

**EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
BUDGET REVIEWS  
Monday, MARCH 19th, 2012**

Members In Attendance: Raymond Hart, Chairman  
Steve Harney, Secretary  
Richard Bengtson  
Steve Carpenteri  
Steve Kelley

Also In Attendance: Paul Formica, First Selectman  
Anna Johnson, Finance Director  
Donna Bekech, Assessor  
John McCulloch, Tax Collector  
Joe Smith, Chief Building Official  
Renee Fecteau, Human Resources  
Cathy Wilson, Senior Services Director  
Sgt. Wm. Blanchette, Police, Resident Trooper

Absent: Lisa Picarazzi

**A. Call Special Meeting to Order**

Chairman Hart called this Special Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance to order at 6:30 PM. He noted that Ms. Picarazzi could not be present this evening.

**B. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge was observed.

**C. Delegations**

Mr. Hart called for Delegations.

There were none.

**D. New Business**

**a. Budget Reviews – FY 2012 - 2013**

Mr. Hart explained the procedure stating that Mr. Formica and the department head will give the presentation and then the Board will ask any questions that they may have.

◆ **Assessor (102) – Donna Bekech, Assessor**

**\*\*MOTION (1)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Item 102 – Assessor.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica noted that the real difference here is in Service Contracts.

Ms. Bekech said that the increase of \$9500 is for a service contract for web hosting for the property cards. The other increase is for the transportation allowance as the reimbursement per mile has been increased from 50¢ per mile to 55¢ per mile.

Mr. Kelley asked about line 239 – Contracted Operating Services at \$5300. He said that they have not spent much this year and asked why they would need the same amount.

Ms. Bekech said that was because this was a reval year.

**\*\*MOTION (2)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for Item 102 - Assessor.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

◆ **Tax Collector (103) – John McCulloch, Tax Collector**

**\*\*MOTION (3)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Item 103 – Tax Collector.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica said that this budget is similar to last year and that the increase of \$1000 has to do with book binding.

Mr. McCulloch explained that the increase for book binding is due to a two-year contract in which the company has agreed to hold the price if they agree to two years. There is a small increase here but a larger one is expected that they will not incur with this contract.

Mr. Kelley asked how they were doing on tax collections.

Mr. McCulloch said that they are at 97.58% which is a bit behind last year. He said that they would be sending out lien notices this week.

Mr. Hart asked where they were last year at this time.

Mr. McCulloch said that they were at 97.64% last year – so they are a little behind but he expected that they would catch up.

**MOTION (4)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for Item 103 Tax Collector.

Mr. Bengtson seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

◆ **Board of Assessment Appeals (127) – Donna Bekech, Assessor**

**\*\*MOTION (5)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Item 127 – Board of Assessment Appeals.

Mr. Carpenteri seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica said that they are currently going through the hearing process and having discussions on that from the reval so that is where the expense is this year – for the recording secretary. They do not expect to have as many hearings next year.

Mr. Hart asked how many appeals they have had from the reval.

Ms. Bekech said that they have had around 80 which is a fair representation.

**\*\*MOTION (6)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for Item 127 – Board of Assessment Appeals.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

◆ **Building Department (104) – Joseph Smith, Chief Building Official**

**\*\*MOTION (7)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Item 104 – Building Department.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica noted that the increases are mostly contractual and that Mr. Smith is present and they could ask him about the refund line item and revenues.

Mr. Kelley asked about line 212 – Building Official – noting that only 20% has been spent so far this year – he said that he would like to reduce it to \$5000.

Mr. Smith said that he would not want it reduced as while he has not needed as much this year so far, if things change, he would need this assistant more and would need more money in that line and more help if all the things come through as the zoning official has been talking about. He noted that they had also made a provision last year for plan review to be done outside – and while he has not done this so far – if things come through – he would have it done outside – but that would also reduce the revenue to us. He explained that he would choose the company and the applicant would pay the bill (for the plan review). He said that he is holding revenue projections where they have been.

Mr. Hart asked about line 293 – Permit Refunds at \$4000 and if he expected larger or more refunds.

Mr. Smith said no – he added that the refund line only applies to items that were submitted in the previous fiscal year(s) and is not for current items that may be refunded. He added that they only refund 80% of the permit cost, keeping 20% for the administrative work that has been done.

**\*\*MOTION (8)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for Item 104 – Building Department.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

**◆ Human Resources (106) – Renee Fecteau, Human Resources Manager**

**\*\*MOTION (9)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Item 106 – Human Resources.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica explained that this is a work in progress because they are not sure where it will end as they had proposed to reduce this due to the new Field Services Building Manager position as some HR functions would be done for the people in that building by that position. Currently Ms. Fecteau is working three days per week in the new building and two days per week here with people in this building. It was felt that they could do this with the new position as the new time clocks would help with payroll. The position was challenged by the union and that has not been resolved yet. He noted that they have been in conversation with the Towns of Colchester and Montville regarding the potential sharing of an HR Manager for a couple of days per week.

Mr. Hart asked if with the two days here and three days at the garage – Renee is available to people five days a week –

Mr. Formica explained that the position has been a four day per week position and that Renee has always worked the one day at the garage. He added that they also hired an HR Consultant to upgrade the job descriptions, etc.

**\*\*MOTION (10)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for Item 106 – Human Resources.

Mr. Carpenteri seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

**◆ Commission on Aging (418) – Cathy Wilson, Senior Services Director**

**\*\*MOTION (11)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Item 418 – Commission on Aging.

Mr. Carpenteri seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica said that this covers a wide variety of services and that they moved some of the programs out to the Parks & Recreation Special Revenue Fund. Some still need to be subsidized by the Town and the

Administrative Secretary part time position was requested to be increased to full time so that Ms. Wilson could get out into the community more. The reduction in revenues will be offset to it.

Ms. Wilson explained that the items that were withdrawn from the budget are the trips that pay for themselves and make some extra revenue dollars. She said that she has some programs that cannot be moved as of yet as they are now priced at what people can afford and she will have to work on what she can do with them. She said that she has been with the Town for 18 years now and that she is seeing more foot traffic and more programs between the rental rebates, energy assistance, etc. so this seemed to be a good year to do this.

**\*\*MOTION (12)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for Item 418 – Commission on Aging.

Mr. Bengtson seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

**◆ First Selectman (101) – Paul Formica, First Selectman**

**\*\*MOTION (13)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Item 101 – First Selectman.

Mr. Bengtson seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica said that this is substantially similar to last year with the difference being the ad hoc committees due to the Darrow Pond Committee that was just set up. The postage reflects the stamp increase.

Mr. Kelley asked about line item 412 – PT Clerical at \$4000 as they have only used about \$1000.

Mr. Formica said that is used for the vacations of his Executive Assistant and also used for other departments. He said that he does not have someone just sitting in the office for vacation coverage and that he handles a lot of it himself.

Mr. Hart asked about line 292 – Welfare/General Assistance and line 320 – Misc. Supplies as they have spent zero on line 292 and about 20% on line 320.

Mr. Formica said that they have to have the money in the welfare line item as it is used for evictions. With regard to supplies, they are trying to figure out how this will work as the company that they have been using has been bought out by a larger company and they do not know yet what will happen with the prices. They also help out for the ad hoc committee items with this line.

**\*\*MOTION (14)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for Item 101 – First Selectman.

Mr. Bengtson seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

**◆ Finance Department (118) – Anna Johnson, Finance Director**

**\*\*MOTION (15)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Item 118 – Finance Department.

Mr. Bengtson seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica said that this is basically the same except for contractual increases. He noted that longevity was reduced as a long term person moved up to Emergency Management and a new person came in.

**\*\*MOTION (16)**

Mr. Bengtson moved to close the budget review for Item 118 – Finance Department.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

◆ **Health & Welfare (419) – VNA, presented by Mr. Formica**

**\*\*MOTION (17)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Item 419 – Health & Welfare.

Mr. Carpenteri seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica said that this shows a budget reduction of \$2000 and that it is for services provided by the VNA. He noted that we get a lot in services from this organization. This is the amount they requested.

**\*\*MOTION (18)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for Item 419 – Health & Welfare.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

◆ **Police (216) – Sgt. Bill Blanchette, Resident State Trooper**

**\*\*MOTION (19)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Item 216 – Police.

Mr. Carpenteri seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica said that Sgt. Blanchette is present this evening and thanked him for the excellent job that he does noting that the Police Department had not been so well managed prior to his arrival. He explained that they increased the Resident Trooper salary by \$10,000 as they are billed in the arrears and that the Town pays 70% plus other costs.

He said that he suggested increasing the department by one police officer and noted that they had processed 11,000 pieces of evidence from the burglaries up and down the coast. The Board of Selectmen however put off the hiring of a new officer to January. He noted that they had an officer who left and went to Florida and that they have a new officer to replace him and they also have two new police dogs. He said that the department is growing and the needs of it are growing. He said that Sgt. Blanchette has done an excellent management job with personnel and the boat patrol. The larger beach at the Boardwalk (Amtrak Beach) will require more help.

Mr. Kelley asked about line 514 – Overtime – and at what point it becomes better to increase staffing rather than to pay out a quarter of a million dollars in overtime.

Sgt. Blanchette said that they are trying to increase staffing and that they have minimum staffing requirements which mean that line item (514) starts out at \$100,000 in the hole as the officers can work and bank their holidays and then get paid for them at the end of the year.

Mr. Formica noted that there should be a separate line item for the contractual holiday pay versus overtime.

Mr. Hart asked about the patrol boat.

Sgt. Blanchette said that it is a 50/50 Waterford/East Lyme split and that it was purchased with a grant. It has to be in the water 365 days on call 24/7 and can only be out for specific days for maintenance. They will have one East Lyme and one Waterford officer working it and it should be out patrolling more. With the cost of diesel fuel approaching \$5/gallon they will pay the Town Garage out of their budgets for fuel as it will be cheaper when purchased as fleet fuel.

Mr. Hart asked about line 412 – Part Time Clerical at \$3000 and if they anticipated needing this as they have not used much so far this year.

Sgt. Blanchette said that this is for when the Administrative Assistant is on vacation and they need to go to others for coverage.

Mr. Hart asked about coverage and considerations with the upcoming large scale OpSail event and the large amount of people coming into Town. He also asked about the need for another detective.

Sgt. Blanchette said that he has seven (7) Troopers committed to coming in to help during the OpSail/CEL event on a 'mutual aid' agreement. He said that they would also help out New London for the event. He explained that neighboring Towns frequently help each other out for such events. He said that he would love

to get another detective but has to go with the needs of the Town. He would also love to have a Youth Officer but that they also have a great need for another person for traffic issues.

Mr. Hart asked if the new patrol boat is larger than the last one.

Sgt. Blanchette said that it is 27' and substantially larger than the old one. It is aluminum, twin outboard motors and they have a five (5) year maintenance contract on it.

Mr. Hart asked about training and if that was also included.

Sgt. Blanchette said that training is actually included in the grant.

Mr. Kelley asked about line 516 – Longevity/Shift Differential/Stipend and said that they had spent a little over \$7000 last year and that so far this year they have spent around \$5000. He asked if they would need the \$23,000 and what it is used for.

Sgt. Blanchette said that he would defer to Ms. Johnson -

Ms. Johnson said that line item covers officers when they work other shifts as they get a shift differential of 15¢/hour. It also covers longevity payouts – of \$100 per year on five years of service up to 10 years of service and \$250 per year from 10 years of service and on.

Mr. Hart and Mr. Kelley asked Ms. Johnson if she could project out to the end of the year to see if they will actually need \$23,000.

**\*\*MOTION (20)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for Item 216 – Police.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

**◆ Debt Service Interest & Principal (522 & 523) – Paul Formica, First Selectman**

**\*\*MOTION (21)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Items 522 & 523 – Debt Service Interest & Principal.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica noted that they have refunded the debt four times over the years and have saved over \$2M in interest by doing so.

**\*\*MOTION (22)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for Items 522 & 523 – Debt Service Interest & Principal.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

**◆ Long Range Capital Plan 724 – Paul Formica, First Selectman**

**\*\*MOTION (23)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for the Long Range Capital Plan - 724.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Formica explained the 5-year capital improvement plan stating that it is exactly what it says and that it is a flexible plan. The Capital Improvement Committee is made up of himself, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Giannattasio, Mr. Lombardo and a representative from the Board of Finance who is currently Mr. Harney. They meet five to six times per year. Page 6 of the 6 page plan shows how they propose to pay for the capital items – the items are color coded in reference to how they are expected to be funded. The only items that they have control over are the Town \$766,602 and the Board of Ed \$139,497.

Mr. Kelley asked if the \$6000 for the folding doors at the Community Center is still needed as he said that he thought that they have been fixed. He also asked if Town-wide roofing could be moved out a year or two.

Mr. Formica said possibly.

Mr. Harney noted that it has been put off already.

Mr. Kelley asked if the soffit repair could also be put out a bit or if it has caused damage already as they are talking \$19,200 in a year when the economy is not very good for a lot of people.

Mr. Kelley also asked about the Playscape replacement as it is listed as a low priority item. Mr. Formica said that they could get that information from Mr. Putnam when he presents his budget. He added that the Town park areas and equipment are seeing a much greater use.

Mr. Kelley asked about the Board of Ed district-wide parking as they are adding 150 new parking spaces with the new athletic complex.

Mr. Formica said that is a good question for the Board of Ed when they come to do their presentation next week.

**\*\*MOTION (24)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for the Long Range Capital Plan - 724.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

**E. Public Discussion**

Mr. Hart called for any comments from the Public.

There were none.

**F. Board Comments**

Mr. Hart asked if the Board members had any comments.

There were none.

**G. Adjournment**

**\*\*MOTION (25)**

Mr. Bengtson moved to adjourn this Special Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance at 8:35 PM.

Mr. Harney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,  
Recording Secretary