

**EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
BUDGET REVIEWS – FY 2017-2018  
Monday, MARCH 27th, 2017**

Members In Attendance: Camille Alberti, Chairperson  
Lisa Picarazzi, Vice-Chairperson  
Beth Hogan  
Peter DeRosa  
William Weber

FILED

Apr 3 2017 AT 10:00 AM PM  
Karen Galbo, CTZ  
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also In Attendance: Mark Nickerson, First Selectman  
Anna Johnson, Finance Director  
Gary Goeschel, Town Planner, Wetland Agent  
Matthew Walker, Zoning Commission Chairman  
William Mulholland, Zoning Official  
Jen Muggeo, Finance Administrative, LLHD  
Steve Wargo, Niantic Fire Chief  
Jim Levandoski, Flanders Fire Chief  
William Rix, Flanders Deputy Fire Chief  
Dick Morris, Fire Marshal

Absent: Jason Pazzaglia

**A. Call Special Meeting to Order**

Chairperson Alberti called this Special Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance to order at 6:32 PM.

**B. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge was observed.

**C. Delegations**

Ms. Alberti called for Delegations noting that only agenda items could be discussed during delegations. Other items could be stated during Public Discussion at the end of the meeting.

**D. New Business**

**a. Budget Reviews – FY 2017 - 2018**

◆ **Planning Department & Commission (117) – Gary Goeschel, Town Planner & Wetland Agent**

Mr. Nickerson said that this is a pretty straight forward budget; there is a \$50 increase in the conference line item. He noted that Mr. Goeschel is present this evening.

Ms. Alberti asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Hogan asked about the revenue figure of \$5,790 and then the net budget figure on the bottom of the first page.

Mr. Nickerson said that he asked that it be added and that while it does not make much of a difference with the smaller budgets – when you get into the larger ones such as Parks & Recreation – it does make a big difference.

Ms. Johnson added that it gives them more information while looking at the budgets and that it is easier to see on the bottom of the page.

Ms. Picarazzi asked what the revenue is coming from.

Mr. Goeschel said it comes from land use applications and GIS maps although there has been a reduction in revenue from the maps as they are available on-line.

Mr. Weber asked about the maintenance line going up a few times.

Mr. Goeschel said that it is due to software upgrades and the GIS maintenance.  
Mr. Weber noted that it seems a bit high.

Ms. Alberti asked about longevity – not just for this department – but in general as it seems to have been re-implemented by the Board of Selectmen. She asked why, how and what the frequency is.

Mr. Nickerson said that he had added it back in; that it is given yearly and that they started taking from the insurance so that it balances. The department heads now have to contribute and pay some of their health insurance.

◆ **Inland Wetlands Agency (132) – Gary Goeschel, Town Planner & Wetland Agent**

Ms. Hogan said that the revenue figure was also in this budget.

Ms. Alberti said that she finds it very helpful as general information for them.

Mr. Weber asked about the \$3000 for consultants and if they spent that last year.

Mr. Goeschel said that it is just a place holder – pass-through of the money for a consultant if necessary. The applicant would have to pay for it if it is found necessary to have a consultant.

◆ **Zoning Commission (116) – Matthew Walker, Zoning Commission Chairman, William Mulholland, Zoning Official**

Mr. Walker, Chairman of the Zoning Commission noted that the budget is lean and efficient. He added that they are also the Aquifer Protection Agency for the Town and that the Zoning Official is also the Blight Officer. He said that he wanted to thank the staff for all that they do for the Commission to enable them to conduct their business. He said that Mr. Mulholland would review the budget items.

Mr. Mulholland said reviewed the line items and noted the recent addition of longevity. Additionally they have realized around \$29,000 in revenues so far this year and it may go a bit higher. A few years ago they realized \$40,000 in revenues however; that goes along with the projects that take place within the Town. The Blight enforcement has added some time to the workload with the true effect yet to be realized as they have sought to work through the provisions in the zoning regulations for enforcement before turning it over to the legal process which would not only accelerate the costs but also the time factor.

Ms. Picarazzi asked what percentage of time he felt was added for Blight enforcement – 5%, 10%?

Mr. Mulholland said about 10%.

Mr. Nickerson noted that they have not brought a case to full circle yet but if one does go that way – it could take a year or so for that including court time and costs. He said that he hopes that they can get resolution as they have been able to do so far.

◆ **Ledge Light Health District (108) – Jennifer Muggeo, Finance Administration, LLHD**

Ms. Muggeo said that they had a 1% increase to the rate. The districts per capita rate is \$7.37 - a .14¢ increase or 1%. The East Lyme population as reported by the DPH is 19,343 – up from 19,040 which accounts for the overall increase.

◆ **Smith Harris House Commission (134) – presented by Mr. Nickerson, First Selectman**

Mr. Nickerson noted that they had reduced the budget to bring it down to where it was. He said that he was dismayed to find that they pay their Tour Guides as he had thought that they were volunteers. This is a Museum of the Town and the Curator does a great job.

Ms. Hogan said that she also had thought that the Tour Guides were volunteers; she added that perhaps it had changed as they may once have been volunteers.

Ms. Alberti asked on an operational note – why they don't pull all of the historic properties together.

Mr. Nickerson said that the Smith Harris House does not come under the Historic Properties designation.

Ms. Hogan explained that the Historic Properties Commission was created in order to be able to get money from the State.

◆ **Niantic Fire Department (217) – Steve Wargo, Niantic Fire Chief**

Niantic Fire Chief Wargo said that his budget was relatively flat. Radio Maintenance – line 221 has seen a 100% increase due to the need to replace 10 failing radio batteries that have gone beyond their life

expectancy. The batteries are around \$80 each. He also noted that they have two buildings in two sections of Niantic.

Ms. Picarazzi asked if they had any idea if the fire study would help them here.

Mr. Nickerson said that it would not help them with this year and that it is not ready yet for public distribution.

Ms. Picarazzi said that she is disappointed that it cannot be used as a tool now for this upcoming budget year.

Mr. Nickerson said that they are going through it now and that it should be available in the near future.

Mr. DeRosa asked about the Firefighters 2% increase for Niantic and 0% for Flanders Firefighters.

Ms. Johnson said that they are at the end of their contract so they will have to come back once a new one is decided. She said that she would remove the 2% increase in Niantic as that has yet to be negotiated.

Mr. Weber said that it looks like the budgets are really thin.

◆ **Flanders Fire Department (218) – Jim Levandoski, Flanders Fire Chief; William Rix, Flanders Deputy Fire Chief**

Flanders Chief Levandoski said that he will be done as the Chief in October and as such he felt that he should not create someone else's budget – so, Deputy Fire Chief Rix has created it as it is anticipated that he will be the Fire Chief then.

Ms. Alberti asked about line item #614 – Overtime at \$60,100 – a 32% increase.

Deputy Fire chief Rix explained that the base is around \$50,000 as they have to include holidays and training and the \$60,000 is a more realistic figure when you consider the raises that have not yet been determined or realized. This also includes late runs and storms, etc.

Ms. Picarazzi asked Ms. Johnson if it would be better not to factor in the extra beyond the \$49,000 now and to put it in later if it is needed.

Ms. Johnson said that this is one of the accounts that are always in trouble and that it would be on the watch list anyways.

Ms. Picarazzi said that her thought is that she would rather have them come back later on for a transfer.

Mr. DeRosa agreed and said that he likes the accountability of that process.

Ms. Picarazzi asked what Mr. Nickerson thought.

Mr. Nickerson said that they could put it at \$52,000; he cautioned that they would have to remember that people may come back for additional funds and that the rest could be put in Contingency.

Chief Levandoski said that while he understands the argument; that he believes that they are asking for what they truly need and not padding the budget.

Deputy Chief Rix said that he would like the \$500 back for the uniform allowance that the Board of Selectmen cut.

Ms. Alberti said that they would note it for their future discussion. She also said that with how the State is that they are looking to be equitable to all residents in Town. She asked if they had thought of fund-raising.

Deputy Chief Rix said that they have done it in the past for specific items.

◆ **Emergency Management (224) – Dick Morris, Fire Marshal**

Mr. Nickerson said that the Dispatchers have been pulled from this budget and that they are under the Police now. This budget is Emergency Management and Fire Marshal and it is down by 28% - reductions were made to staff and hours.

Dick Morris, Fire Marshal said that there is a decrease as the Dispatchers are now under the Police Department.

Ms. Picarazzi noted that they are looking for an increase of 5.7% after all of the adjustments.

Mr. Weber said that the overall department increase is 2.3%.

Ms. Picarazzi asked about the increase in line 213 – Part time Fire Marshals.

Mr. Morris said that it is due to more inspections that they have to do. They have a lot of new apartments and apartment buildings that they inspect.

Mr. Weber asked if it comes back as revenue.

Mr. Morris said no – some Towns do charge but we do not. He added that he also does not advocate for charging as they seek to facilitate compliance. He noted that revenues come from Nuclear Safety and some blasting permits. The Nuclear Safety Grant also covers some of his salary for being on-call for Millstone, etc.

Discussion ensued regarding the percentages on the sheets that had been provided and Ms. Johnson said that she would get the updated sheets to them at their next meeting.

◆ **General Govt. & Misc. Benefits (114) – presented by Mark Nickerson & Anna Johnson**

Ms. Johnson explained that for Workers Compensation that they were in a three year lock in rate and that it was extended for two more years. They also were scheduled for a 20% increase in WC and a 10% increase in Liability however they asked to be re-evaluated and after that was done it was reduced to a 10% increase in Workers Comp and a 3% increase in Liability. She said that they are also looking for bids from other providers to see if they can do better on them.

Mr. Nickerson said that it is more than likely that WC will be a steady rate. He said that CIRMA is through CCM.

Ms. Johnson noted that retirement is an issue as they have an aging workforce. She suggested that if they do not actually use the amount that is put in that they carry it over as they know that people will retire and they will need it for that. The latest people to retire received 25% of what they were due when they left; 50% will be paid out on 7/1/2017 and the final 25% on 7/1/2018. This year they are planning on a firefighter and two police retiring.

Ms. Alberti said – to be clear – that the unfunded liability is the unused sick and other days that people would have to be paid when retiring. She noted that they were going to try to bring down the number of carryover days that people could have.

Ms. Johnson said that the big numbers are with the public safety people.

Ms. Alberti asked if the pension factor was because they have not achieved an adequate amount of return on investments for it or was it due to other factors.

Ms. Johnson said that it is amortized out over five years and that there are several factors involved.

Mr. Weber asked about legal fees – he noted that 2017 figures are not actuals.

Ms. Johnson said that she is involved in that now and that she tracks it for 10 years. Also, in June they are catching up on the last three months of the fiscal year to close out the year.

Mr. Nickerson noted that there is a health increase of 11.9%.

Ms. Johnson said that the health insurance went from \$1.5M to \$1.7M.

Mr. Nickerson said that the actual increase percentage will come later in the season.

◆ **Contingency (120) – presented by Mark Nickerson & Anna Johnson**

Mr. Nickerson explained that they have the money in this account (Personnel Services 100 – line 500) for the contracts. This line item includes: the large bargaining unit that is going to arbitration; non-union increases, and the police and fire contracts. The other contingency (Operating 300 - line 500) is for unexpected department needs throughout the year.

◆ **Capital (724) – Mark Nickerson & Anna Johnson**

Mr. Nickerson said that this is where the bulk of the cuts made by the Board of Selectmen came from.

Ms. Alberti asked about Line #463 – Police Cruisers and what that includes and if the Chief's vehicle is in that line item.

Ms. Johnson said that the Chief's vehicle was being funded through prior year commitments.

Ms. Hogan said that she is looking at a considerable amount of cuts that would have to be made.

◆ **CNRE – presented by Mark Nickerson & Anna Johnson**

Ms. Johnson explained the sheet that held the leftover balances in the CNRE accounts. She said that action should come before the Board to move the funds left to possible future purchases.

Mr. Weber noted that for years maintenance items have been kicked down the road and that he is not sure how much longer they can keep doing that.

It was agreed to discuss this in more detail at a future meeting later this week.

**E. Public Discussion**

Ms. Alberti called for any comments from the Public.  
There were none.

**F. Board Comments**

Ms. Alberti called for Board Comments.

Ms. Picarazzi said that they have a very tough task ahead of them.

Mr. Weber said that he thinks that having the four nights together is very tough and that having time in-between the meetings is essential.

Ms. Alberti said that she appreciates the effort that goes into putting these budgets together. She added that she has followed other Towns and that she does not think that we have handled our process in the same way as they have – this is a joint effort and everyone is going to have to make concessions as she does not want to have to come back to the taxpayers later on.

**G. Adjournment**

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

Ms. Picarazzi moved to adjourn this Special Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance at 9:20 PM.

Mr. DeRosa seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,  
Recording Secretary