

**EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
BUDGET REVIEWS
Wednesday, MARCH 28th, 2012**

Board of Finance Raymond Hart, Chairman
Members In Attendance: Steve Harney, Secretary
 Richard Bengtson
 Steve Carpenteri
 Steve Kelley
 Lisa Picarazzi

Board of Selectmen Paul Formica, First Selectman, Holly Cheeseman,
Members In Attendance: Kevin Seery, Robert Wilson

Also In Attendance: Paul Formica, First Selectman, Ex-Officio
 Anna Johnson, Finance Director
 Dr. James Lombardo, Superintendent of Schools
 Don Meltabarger, School Business Manager
 Tim Hagen, Chairman, Board of Education
 Brian Reas, Asst. Superintendent for SPED

Absent: No One

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.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was observed.

C. Delegations

Mr. Hart called for Delegations.
There were no delegations.

D. New Business

a. Budget Reviews – FY 2012 - 2013

◆ Board of Education (999) – Dr. James Lombardo, Superintendent of Schools

****MOTION (1)**

Mr. Kelley moved to open the budget review for Item 999 – Board of Education.
Mr. Carpenteri seconded the motion.
Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Hart welcomed the superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education.

Tim Hagen, Chairman of the Board of Education thanked the Board and Dr. Lombardo for their hard work on the budget. He said that they faced many challenges this year and worked on many new programs. The school system in East Lyme is a valuable one and it is this way due to the great staff and para-professionals that they have. He said that Dr. Lombardo would present the budget through a Power Point presentation.

Dr. James Lombardo, Superintendent of Schools said that he had brought a number of the professionals in the various areas with him this evening so that they could answer any questions that the Board might have. He identified them and continued that this year as last year, they face challenges. He reviewed the PowerPoint presentation (attached to Minutes) with them noting the four 2012-2013 budget priorities:

- **Ensure that the students and staff work and learn in a safe and healthy school environment** by addressing code compliance issues of lighting, air quality and supporting safe schools plans.
- **Ensure that the students are engaged and challenged to achieve a personal vision of success** by maintaining resource support for instructional programs; implementing the second year of a hardware and software replacement schedule, maintaining resource support for the Coastal Connections program; implementing program revisions to improve the efficiency of the special education program; maintaining network and information technology enhancements to ELPS communications and providing resources to implement "Student Success Plans".

Dr. Lombardo noted that the Coastal Connections program has 16 people in it now and there are many who want to join.

- **Ensure that students are supported by Best Leadership Practices** by ensuring professional development resources to address the differentiated learning needs of the teachers, administrators and staff.
- **Ensure that each child is supported by caring adults** by providing professional development for all concerned with the implementation of 'Scientifically Research Based Intervention (SRBI) and Individualized Education Plans (IEP's); maintaining reasonable class sizes that reflect the current research on class size and continuing the services of a school social worker and PT special education teacher at Flanders/Haynes.

Dr. Lombardo said that the full time social worker has been well received and absorbed into the system. He explained that the FY2013 budget includes average salary adjustments of **1.25%** for administrators, **2.99%** for teachers and an estimated **3.0%** for other employee groups still in negotiations. The budget includes a reduction of 3.0 FTE teaching positions (people retiring) to reflect reduced enrollment (115 less students) projections.

The salary and benefit changes represent **82%** or **2.4%** of the **2.8%** budget increase.

He reviewed the major increases to the budget noting that Salaries had a **3.7%** increase; Custodian OT/PT a **25.4%** increase (due to a large amount of snow storms and Storm Irene); Substitutes a **16.4%** increase; Repair/Maintenance (network switches) a **26%** increase; Professional/Tech services (includes contracted services/purchases and the Social Worker; EMCOR Contract for HVAC; Computer Services Contract - Business Network and the Sonitrol Contract for fire); Supplemental Salaries a **27.1%** increase (due to an error in budgeting two years ago); and Unemployment compensation a **100%** increase as the costs have doubled. He noted that 70% of the staff has less than 10 years of time in and that they have had well over 22 maternity leaves this past year which has escalated the use of substitutes to fill in who are paid at the rate of \$150/day.

Mr. Kelley asked about line 330 on page 2-4 – Prof/Tech Service showing a \$260,243 increase. He heard that \$40,000 of that was for the Social Worker but there was \$210,000 more.

Dr. Lombardo said that the EMCOR contract was \$66,000, IT \$70,000 and Sonitrol \$15,000 and that the \$260,000 includes all of the new items in that line item.

Mr. Kelley also asked if they could make up a \$140,000 shortfall in a different year.

Dr. Lombardo said that if they overspend in one area that they have to under spend in some other area in the same year. It cannot be carried to another year.

Mr. Harney asked if the number of SPED students has declined.

Dr. Lombardo said that the SPED population has declined the same 5% as the regular population.

Mr. Kelley asked about line 615 on page 2-7 – Grounds Supplies and if it reflects the projected savings of the new turf field.

Mr. Meltabarger said that the savings would be about \$10,000.

Mr. Kelley said that they are only decreasing that line by \$6000 and asked about the supplies.

Mr. Meltabarger said that the Tru-Green contract reflected a reduction of \$10,000 however they have the repair of the lawnmowers and the Town backhoe which they borrow and field supplies had a \$2000 increase.

Mr. Kelley asked about the Substitutes line items 120 and 121 on page 2-2 where they showed a reduction one year by \$56,000 and in the next year they went up by the same \$56,000 in the paraprofessionals. He asked what accounts for that cycle.

Dr. Lombardo said that they spent about \$16,000 for 'paras' and that halfway through FY10/11 they put a freeze on them. He said that this year they will be over spent as they have a lot of long term leave people (27). He added that it is not an area where he can say that they do not hire a sub. They are trying to make do where they can.

Mr. Kelley asked about line 130 – Overtime on the same page and if people who request use of the school facilities pay a fee to use them.

Dr. Lombardo said that if they are not East Lyme groups etc. that they are charged a fee.

Mr. Kelley asked about Section 3 the number of classes and size at Haynes & Niantic. He said that it looked like they were adding classes with a projected enrollment decrease of 115 students.

Dr. Lombardo said that they try to move the numbers downward with regard to class size and that overall there will be three (3) fewer classes overall.

Mr. Kelley said that the budget to run the schools is about \$26M and that the rest is for 'district wide' which is one third of the overall budget however the upcoming years' increase in that line item is about 58%.

Mr. Meltabarger said that page 1-4 better explains where those dollars are – health insurance is included in the district wide area and not spread out.

Mr. Hart asked if they anticipated an increase in Health Insurance for this year.

Dr. Lombardo said no, they have kept it flat.

Mr. Kelley asked about the CIP for the Board of Ed and specifically the \$50,000 for district wide parking. He asked if they would need that as they will have an increase of 150 parking spaces with the new athletic complex.

Dr. Lombardo said that they may not need it however; they would not have known that as the athletic complex was not approved when they did this budget.

Mr. Meltabarger said that it is an arbitrary number that should not go away as there are other areas that need work to the parking areas.

Mr. Harney said that they have been good about supplying monthly reports however the current budget does not show any surplus – he asked if they anticipated having any by the end of the fiscal year.

Dr. Lombardo said yes and added that he had just recently released the freeze on the purchase of supplies. He said that he hopes for savings in Health or other areas although he does not have any numbers at this time.

Mr. Harney said that he realizes that SPED is a moving target – but asked if the changeover has had any effect to this program.

Mr. Reas said that he does not expect that it would and that they will do as they have been doing it.

Mr. Harney asked about the last installment of the Federal job program and the three positions that were covered by that program and if they would be continuing them.

Dr. Lombardo said that there is funding for them as regular positions now so they had to backfill the budget.

Ms. Picarazzi asked about the 2.87% increase in the overall budget and said that she had come up with a 2.78% increase and asked that they check the numbers.

Dr. Lombardo said that the numbers are correct however the percentage may be off.

Mr. Carpenteri asked about line 431 on page 2-5 – Preventive Maintenance.

Dr. Lombardo said that was for the network switches.

Mr. Carpenteri asked if line 432 – Code Compliance covers the asbestos abatement.
Dr. Lombardo said yes and added that it is also for the air testing.

Ms. Picarazzi asked about the maintenance on the turf fields and recalled that it was discussed extensively at the informational sessions on the athletic complex project that there would be savings – she said that she would like to see those savings broken out by labor and supplies.
Dr. Lombardo agreed and said that he would get that for them as well as the information on any surplus.

Mr. Harney asked Mr. Hagen about the status of advertising at the sports events as that was stressed at the athletic complex sessions.
Mr. Hagen said that it is on the BOE meeting agenda for mid April.

Mr. Hart asked if they had a five year plan to upgrade the switches.
Dr. Lombardo said no.

Mr. Hart asked about line 74 – Telephone on page 1-3d – saying that he thought that the anticipated savings were supposed to be larger.
Dr. Lombardo said that they did not see as much in savings there as expected and that there are repairs to the system of items that have to be replaced as they wear out so there is that associated cost.

Mr. Hart asked how much enrollment could drop before they think about closing a school.
Dr. Lombardo said that they have a feasibility study committee and the three elementary schools have heavy repair costs coming very soon. The committee is looking at the possibility of closing one of the schools and is mapping out the plans and costs and State aid etc. The plan is to present a recommendation or potential plan in October of this year to the Board of Ed on which way to go.

Mr. Hart asked if Dr. Lombardo saw any revenues coming in to offset the loss of the education job fund, etc.
Dr. Lombardo said that he does not see anything coming within the next couple of years and certainly nothing until after the upcoming election.

Mr. Hart asked about the ECS funding.
Dr. Lombardo said that it was increased by \$20,000 as it stands now.
Mr. Formica said that the funding from Committee is \$7.1M now and the additional \$20,000 – but that could be adjusted.

Mr. Harney asked if any other districts are doing other programs like our Coastal Connections – and if so – could they send some of the students from here to them.
Dr. Lombardo said no.

Mr. Hart asked if they could prioritize the CIP items.
Mr. Meltabarger passed out a listing of the projects.
Dr. Lombardo said that the listing totals \$94,901 and shows a decrease of \$68,000.

Mr. Hart thanked Dr. Lombardo, his staff and the Board of Ed on the work that they did bringing forth this budget.

****MOTION (2)**

Mr. Kelley moved to close the budget review for Item 999 – Board of Education.
Mr. Harney seconded the motion.
Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

E. Public Discussion

Mr. Hart called for any comments from the Public.

Karen Rak, 27 Black Point Road said that she has come to these meetings for many years and that she keeps hearing about all of these savings - \$451,000 savings in SPED; savings year after year – on solar panels, new telephone systems, SPED Coastal Connections programs, new boilers etc. – but – we never

see these savings. She said that she thinks that it is time for the taxpayers to see some of these savings come back to them. She thanked the Board of Finance members for their questions and service. She also asked about the stated cost per pupil versus what the actual cost per pupil is and would like to know overall what it really costs. She asked that they provide that information.

F. Board Comments

There were none.

G. Adjournment

****MOTION (3)**

Mr. Kelley moved to adjourn this Special Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance at 8:45 PM.

Mr. Bengtson seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,
Recording Secretary