is no grant that will offset the new mandate. Mr. Reas added early childhood grants are given to needy districts. We are not in that category.

Ms. Hogan asked if you have a Dean of Students at the Middle School would you also need a monitor? Mr. Reas replied we could consider that. At times we need a monitor. The new seats limit the driver's visibility. Ms. Alberti asked why doesn't school

busses have seat belts? Mr. Reas replied there is considerable costs for seat belts and the current seats on the bus are made higher and the child's head will go into the seats in front. Seat belts have become a safety issue. Mr. Meltabarger stated the children are safer without a seat belt, e.g. if the bus was on fire or the bus driver was incapacitated. Mr. Reas added on an annual basis we teach youngster safety on the bus. Ms. Alberti asked have you found that cameras on the bus have helped? Mr. Reas replied we are now able to investigate what has happened.

Ms. DeLeeuw, who has been a Middle School Principal for seven years, added we have discussion with students on bus behavior at the Middle School. Every year we have a program on positive behavior. Some of the busses are crowded, and we have to deal with bus issues quite frequently. Much of it is loud inappropriate behavior. By using cameras we are able to look at the incident. The Dean of Students could help the administrators. We tend to have more incidents on crowded busses. Ms. Picarazzi asked if any students lose their bus privileges? Ms. DeLeeuw replied some have been suspended off the bus.

Ms. Picarazzi asked how many students are enrolled in Coastal Connections? Mr. Susi replied there are currently 13. Last year there were 20. This year it was not well advertised. Enrollment also fluxuates. We would like to get more tuition students. Ms. Picarazzi asked if Coastal Connections is an alternative school? Mr. Susi replied it is a program for students who were not successful in High School and have been sent to that program. These students attend High School and have internships. Students are interviewed before going into this program.

Mr. Harney asked how do you handle disciplinary problems? Mr. Susi replied we are required to have ten hours of tutoring outside of school. Mr. Reas added a great job has been done at the High School turning in-school suspension into something that supports students and returns them back on track with academics. Ms. Hogan felt Coastal Connections is a positive program. She asked if the two students from Old Lyme are in the tuition line item? Mr. Meltabarger replied they are.

Mr. Kelley noted we pay the VNA for five school nurses at a cost of \$564,262. He asked if the VNA pays for their benefits? Mr. Reas replied they pay and supervise. Mr. Meltabarger stated we moved the medically fragile and hired an aide. During the summer we have a Special Education Program. Mr. Meltabarger stated we reviewed this and found this was the best answer for our needs. We are paying an hourly rate.

Mr. Harney asked do you project any surplus being given back? Mr. Reas replied we are tighter this year than last year. We have had a rough winter. Mr. Meltabarger added this is the tightest year we've had in special education. We have had \$97,000 in extra expenses.

Ms. Alberti stated she would like to support this budget in its entirety. She noted data that performance at East Lyme High School was rated at 12 in one article and 524 in another. She felt these numbers need to be raised. Mr. Reas replied every year the Board

of Education sets high expectations; we are constantly trying to improve. Every year we have improved in the state testing assessments. We are required to do teacher evaluations. Ms. Alberti asked Mr. Hagen if there were any performance metrics? Mr. Hagen replied Dr. Lombardo initiated a Five-Year Plan for the district. Coastal Connections brings youngsters back for special education. Last year we were able to have all day kindergarten. We are interested in a Five-Year Plan. Its important to conduct a search for a new superintendent.

Ms. Alberti asked that while searching for a new Superintendent that you request as part of the Strategic Plan that the High School move up to the top 10 rating. Mr. Hagen stated we plan to have a Community Forum in gathering information for a new Superintendent.

E. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Ms. Senges-Murphy, a new member of the Board of Education, felt deliberation on the Board is extremely thorough. Elementary language has been removed. We are working on raising the level of education in East Lyme. The Board realizes finances are tight. Fixed costs have increased. The Superintendent and staff did a good job of trying to decrease the budget. Ms. Senges-Murphy has worked in Connecticut education for 40 years and know people from other areas of Connecticut. East Lyme has done well in state scores. Young families would like to move to East Lyme because of the school system. We do have to be concerned about our retired citizens. However, she asked that the Board of Finance not cut this school budget. She felt the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools has done a good job of paring down this budget.

F. BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Kelley stated the Board of Finance will meet at the Town Hall on March 31 at 6:30 p.m. to begin its deliberations.

G. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Picarazzi moved to adjourn the March 27,
2014 East Lyme Board of Finance Special
Meeting at 8:30 p.m. Seconded by
Ms. Alberti. (6-0) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary