

Mar 6 2017 AT 12:40 AM (PM)

EAST LYME BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

SPECIAL MEETING OF MARCH 1, 2017

## MINUTES

PRESENT: Mark Nickerson, Kevin Seery, Marc Salerno, Paul Dagle, Dan Cunningham and Rose Ann Hardy

ALSO PRESENT: Anna Johnson, Director of Finance

Mr. Nickerson called the Special Meeting for the purpose of Budget Reviews to order at 5:02 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He noted that a Town Meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., so if this budget meeting is not finished by 7 p.m., we will recess and pick up the discussion during the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen which will begin immediately following the close of the Town Meeting.

#### Parks & Recreation - #421

Mr. David Putnam, Director, was present to speak on the budget and distributed Department's Annual Report and Events publication. Line item #412 PT Seasonal Labor went up only due to the minimum wage increase from \$9.65 per hour to \$10.10 per hour. No increase in the other salary accounts due to ongoing union contract negotiations. New line item for Beach Security has been added after consideration of public feedback. It is being recommended that a dedicated officer be assigned to the Parks & Recreation Department for weekends, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Celebrate East Lyme, Friday night concerts at the new band shell at McCook's Park. It is estimated that this officer would work a 7-8 hour shift on the assigned day.

Mr. Nickerson inquired as to how many days during the summer season are the parks full to capacity; Mr. Putnam reported that they were full to capacity four days this past summer, on Fourth of July weekend and Celebrate East Lyme weekend.

Ms. Hardy inquired if the new line item of \$10,000 for Beach Security will be offset by revenue, and Mr. Putnam stated that yes indirectly as the money collected for passes goes back into the General Fund. Mr. Nickerson suggested that maybe for the next budget cycle we might consider creating a special, separate self-subsidizing revenue account for the beaches. Ms. Johnson stated that they could rework the budget, but to remember that this budget in particular is difficult because the fiscal year starts in the middle of the season for this budget.

Ms. Johnson reported that last year's revenues totaled \$190,809 from Park & Recreation alone, which is an all time record for this department. Mr. Nickerson acknowledged the great job that the Parks & Recreation department and employees do, and that we are all proud of our park system.

Mr. Salerno inquired as to the reduction in lighting, and Mr. Putnam reported that less was used due to decreased use of Vet's Park for night games. Regarding line items 201-241, Mr. Salerno inquired why they are requesting more than what was spent last fiscal year; Mr. Putnam reported that last year they were afforded credits for some of the necessary training, but that won't be the case this year and some additional training will be needed as well. Mr. Salerno inquired as to how much of the Line 201 budget has been expended so far this year, and Ms. Johnson reported that this budget is tracking at 78% so may go over the budgeted amount of \$5,500.00.

Mr. Cunningham inquired as to why the light budget needs to be so high based on last year's usage, and Mr. Putnam reported that there just were not a lot of night games last year, but that is not expected to be the case this year. It was asked if it has been discussed to switch the park light over to the LED lighting as we did with the street lights, and it was explained that this would be a very costly

project but that eventually it should be done. Currently the sport teams that utilize the parks at night do get charged a fee for the lights. Mr. Cunningham would like to see the #211 line item come down a bit.

Ms. Hardy inquired as to what the department would do if the \$21,095 State Grant for Youth Services is not received, and Mr. Putnam indicated that this money funds community programs such as the drug awareness event with guess Chris Herron that was put on for the community last year, so he is not sure yet what the repercussions are as of yet.

#### Library - #420

Ms. Lisa Timothy was present to speak on this budget. Ms. Timothy stated that the Library has a different relationship with the Town and is classified as an "Associate Library", and not officially a Town Department. The library is overseen by a Board of Trustees and not the Board of Selectman, although health insurance and pension benefits are provided and subsidized for Library employees as they are for all Town employees. The Library has its own source of funding streams, including a yearly endowment of approximately \$25,000.00, which is to be used for books only. She also noted that some monies received have been reinvested and those profits have assisted the many programs that are run for the community. Such programs include the newly created "Real vs. Fake News" seminar which has been a big hit with the community. Ms. Timothy noted that although we move into the technology age, the library still keeps full paper copies of everything and will continue to do so. She reported that this past year they were able to replace the many outdated computers and purchased updated software, all with private funds and all with existing library personnel, without the need to bring in additional IT support. Ms. Timothy reported that of the training software that is available to the public, 21 online certifications were awarded, so the residents are utilizing these programs. She noted that they have applied for a Grant to start working on Strategic Planning, but she does not know the likelihood of receiving such grant given the current fiscal situation of the State. Regarding the current LION Database state delivery program used for sharing resources with other libraries has been working well for many years; however, over the past couple of years due to continued budget cuts the system is breaking down and it is taking a long time for people to receive their books. She reported that there is a meeting scheduled in Hartford on March 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss this matter.

Mr. Nickerson noted that there was a 5% increase initially requested on this budget from last year, and that it has been cut down to a 2.5% increase; this would cover the increase in health benefits for the upcoming fiscal year. Ms. Timothy noted that approximately 2,800 residents visit the library on a weekly basis, with 70-80 people on site on Sundays. She noted that with a budget decrease, they may need to close on Sundays all together. Ms. Timothy reported that the \$45,360 yearly fee for LION includes the computers, the program, as well as all technical support. She acknowledged that the High School has made the decision not to use this program next year, but that the library will continue to use this program in hopes that they can get it back on track; when it was working properly it was a great program and an asset to the Town and residents.

In closing, Ms. Timothy noted that she has a great staff, and Mr. Nickerson acknowledged that our Library is something to be proud of and that the Town appreciates everything that they do and offer to our residents.

#### Commission on Aging - #418

Ms. Cathy Wilson was present to speak on this budget. Ms. Wilson noted that the .10% increase is far from the 2.39% increase they had originally requested. This increase request is primarily due to the exponential increase in services being requested by the public from this department. Mr. Nickerson noted that a chunk of the proposed increase was due to a request to bump up an existing employee to a higher job title/function, hence higher pay rate. He reported that he was amenable to keeping the

position status quo, but cannot justify an increase when there is a real chance that there could be layoffs dependent upon the Governor's final State budget.

Regarding the requested increase in line #415 Program Instructors; if the budget passes with the \$4,000 decrease as proposed, that would mean having to cancel classes. Ms. Wilson stated that these programs are in place and being used by the most vulnerable citizens in our town, and those that do not have the disposable income to go out and utilize private classes or even eat in a restaurant based on their set income; which is why it is so important not to make cuts in these areas. Regarding the trips that are organized through the Community Center, Ms. Wilson stated that these trips pay for themselves and do yield small revenue.

Mr. Salerno inquired as to which classes are less popular and might be appropriate to cut. Ms. Wilson stated that attendance is not an accurate way to judge each class as some of the classes are geared toward the elderly and have small attendance because the participants require more attention from the instructor so have to be limited.

Mr. Nickerson requested information on the TVCCA meals program and inquired how that is going. Ms. Wilson reported that over the past couple of years they have lost TVCCA manpower due to increased participation and more Town joining the program. Right now Town volunteers are doing all of the leg work for distributing food and the office staff is doing all of the administrative work for this program. TVCCA covers the full cost of the food. Ms. Hardy inquired about the fee we pay TVCCA, and Ms. Wilson reported that TVCCA offers other services in addition to the meals provided. Mr. Nickerson thanked Ms. Wilson and acknowledged the great job she and her staff are doing.

#### Historic Properties - #139

Ms. Luane Lange was present to speak on this budget. Ms. Lange made note that this is the first year that this Commission has its own budget. Although a small budget and a small commission, Ms. Lange stated that this is a Commission that is needed and wanted by the residents for the value that is added in making sure the historic value of properties is monitored and protected.

Ms. Betty Murphy and Mr. Mark Christensen were present to speak on the Samuel Smith House budget. Ms. Murphy reported that this budget is bare minimum and needs that additional \$2,500 in the budget in order to complete some necessary work to the structure. Most revenue is procured during volunteer fundraising, and there is a possibility of doing something with the acreage that we have, but this requires the Town's involvement and she was not prepared to speak on that this evening. Mr. Dagle inquired if the \$2,500 would be enough to complete the critical work that needs to be done on the southeast corner of the structure, and the answer was yes this is the budgeted amount for this work. There are fundraising events set up to bring in additional funds for work that needs to be performed.

#### Smith Harris Commission - #134

Mr. Richard MacDonald was present to speak on this budget. Mr. MacDonald reviewed each line item and proposed cuts. He reported that the biggest issue will be with line item #412 PT Rec Secy/Tour Guides; these costs have increase for the upcoming budget year and if the Town budget doesn't match the increase then that will affect whether we can afford to keep the house open for tours at all. Although not ideal, they can make the remaining cuts work in the #200 Services – Contracted/Operating, but request that the #412 Tour guide line item not be cut. Mr. MacDonald stated that the increase is due to the increase in State Minimum Wage. Mr. Salerno inquired about the increase in line item #415 Curator, and Mr. MacDonald reported that the wages were increased to be more in line with what she should be making; she works approximately 12 hours per week during the month of August, unless there is a program that would require more time on her part. Mr. Salerno inquired as to the year-to-date utility usage, and suggested that we might be able to move some funds from that line item to supplement the #100 personnel services line items.

Contingency - #120

Ms. Anna Johnson was present to speak on this budget, and reported that the Town Payroll Pending PR change account is holding PR during the Union negotiations that are pending. Mr. Nickerson stated that they would have to really look at the numbers in the Operating Contingency because \$125,000 is a very low number based on the size of our Town. Ms. Hardy also noted that if the State withdraws further funding as anticipated, that this number will be affected. Mr. Nickerson acknowledged that realistically everything is in limbo until the State submits their final budget. Mr. Salerno reported that if the budget is finalized as projected, that would mean an increase in 3 Mils.

Mr. Nickerson called for a recess at 6:49 p.m., at which time he announced that the remainder of the Special Budget Meeting would reconvene during the Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen under Agenda Item #2d.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Anderson".

Sandra Anderson  
Recording Secretary