

**EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, MARCH 8th, 2017**

Members in Attendance: Camille Alberti, Chairperson
Lisa Picarazzi, Vice Chairperson
Peter DeRosa
Beth Hogan
Jason Pazzaglia
William Weber

FILED

Mar 13 2017 AT 10:00 AM/PM
Camille Alberti, Clerk
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also In Attendance: Mark Nickerson, First Selectman
Anna Johnson, Finance Director
Attorney Nicholas Grello, Town Labor Attorney
Sgt. Mike Macek, East Lyme Police
Bill Scheer, Asst. Director - Public Works

Absent: No One

A. Call Meeting to Order

Chairperson Alberti called this Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance to order at 7:02 PM.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was observed.

C. Delegations

Ms. Alberti called for delegations.
There were no delegations.

Ms. Alberti asked that they address the Executive Session at this time so that the Attorney would not have to wait until later on in the meeting.
The consensus of the Board was to address it as the next item.

Executive Session

o **Enter into Executive Session – Re: Contract Negotiations**

****MOTION (1)**

Ms. Hogan moved to enter into Executive Session at 7:03 PM for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations inviting Mark Nickerson, Attorney Nick Grello and Anna Johnson to join them.

Ms. Picarazzi seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

****MOTION (2)**

Ms. Hogan moved to return to Regular Session at 7:55 PM with no action taken in Executive Session.

Ms. Picarazzi seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

D. Approval of Minutes

▪ **Regular Meeting – January 11, 2017**

Ms. Alberti called for a motion for approval or any changes to the Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes of January 11, 2017.

Ms. Alberti asked that on Page 3 in Motion (3) that Abstained be changed to Against to reflect that she voted against the item.

****MOTION (3)**

Ms. Hogan moved to approve the Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes of January 11, 2017 as amended.

Ms. Picarazzi seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 1. Motion passed.

Abstained: Mr. Weber

E. Reports

◆ **Board of Education**

There was no report.

◆ **First Selectman**

Mr. Nickerson reported that they had received 19 applicants for the Police Chief position and that they have scheduled interviews.

Ms. Hogan asked when the State Trooper contract ends.

Mr. Nickerson said that it is on a month to month basis.

Mr. Nickerson also said that the Referendum for the school project is next week Tuesday – March 14, 2017. He noted that he has seen fliers being circulated with misinformation stating that it would not cause any increase in taxes and that he wanted it known that is not a true statement – the debt service for this project would equate to about a 1 mil increase.

He continued that he has attended COST and COG meetings; the Governor's budget is being re-crafted and this is a very rough year with a monumental task ahead. He has met with the Ambulance Association regarding what they give back on a regular basis. Also, there is more to be done on the fire study to bring the report to a finished project.

Mr. Weber asked if the fire study would cost more as it has gone on for so long.

Mr. Nickerson said no.

Ms. Alberti said that some six months ago they appropriated a Brownfield Grant for the downtown property that was going to be torn down – she asked what the status is on that.

Mr. Nickerson said that they have protocols to go through and that he anticipated that it would be down and grassed for Memorial Day.

◆ **Finance Director**

Ms. Johnson said that they had received the reports in their packets. She noted the larger expenditures and revenues.

Mr. Weber asked if any of the proposed student growth was coming from Salem.

Ms. Johnson said that she did not know although the projections for next year from Salem are less.

Ms. Picarazzi asked how to budget for the upcoming year on items that are significantly under or over budget projections now.

Ms. Johnson explained that for the major items such as legal fees that she keeps spreadsheets that go over years to see how it goes.

Ms. Picarazzi asked about the Public Works overtime being over.

Ms. Johnson recalled to them that it was based on a change at the Transfer Station that did not happen however; Mr. Bragaw has said that he would cover it within his budget.

Mr. DeRosa asked about the Resident Trooper and how that it paid.

Mr. Nickerson said that they send a check to the State for that and that it is paid in the arrears so they will owe on it next year.

Ms. Alberti asked Ms. Johnson if she was still figuring on a \$465,000 short fall in revenues. Ms. Johnson said that there was another shift and that figure is now \$475,000. She also noted that she had provided them with the number of employees that they have in the departments as well as a Chart of Accounts snap shot in time as has been requested.

F. New Business

a. Authorize Expenditure \$6000 from Contingency for VOIP Phone System

Mr. Nickerson noted that Mr. Scheer was present to explain this.

Mr. Scheer explained that this would be using the Nutmeg Network internet connection to do away with local phone and voicemail system equipment (which is more than 20 years old) and move to a cloud based voicemail system. This system will allow for call forwarding to cell phones and other features of a new phone system. They interviewed VOIP providers and decided on Frontier based on price, proposal and continuity of service as they are our existing phone carrier. The phone purchase option is preferred and the Town Hall portion of the Frontier bill will decrease from \$1150 to \$900 monthly.

Ms. Alberti called for a motion.

****MOTION (4)**

Ms. Picarazzi moved to approve an expenditure of \$6000 from account 01-01-120-200-300 (Contingency) for the purchase of VOIP phones, POE (power over Ethernet) switches and wires to upgrade the town Hall phone system to a Frontier VOIP system.

Mr. Weber seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

b. Special Appropriation up to \$36,586.48 – Reallocate 2015/2016 Vehicle Acquisition for Police Chief Vehicle

Mr. Nickerson said that they have found a way to pay for the new Police Chief's car outside of the budget. He noted that Sgt. Macek is available to speak to this and to answer questions.

Ms. Johnson explained that this would close out the FY 15/16 Vehicle Acquisition Program (they were able to get the cars at a lower rate than originally estimated) as the remaining funds exceed 4% of the remainder so they are not allowed to put it on the balance.

Sgt. Macek said that they are looking at a stripped down version SUV and that it does not require all of the other bells and whistles.

Ms. Picarazzi asked why they would buy it now before they have a Chief.

Mr. Nickerson said that they would have one in around 30 days and as this goes through the process it will be June or July before they get it.

Ms. Picarazzi asked if it has to be brand new.

Mr. Nickerson said that he had suggested a used vehicle originally but that was met with some opposition. He noted that it would last many years as it would not see the mileage that the regular cars do and would not need to be replaced as quickly.

Ms. Picarazzi said that she just wondered if they really need to get a brand new vehicle and if one a few years old would suffice.

Sgt. Macek said that they were pricing out vehicles two to three years old and looking at police cars vs. civilian cars and the civilian cars break down a lot more. They have different packages than the police vehicles. That said – they want a working Police Chief who needs a reliable vehicle.

Mr. DeRosa said that with a better vehicle they would not be back every few years looking for a new car for the Chief.

Ms. Alberti said that she thinks that they need some sort of fixed asset log.
Mr. Nickerson said that they have one and that they have brought it before them in the past and that he would have Mr. Bragaw bring it at budget time.

Mr. Pazzaglia asked if they are still looking for a vehicle.
Sgt. Macek said that they are looking with MHQ and that they do not expect to use the full amount.

Ms. Alberti called for a motion.

****MOTION (5)**

Mr. Weber moved to approve a special appropriation in the amount of up to \$36,586.48 from the remaining balance of the 2015/16 Vehicle Acquisition Program to purchase a vehicle for the Police.

Mr. DeRosa seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

(Note: This item requires Town Meeting Approval.)

c. Review 2017/2018 Proposed Budget

Mr. Nickerson noted that they have received their budget books this evening and said that he had provided them with an overview letter in the front of the book that they could read. The overall budget increase is 2.98%. He said that they have to balance services and affordability. A lot of cuts are coming out of the education budget – such as ECS where we have received \$7M and have benefitted from this and they are proposing to lower that to \$2M in funding. They are also asking the Towns' to pay one-third of the pension costs which is approximately \$2.4M. He said that he has put the department heads on notice that people and hours may need to be cut and that this could happen in June and July with the protracted budget debacle.

G. Old Business

a. Purchasing Policy

Mr. Nickerson reported that this Subcommittee has met earlier this evening and is moving along.

b. BOE Permanent Maintenance Account

Mr. Pazzaglia said that he did not have an update at this time.

c. Study other Town Wages & Benefits

Ms. Picarazzi said that it was an informative discussion they had earlier.

Ms. Alberti said that this information that they are looking for relates to non-union people.

Ms. Picarazzi asked if they could get information from other Towns.

Ms. Johnson said that she was looking into Waterford, Ledyard and Stonington as they are similar in size to East Lyme.

H. Public Discussion

Ms. Alberti called for Public Discussion.

There was no Public Discussion.

I. Board Comments

Ms. Alberti called for Board comments.

Mr. Weber asked Ms. Johnson if she would email him the spreadsheet of the budgets so that he could compare and merge them during the process.

Ms. Johnson said that she would.

Mr. Pazzaglia said that he would like to see options when someone comes before them with items such as vehicles.

Ms. Johnson explained that Mr. Bragaw and Sgt. Macek have been working on specs for the vehicle that they would be looking for. Additionally, the reason why the dollars are available is because of how well they are doing with the vehicle acquisition program.

Ms. Alberti said to Mr. Pazzaglia that if he feels strongly about this then that is the way he should vote on the item when it comes before them.

Ms. Alberti said that they have two weeks to review the budget book.

Ms. Hogan asked if they want to cut each budget or just give Mr. Nickerson a number to work with.

Ms. Alberti said that if somebody feels strongly about some department then they should make a motion and see what happens. She added that Mr. Nickerson is the CEO of the Town and that he has the ultimate decision of where the cuts will come from.

Mr. Nickerson said that he appreciates that respect and said that he would like to know where they think that cuts should be made – although he may not agree with them it gives an idea of what they are seeing.

Mr. Weber said that he agrees with giving Mr. Nickerson ideas on what they think that they do not need and a number that they want to see as a reduction.

Mr. Nickerson said that he would agree with that and the he would make the determination between services and where to cut.

J. Adjournment

Ms. Alberti called for a motion to adjourn.

****MOTION (6)**

Mr. Picarazzi moved to adjourn this Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance at 9:09 PM.

Mr. Weber seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,
Recording Secretary