

**EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
FY 2019-2020 PROPOSED BUDGET
Monday, APRIL 29th, 2019**

Members In Attendance: Lisa Picarazzi, Acting Chairperson
Camille Alberti
John Birmingham
Jason Pazzaglia
Anne Santoro

FILED

May 6 20 19 AT 10:15 AM/PM
William Weber
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also In Attendance: Mark Nickerson, First Selectman
Anna Johnson, Finance Director
Jeffrey Newton, Superintendent of Schools
Tim Hagen, Chairman, Board of Ed

Absent: William Weber, Chairman

A. Call Public Hearing to Order

Acting Chairperson Picarazzi called this Public Hearing on the FY 2019-2020 Proposed Budget of the East Lyme Board of Finance to order at 7:05 PM.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was observed.

Ms. Picarazzi welcomed everyone, and said that they would first hear from the First Selectman, Mark Nickerson then from the Board of Education Chairman, Tim Hagen and Superintendent of Schools, Jeffrey Newton.

C. Comments by First Selectman

First Selectman, Mark Nickerson welcomed everyone and said that this State is in a very difficult economic environment and that it will remain so for a number of years to come. Some of the comparative rates rose three-fold in some areas. Health insurance costs have doubled in five years and they are looking to change to the State 2.0 program in the upcoming fiscal year but that will only make things flat and offer only a temporary solution. His responsibility is to maintain or increase the property value but strike a balance between the services that are offered and the affordability to the people. Regardless of what happens in this budget and the next and the one after that, East Lyme will still be a desirable Town. Things are difficult now and will become more difficult each year due to the State situation. He said that it was nice to see many of the school people here and suggested that perhaps they would want to join the budget process much earlier next year. He said that the Board of Finance is here to respect them and asked that they respect them also even if they have a difference of opinions. He said that no one wants to chase fixed income residents out of this Town.

D. Comments by Board of Education Chairman

Ms. Picarazzi said that they would now hear from the Board of Education Chairman, Timothy Hagen.

Tim Hagen, Board of Ed Chairman said that he has lived here for 39 years and plans on staying forever. He said that they were stunned with the \$500,000 reduction to their budget and are upset that their collective efforts have fallen short this year. He said that they made reductions of around \$600,000 between staff and the re-districting and the elimination of two buses. There was an increase of \$363,000 in the health insurance cost and SPED costs increase nearly \$500,000 which comes to around \$800,000. He said that they had also asked for \$110,000 to enhance the security in the schools. He said that Mr. Newton would speak next.

Jeffrey Newtown, Superintendent of Schools thanked everyone for coming out as it speaks to the community support for education in this Town. He said that a 3.18% increase was requested to their budget and noted that the budget drivers were – employee salaries and benefits, transportation, tuition, tech software, supplies and equipment. He said that he is tired of dipping into supplies over the years and that they have a zero-based budget. He noted items that they have worked on such are the lunch program, natural gas, and copy contract services. He noted their per pupil cost in comparison to Old Lyme, etc. He said that Ryan Schrader, a BOE member wanted to say a few words.

Ryan Schrader, BOE member said that he has three (3) children in the schools here so he joined the BOE. He said that after attending meetings that he heard that transportation costs were too high however, they are in the lower percentile on spending per pupil. He said that the average school spending increase in the State is 3.5% but theirs is 2.9%. He said that he thinks that they should use this information to have more constructive discussion in the future. He said that he chose this Town for the schools.

Mr. Newton said that they worked hard to make reductions so the direct impacts are increased elementary class sizes and they do not want larger class sizes; pay for play and he does not want parents to have to pay for that. He said that he hopes that this will be reconsidered by the Board of Finance.

Mr. Hagen said that he believes that this is not what the community wants and feels that they want to keep things on the path that they are so for the Board of Finance to put out a budget proposal such as this one is not expressing what the community wants and he asks that it be decided at referendum what they had originally proposed.

E. Board of Finance Presentation of Proposed Budget for FY 2019-2020

Ms. Picarazzi introduced the Board members and said that they all worked hard and that she feels that they want the same things. She asked the BOE members to stand to be recognized. She then went through the PowerPoint presentation (See attached) noting that at this time it represents a .73 mil increase. She said that they have to look at the whole picture for the budget and not just education. Further it is just a matter of time before they will be asked to take on the pension expense for the teachers. They are not a Board that hates education but from some of the comments she has heard it seems so to some people. They have to consider a lot of economic factors when working on the budget and they have to try to find common ground including concern for the businesses in Town and trying to maintain affordability.

She said that she would not go into great detail at this time as there were many people present who wished to speak. She asked that they limit their comments to two minutes so that everyone would have the chance to speak and that they provide their name and address for the record.

F. Public Discussion

Ms. Picarazzi called for public comments and asked that speakers state their name and address for the record and limit their comments to two minutes.

Jeff Provost, 78 Dean Road said that he has lived here for 26 years. He listed all of his affiliations with the school and said that tonight is the night that they crossed the line on the budget. He asked the students to stand so they can be told that they won't have the same opportunities that he had going to school. He said that he does not think that they will get things back and added that the Town does a great job also.

Kadian Bharti, 1 Darrows Court said that they are a senior in high school and the president of the class of 2019 and they came out due to the cuts to the BOE. The cuts may affect sports and pay to play and they feel that sports are very important to the educational system. He asks that they think how this will impact the students.

Paige Kelly, 4 Village Court said that she is a student in this Town and heard about the cuts. They are a good school system due to the programs. She will graduate in a year and said that while they don't have control over the State funding they do have control over the educational programs.

Diane Swan, 7 N. Beechwood said that she is an educator and tax payer and reminded them that they were here again last year. She noted that the Triumph building is empty and asked if they know what is going in

there. She also noted the pensions and how they saw them as the 'burden' of them for the Town. They have to own it.

Lisa Timothy, Library Director, 39 Society Road said that she does not live in this Town but hopes to move to it. She said that she heard that they don't need some of the money for books but they have been cut by 82% over the years and she wants it restored. She heard them say that visits are down by 10% but she claims that has increased by 25 visits. The school and public libraries serve different purposes so they cannot be merged. She asked that they move \$20,000 from the capital account to her operating account for books.

??, a Library Board member said that they have been cut on book money over the years. Only 10% are eBooks, the rest are regular books.

Lynette Ridolfi, 7 Carlisle said that she supports the library budget.

Carol Clulow, 3 Bittersweet said that she also supports the library budget.

Sandy Davidson, 2 Bittersweet Lane said that she taught for 30 years in the Montville school system (first and second grades) she is concerned with the increase of class size as it causes more SPED issues later on. She also supports the library budget.

??, 13 ?? Drive thanked everyone for coming and said that they are a senior in the high school. It is harmful cutting sports especially in the middle school as it has an impact on high school. Also pay for play providers fewer opportunities for them to better themselves.

??, Willow Drive said that he is on the cross-country team and that they would see incoming members to the sports team plummet. He is a sophomore and said that he joined it as it looked like it would be a lot of fun and it has been.

Ms. Sokolovskaya 26 White Birch Circle said that she moved here from Germany and that when she saw the elimination of middle school sports she was concerned. In Germany there were no after school sports and she moved here for the sports as well as the academics. They are a valuable opportunity and help with college also.

??? (started speaking with people clapping – could not hear) spoke on the library budget cuts and said that when considering moving to this Town that the library and the pool at the school was an important consideration.

Tiffany Cauouette, 19 Bishops Bay said that she comes with experience with being a principal in another DRG school. She said that it is near impossible to come back from these cuts. They won't have the support that they need even though the superintendent will make things work. They will see the school climate deteriorate.

Ashley ?, 4 Grove Ave. said that she is an educator and was given a letter to read from Verada Lackey of 22 Sunnyside Drive (See attached) One of her children is a SPED student and has progressed greatly here.

Richard Freeman, 71 Charter Oak Drive said that he moved here two years ago from Illinois and has a daughter in the marching band. He said that in Illinois the parents paid for the band supplies and that he moved here to get away from that as he does not think that it should come out of the parents' pockets.

Caryn Novick, 3 Morris Lane said that she is a parent of two and understands that there have to be cuts but not to education. They need smaller class sizes, not larger as then the kids do not get as much attention as the teachers have more discipline issues. They need that person to person connection.

Mr. Lawry, 10 Cavasin said that he appreciated that there is no malicious intent and that they are trying to do the right thing and that they went through the budget line by line. But they can't just teach to the middle, he asked that they reconsider.

??, ?? Woodland Drive said that they are a sports enthusiast and they moved here in 2014. They do not think that they would have had these opportunities if they did not move here.

Lauren Helms, 1 Wayne Drive said that she has been here since 1999 and that she graduated in 2006. She is a homeowner here and has three year old twins. By cutting the budget they are taking away opportunities for those such as her daughter.

Mr. Yang, 31 Cedarbrook Lane said that he is in middle school sports and that they sent one to the nationals so they are doing well. He said that his dad came here for the school system and that it has the fourth best high school in the state. He thinks that they need to put quality in to get quality out.

???, 141 Black Point Road said that he is a student at the middle school and wants a successful education. He does not agree with the budget cut.

???, 22 Old Black Point Road said that they are an eighth grader and that clubs/sports allow them to make a lot of friends – it is an extension of the classroom. They asked that they reconsider giving them the budget that they requested.

???, 12 Jackie? Drive said that they are an eighth grader and heard that there will be fewer teachers and larger class sizes. This gives kids less education.

Ron Rando, 194 Boston Post Road said that he has been in business here for 47 years and has been coming here for as many years. He has not heard one of the people speaking tonight talk about the seniors or others in this Town. There are a lot of people who cannot afford things or cannot afford their medical costs. He said that he is sick and tired of coming to these meetings and hearing about how the education budget has been cut – he thinks that they should have cut the requested increase by \$1M.

Mr. Crouch?? 35 Scott Road said that Mr. Rando's education as a child is not the same as the education today and that this education is why people moved to East Lyme. He asked that they have some kindness. Also, businesses come and businesses go.

Ms. Treptow, 179 N. Bridebrook Road said that she is an eighth grader on the cross country & swim team. These teams are very encouraging and offer her many opportunities.

Byron Stewart, 17 Saunders Drive said that he understands that it is a tough budget but feels that people here show that they value education. He thinks they need to go to the insurance companies regarding not being able to cover those costs. They need to put the money into the education system.

Max Seefeldt, 5 Wildwood Drive said that we are one of the wealthiest Towns in one of the wealthiest states and he thinks we should act like it. He understands that sports are to be decimated and that cannot happen.

Kyle Douton, 5 Rockwell Street said that he is the husband of a teacher and has two kids in the school system. He also has his dad's business in this Town. The problem is with the zoning in this Town – they built way too many elderly communities and multi-family and rental units that put a burden on the schools. He thinks that they need to look at that. They need families and the families support the businesses. He thinks that the businesses are doing well and does not see any issues with that.

Robin Soule, 14 Hathaway Drive said that she is the parent of three successful kids and also a product of the school system. She thinks that the cuts will have a detrimental effect. Salaries and insurance are big items but many educators have given up higher salaries elsewhere to be here. Let the townspeople vote on the budget.

???, 30 Chesterfield Rd said that he lives in East Lyme and that cutting sports would be butchering education. He is a junior at the high school and did go to a private school previously. He also has a sister who participates in sports.

(Note: A brief break was taken here)

John Drabik, 18 Drabik Road said that they were here to address the budget and not sports or special interest groups. They have to live within their means and this involves give and take each year. But – the budget keeps climbing and we spend more than we make, you are killing us and we do not know what the State will do. The State wants more, the Feds want more – Twenty-five years ago the budget here was \$24M it has increased by \$50M. The property values have dropped – it is the State and all of the excessive spending. This is a public hearing; he said that he feels like he has been mugged – the superintendent sends out a letter and tells everyone to come out and it's like a horse and pony show – whine and cry – like I owe you an education – Shame on you all. He said that he pays \$50,000 in taxes and it is still not enough.....

Krysti Behbehani, 53 Upper Pattagansett Road said that they are a military family and with these cuts people will no longer move here for the education system. She thinks this cut is depriving the kids of an education and that as a Board of only six members that they are making the wrong decision.

Carla Frisbie, 233 Upper Pattagansett Road said that she is a teacher here and had an email exchange with a Board of Finance member – she said that she invited them to the middle school to show them what they need but the meeting conflicted with their schedules and no one showed up. She said that our children deserve better.

Colleen Callahan, 148 Giants Neck Road said that she thinks that they have heard enough about sports and that there are other issues. She has heard that retirees need to be considered but – this is not a Town of retirees – the majority of the people here are families and they come here for the schools.

Michelle Jeff, 109 Lovers Lane thanked the teachers and said that enough is enough.

Marie Conaway, 3 Goldfinch Terrace said that she is an educator in Middletown and lives in East Lyme. Her son attends the school here and takes music classes. She thinks that this allows them the ability to do many things well. She asked that they not cut the music program.

Patrick Conaway, 3 Goldfinch Terrace said that he has to take the late bus and that he does not want it cut. He said that he also helped his mother teach where she is and that they had 28 students and it is a lot.

Ms. Horner, 42 Manwaring Road said that she is a teacher at the middle school and they have won awards. They moved and stayed here when they could have gone all over the country. They think that cost cutting negatively impacts the education system.

Bill Derry, 212 Pennsylvania Ave. said that he is a member of the BOE and in talking as one elected official to another they said that the superintendent rallied the troops and put on a circus show and the Chairman also had said at one of the meetings that families with children are a burden to the Town and don't pay enough taxes. But – the businesses are here because of the families – such as – the three ice cream shops. He said that he thinks that they should listen to those who know.

Jamie Barr-Shelburne, 31 McElaney Drive said that she has three kids in the school system. One in the high school, one in the middle school and one in kindergarten and asked that they please put the money back into the education budget as this budget will kill them. Pay for play, larger class sizes will affect all of them.

?? Carlin, 22 MacKinnon Place said that they are a senior at the high school and has a great 12 years in the school system and thanked the superintendent.

Diane Swan, 7 N. Beechwood said that everyday she makes choices in her family budget. She wants the Board of Finance to look at ideas for revitalization – not about more businesses, etc or more land – but about how to bring more revenue into the Town. Also, no booing, no cheering – civil disobedience.

Alexandra Carlson, 46 Liberty Rd said that she is Candace Carlson's daughter and a seventh grader who participates in sports at the middle school. She would like to be able to continue with sports in the high school also.

Bonnie Dombrowski, 103 Walnut Hill Road thanked them for their efforts but said that she is concerned about discouraging families by seeing education as a burden. She thinks that families are the biggest

supporters of businesses in East Lyme so they support the tax base. She also thinks that fewer businesses will come to Town without the families. She also said that stats that she saw show home values closer to \$300,000 rather than \$250,000.

Beth Provost, 78 Dean Road said that she has lived here over 26 years, is a taxpayer and that her parents live here also. Her dad always spoke about the education system here. She has kids in college and one in high school who now won't have sports like her others and the class sizes will be larger. She said that she is also a teacher here in East Lyme.

Yuan Ken???, 15 Wynn said that he has two kids and that one was all state. He said that he does not want the arts and music or sports cut as they create a positive environment.

Ms. Kirvelevicius, 12 Chapman Drive said that she is a working parent with six children who all enjoy school due to the after school programs. They enjoy going to school. They also come home on the late bus which enables her to be able to work.

Matvey Sokolovskaya, 26 White Birch Circle said that he had written up a number of things but instead he would send them to both Boards. Cutting sports should be out of the question. He thinks they should add more relevant classes to the schools. He also thinks that they will discuss the same things again next year. They cannot be one group vs. the other – they need to change the education system and to work to do things in a different way.

Katie Pollard, 15 Lantern Lane said that she is the mother of two kids and that she brought her family back here. Her family is Beers Septic and they have had roots here and she wants it to stay this way. She is a nurse and urges people to speak up about education and healthcare as they need to work harder and smarter. They need to speak for everyone – go back to the drawing board.

Ms. Baldwin, 166 Chesterfield Road said that she moved here in 2008 for the schools. She has three kids who are here for the schools and otherwise does not have any family here. If it were not for the schools she would not be here.

Ms. Sullivan, 85 East Pattagansett said that she moved here in 2007 for the schools. One of her kids has a learning disability and has received great academics. They cannot have larger class sizes.

Andy ?, 196 Upper Pattagansett Road said that he is a college educator and that East Lyme was the place for them due to the education system. This system creates tax revenues. When his son was in LB Haynes his class size was 17 and now with his daughter there it is 21 – so the system is declining and they will lose people/families coming into this Town.

Ms. Cooper, 11 Cardinal Road said that she is a senior at the high school and the Town is great because of the schools. Without the schools it would be just restaurants.

Ms. Enami, 11 Plum Hill Road said that she does not want sports eliminated as they help students develop a sense of purpose. It also keeps the kids busy.

Mr. Custodio, 11 Colony Road said that he is a husband who has a daughter at Flanders and a wife who teaches at LB Haynes. Those schools are being renovated and this has been a strain – he thinks that cuts on top of all of this are wrong.

Ethan Brown, 15 Stonecliff said that he has a son at LB Haynes who has gone through the SPED program and made leaps and bounds and exceeded his goals. He said that he works at the Coast Guard Academy and recruits high school athletes.

Ms. Lopriore, 12 Penncove Road said that she is a 28 year resident who owns businesses at Flanders four corners. She has four girls and the youngest is a junior. There is a difference from 2010 to 2020 as the art classes were combined. She said that she is also a first year JV coach and sports change kids lives.

Michelle Martin, 6 Acorn Drive said that they moved to East Lyme for the education and the Boardwalk. She appreciates the Board of Finance and their interest in the bond rating and pensions but feels that they all have to solve that together. She said 'sorry sports folks' but art classes can't be decimated. She also noted that pay for play is not the end of the world. The PTA could do more fundraising and perhaps a grant could be written.

Ms. Dombrowski, 103 Walnut Hill Road said that nearly \$300,000 is more like the median house. The \$500,000 cut represents a one quarter of a mil increase which equates at median value to \$52 more per year. They will get what they pay for – restore the cuts.

Esteban Garcia, 10 Winston Road said that he thinks the Board of finance should restore the \$500,000 as the people have said tonight. He chooses to stay here for the education system – let the voters decide.

Mr. Cirone, 236 Upper Pattagansett Road said he thinks that all the officials are stewards and they do work for the best. He does not think that there is any pork in the BOE budget. He would be okay if all that they had was pay for play but he also sees other things on the list.

Rich Barnhart, 13 Louise Drive said that he moved here for the schools (w/Pfizer in 2007 from Michigan). He said that he could have had a bigger, better house elsewhere but chose here for the schools. He thinks that the house premium here is due to the schools and would go away without the schools. He said that they need to know that when the referendum fails that they want more money in the budget.

Ms.??, 24 Central Ave. said that she also came here for the schools and sports and the district. They are also looking to cut a math class due to low enrollment. She finds this unacceptable and wants the funds restored.

Ron Karun, 3 Aberdeen Court thanked them for listening to their concerns. He said that he spoke at a Board of finance meeting in March and said that he was concerned about the Board of Finance scrutinizing security in the schools especially in today's society. He said that he heard that the mil rate was leveraged to support empty nesters when what brought people here was the schools. If the referendum fails the Charter says that you cannot put more money in the budget – but rather – that you can only reduce it – so put it back in now so they can vote on it.

Ms. Picarazzi thanked everyone who came out tonight for all of their comments.

G. Board Comments

Ms. Picarazzi called for comments from the Board.

Ms. Santoro said that this is her second year on the Board. To her fellow Board members she said that it is a pleasure to serve with them as they have spent countless hours on the budgets. She also thanked all the department heads who have prepared budgets as it is not an easy job. Lastly, thanks to all who came out tonight. She said that the sense she had is that there is a loss of perspective on what has happened to date. She said that what they do is not always easy to understand. Such as – the proposed reduction of \$500,000 still leaves an increase of \$1,026,266 to the BOE budget – she asked that they keep that in mind. Also, the BOE budget has increased each year – this increase is 2.14% and stands right at the average of other cities and Towns. The concept of a cut is a misnomer. She said that she felt bad when they received Mr. Newton's letter as it was not clear what really was happening and was very emotional and it did not need to be. She said that she has been here for 30 years. The role of this Board (for perspective) is mandated by the Charter. To be mindful of what they have, they have made a concerted effort to grow the fund balance to an acceptable level as it affects their bond rating. Also, with respect to the tax burden – they do not want people to leave the Town or for businesses not to come. Further, they conduct a detailed review of each budget. For the BOE which had a composite of approximately 10 budgets, this took considerable time and they also went to BOE workshops and made recommendations there which are integral to the cut (\$500,000) that they made.

For herself, she said that she had tremendous difficulty with the revenue side – two things – excess cost grant (\$205,000 cut) and programs had a lack of clarity and also a lack of pursuing potential revenue (before and after school programs). This is a challenging economic climate with the State (pensions, tolls, other tax burdens that they need to be prepared for) and internally for the Town with the bonding for the school

renovations which will increase the debt burden to the taxpayers for the next three to five years. They need to put all of this into perspective no matter how passionate some people may be about education. She said that she also wanted to speak about the Library (she was sorry that the people who spoke had left) their budget is \$1,231,664 which is an increase of 4.06%. The cut involved is \$15,000 to a \$1.2M budget. She said that she finds the statement that they don't want books insulting and preposterous. Further the Library is a public/private entity and they also have a fund drive for books and the private entity has to provide money for books based on an IRS formula.

She thanked Mr. Newton and the BOE for efficiencies noting that she thinks that they are in a different place and that throwing money as a fix is not necessarily successful.

Mr. Birmingham said that when he was born that there were 3000 people in Town. They all want the best education for their kids but they also need to be fiscally responsible and they have to look at the Town as a whole. There are 2800 kids in East Lyme and the demographics show that 50% of the Town is 54 and younger and the other 50% are older and many of them are on fixed incomes. He said that he hears from many of them that they can't afford more taxes. He suggested that they take a drive around Town and look at all of the for sale signs. The whole Town has to be considered and addressed. The school budget is \$49M.

He said that the Town population swells in the summer months. Also, he said that he had the highest number for the cuts to the school system and he based it on the salaries/contracts and feels that they have to be tougher as people do not get 2%+ to 5% increases. \$500,000 is 1% and he thinks that they can find it somewhere.

Then – the letter came out from Mr. Newton – listing cuts – BUT – the Board of Finance does not tell them what to cut – those cuts were listed by the superintendent and he made them – not this Board. He said that there has to be savings.

Mr. Pazzaglia said that the students who spoke this evening spoke well. He said that all that they can do is look at the figures in front of them. The State of CT is in very bad shape. He noted that they also have a decreasing school population and that the costs are going up and classes increasing – he thinks that they have to find other ways to raise dollars.

Ms. Alberti said that this Board works very hard to come up with a fair budget. She has been following the Facebook community page very closely and she tries to answer all the posts or emails that she receives. She does respond to figures that people ask about. But – one of the emails that she received was so offensive – and it came from an educator in this Town - who said that if the old beach people in this Town can't afford to live here any longer then they should move! This was very upsetting.

She said that she takes the macro approach – In February 2010 the recession ended and 48 states recovered while CT and RI have not. Things still look dire in CT – there is 3.9% unemployment while the average is 3.2%. Education drives housing values but they need jobs to drive this. They are at -3.3% gross state product which is the absolute worst economy in the nation. This is where she said that she starts. Two years ago they increased the mil rate to put towards the fund balance and they try to keep the budget even to make it manageable for people.

She said that she had voted for the people to be able to vote with respect to the renovation of the three elementary schools but she was against keeping all three schools open as they are paying operating costs for all of them and they have excess space to support.

They need to get the best resources that they can for the dollars that they have. They need to look at the revenue side and that cannot come solely at or on the back of the taxpayers. She wants the BOE to look at West Hartford since they are looking at benchmarks as they are educating at the same cost as East Lyme. She thanked all who emailed and the 99% who were respectful. She said that she was not impressed by the people who said that they won't vote for her – she does not look at her position as one that works for votes.

Ms. Picarazzi thanked her colleagues for their comments. She said that she would read the memo that was sent around from Superintendent Newton and that she wants it to be a part of the record (copy attached). She said that they are emotional cuts but they need to realize that those cuts do not have to be realized in that way. She suggested that they speak to the superintendent who made those cuts.

She cited the vast difference in the salaries/wages for the same positions between the Town and the school with the school positions in many instances showing increases of three times that of the Town for the same positions.

She said that she was also a proponent of having two elementary schools instead of the three – but now the three schools have to be financed and renovated. Further the administrative levels are very high in our Town as she looks at the numbers and sees the potential for cuts there. Incentivizing the health insurance – she has heard that they would look at that but nothing was done. There are also other areas that could have cuts/reductions.

She apologized for using the term of financial burden for the financial obligation of the pensions that the State is looking to put upon them. She said that she heard about all of the people who moved here for the schools and then – a lot of them leave so the people who are here all of their lives are the ones who are essentially, stuck.

Someone mentioned the invitation for them to come to the schools. It was a one time only invitation and she was on vacation during that time, others had to be at their work during the day, but she did not understand what they were supposed to be shown or what they were supposed to evaluate regarding the classrooms when that is the superintendent's position.

The education budget is 75% of the overall budget. In the last nine years the BOE budget has increased 30% so it is not like you are not being supported, as you are.

Ms. Alberti added that the inflation rates were well below those budget levels that they received.

H. Adjournment

Ms. Picarazzi called for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

****MOTION (1)**

Ms. Alberti moved to close this Public Hearing of the Board of Finance on the proposed FY 2019-2020 Budget at 11:24 PM.

Ms. Santoro seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Ms. Picarazzi said that they would take a brief break and then commence their Special Meeting in this same area and that everyone was welcome to stay and attend that also.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,
Recording Secretary



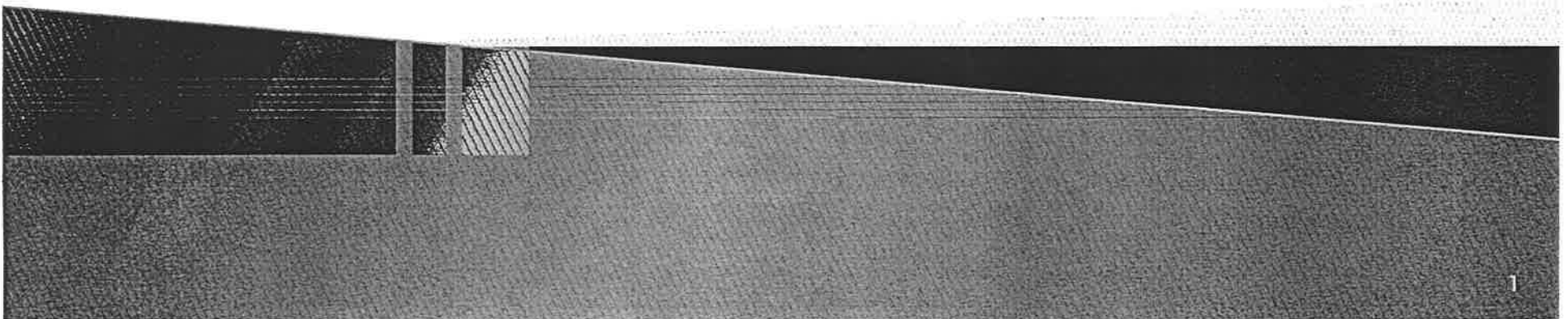
East Lyme Board of Finance

Public Hearing on Proposed Town Budget

April 29, 2019

Lisa Picarazzi

Board of Finance Vice-Chair



Attachment BOT PH 4/29/19

Board of Finance Members

- ▶ Bill Weber, Chairman
- ▶ Lisa Picarazzi, Vice Chairman
- ▶ Camille Alberty
- ▶ Jason Pazzaglia
- ▶ John Birmingham
- ▶ Anne Santoro

Summary of Budget Process FY 2019–2020

- Submitted by Board of Selectmen – March 6, 2019
Overall Increase of 3.14% from FY 2018–2019
- Seven (7) meetings held to review proposed budget, meeting with Department Heads and the Board of Education.
- Board of Finance proposes \$679,148 in net reductions for an overall budget increase of 2.21% and **an estimated .73 mil increase in the current property tax rate with State of Connecticut revenue assumptions as presented.**
- Board of Finance will meet after tonight's Public Hearing to further finalize budget which will subsequently be voted upon at a Town Meeting and referendum.

Summary of Major Projects Completed in FY 2018-2019

- Paving Brook Road, Mill Road, Pattagansett Court, Whittlesey Court, Whittlesey Place and Saunders Point (Phase I)
- Improvements to Hathaway Road, Industrial Park Road and Old Black Point Road
- Cape sealing, paving, crack sealing various town roads consistent with Pavement Management Program
- Paving upgrade to Transfer Station access road.
- Installation of water and sewer lines to Cini Park with goal of opening Restrooms at the site Memorial Day weekend.
- Completed LED flashing signal crosswalk at East Lyme High School for start of School Fall 2018
- Completed park at 224 Main Street with opening celebration July 21, 2018
- Acquisition Program
 - BOE Technology
 - Town Vehicles and Equipment
- Completed Phases I & II of Elementary School Renovation Projects
- Approved the purchase of the Honeywell Building for solution to Police/Public Safety

Proposed Budget Review and Summary by Board of Finance

- Reduced General Government budget by **\$162,000**, which represents an increase of 1.56% from FYE 2019
- Reduced Capital Expenditures by **\$17,148**, which represents a 7.2% increase from FYE 2019.
- Reduced Board of Education Budget by **\$500,000**, which represents a 2.14% increase from FYE 2019.



Major Areas of Revenue Decreases

‣ Education Cost Sharing	(\$680,421)
‣ Taxes – Prior Year Grand Lists	(\$15,000)
‣ Building Permits	(\$15,000)
‣ Use of Fund Balance	(\$500,000)
‣ TOTAL Revenue Decrease for 2020	(\$1,210,421)

Board of Finance Proposed Revenues Budget 2019-2020 Compared to Prior Years

Revenues	Actual 2017-2018	Appropriated 2018-2019	Proposed 2019-2020	% Increase Decrease
Fund Balance		\$700,000	\$175,000	-75.00%
Current Year Taxes	55,794,763	58,639,271	60,731,145	3.57%
Other Taxes, Interest & Lien Fee	782,384	790,950	791,400	0.06%
License & Permits	1,113,117	823,106	776,800	-5.63%
Revenue from Other Govt	7,589,913	7,956,131	7,309,120	-8.13%
Charges & Other Revenue	4,391,190	3,516,445	4,084,243	16.15%
Interest on Investment	76,269	41,500	70,000	68.67%
Total Estimated Revenues	\$69,747,636	\$72,467,403	\$73,937,708	2.03%
Mill Rate	26.16	27.35	28.08	2.67%
Change in Mill Rate		1.19	0.73	
** PLEASE NOTE MILL RATE FOR THE 2019/20 PROPOSED BUDGET IS ESTIMATED **				

FY 2017-2018 budget provided for \$675,000 in Fund Balance, which was not needed, year ended with surplus of \$675,000 to Fund Balance.

Board of Finance Proposed Reductions in Expenses – Summary

Expenditures	Appropriated 2018-2019	Proposed by BOS & BOE 2019-2020	% Increase Decrease	BOF Proposed 2019-2020	BOF Reductions	% Increase Decrease
General Government	\$18,232,239	\$18,678,733	2.45%	\$18,516,733	(\$162,000)	1.56%
Debt Service	5,369,986	5,599,145	4.27%	5,599,145	\$0	4.27%
Education	47,970,984	49,497,250	3.18%	48,997,250	(\$500,000)	2.14%
Buildings, Capital Equipmen	769,186	841,728	9.43%	824,580	(\$17,148)	7.20%
Total Expenditures	\$72,342,395	\$74,616,856	3.14%	\$73,937,708	(\$679,148)	2.21%

Board of Finance Proposed Reductions in Expenses – Detail

Budget Category/Function Description	Amount
General Government & Misc. (Legal)	(\$11,250)
Health/Dental	(41,455)
Payroll Taxes & Workers Comp	(3,386)
Contingency	(20,000)
Police Officers	(25,000)
Public Library	(15,000)
Public Works reclassify to Capital	(39,909)
Parks & Recreation Materials & Field Maintenance	(6,000)
Capital	(17,148)
Total General Government Reduction	(\$179,148)
Board of Education Proposed Budget Reduction	(\$500,000)
Total Net Reductions Expenses	(\$679,148)

Board of Finance Proposed Budget Compared to Prior Years

Expenditures	Expended 2017-2018	Appropriated 2018-2019	Proposed 2019-2020	% Increase Decrease
Total General Government	\$18,094,025	\$18,232,239	\$18,516,733	1.56%
Debt Service	5,373,526	5,369,986	5,599,145	4.27%
Education	46,568,609	47,970,984	48,997,250	2.14%
Capital Outlay / Equipment	791,646	769,186	824,580	7.20%
Total Expenditures	\$70,827,806	\$72,342,395	\$73,937,708	2.21%

Bottom Line

Town of East Lyme Proposed Budget has an overall increase of 2.21% or \$1,595,313 with an estimated .73 mil increase in the tax rate as submitted tonight. This is based on State of Connecticut Revenue assumptions as presented in the proposed budget.

Scenarios for Mill Rate Increase



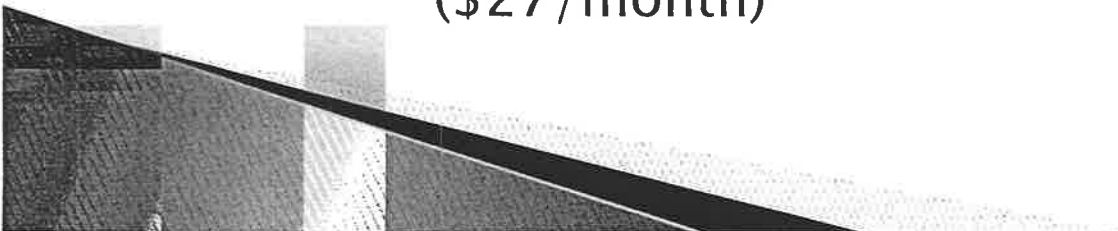
Home assessed at \$250,000 paid \$6,838 in Taxes in FY 18/19. Will pay approximately \$7,020 in Taxes in 19/20. Difference of \$183 / yr (\$5/month)



Home assessed at \$350,000 paid \$9,573 in Taxes in FY 18/19. Will pay approximately \$9,828 in Taxes in 19/20. Difference of \$256 /yr (\$21/month)



Home assessed at \$450,000 paid \$12,303 in Taxes in FY 18/19. Will pay approximately \$12,636 in Taxes in 19/20. Difference of \$329 /yr (\$27/month)



My name is Virada Lackey and I live on Sunnyside Drive in Niantic. I have 2 children that are currently enrolled at Lillie B. One is in integrated preschool and the other is in second grade. Although one child is officially diagnosed with having Autism, both receive special services at school. My daughter who has Autism was diagnosed as soon as she entered into the integrated pre-school program at Lillie B. Haynes four years ago. At the time, she was non-verbal and had behavioral and social problems mainly in part due to her inability to effectively communicate. Over the course of four years, my child has thrived. She talks and not only does she say words and form sentences but she is able to have a communicate with her peers in her social skills group and during other inclusion opportunities. She is an excellent artist, enjoys adaptive PE and enjoys her adaptive music class. This is my child; the child I noticed at 1 1/2 years old who didn't know her own name, who wouldn't make eye contact with me. Who always looked like she was in her own world. My child, who didn't say a word.

We need special services at school, we need paraprofessionals and the early start program of integrated pre-school and we need the special education program. There is an increase of special needs children entering into kindergarten this coming school year. Each child needing different services that caters to their specific needs. Each child who will thrive with the help of these services. They are worthy. They deserve the success my daughter has had. Cutting the budget by \$500k means cutting these services that our children desperately need.

Our paraprofessionals and teachers go above and beyond for our children. Every teacher my children have had have played a large impact in their success thus far and will continue to leave a footprint in their life as they continue with their education. The work does not stop at school, they have worked closely with my family and helped guide us to how we could be just as influential to our children when they are at home. It is a known fact that educators do not make a ton of money. And yet they go above and beyond and continue to make sure our children have all the tools they need to succeed. At times, using their own money to cover expenses at school. Our educators do it because; like us, they want to see their students thrive.

Had you asked me a few years ago where I saw my child in 10-15 years I would've said I just hope she's ok, and she's able to communicate that with us. Today, I still hope shes happy but I also hope she accomplishes everything she sets out for herself. I hope that if she has a dream; she chases it and does not let anyone, anything or any diagnosis stop her from achieving it. It takes a village to raise a child. Without the services and programs at school and the wonderful professionals and staff members that have guided my child along the way, I'm not sure who she would be today. I'm not sure she would be able to tell me she is happy and fully comprehend the meaning of happiness.

And so I ask of you to not cut the budget. Do not tell my child and children like her that she isn't important and that services and programs like special education are not needed for her to thrive. She is the defining example that proves that what our paraprofessionals are doing and the services of the special education program works.

Submitted 4/29/19 BOZ PH -

BOF Public Hearing 4/29/2019

Mike Schulz, ~~LOVERS~~ Care,

Being a tax payer is rather simple. Just sit in the bleacher and watch events that impact on all of us play out. Just pay admission and when you run out of money move.

Thing is it doesn't have to be that way. We have allowed the State and Public Sector determine our costs. A paradigm shift is needed for the Tax Payers to have an equal say in town and education matters. We need full disclosure and transparency of all town and education costs. It's been acknowledged in Senate hearings that there is no proof or evidence that lower class size improves student performance. Even the state Education Department acknowledges that no evidence correlates student performance with school spending. What the increased school spending does do, is increase the compensation of school personnel.

After attending numerous BOE, BOS and BOF meetings over several years, I felt that there was a big hole in my knowledge of the Town and School affairs. So I purchased and studied all associated contracts to improve my understanding. If you would like to review that information, it's available on the town web site under the BOF Special Meeting Minutes dated March 18th, 2019. It's headed Compensation, but would better be headed as a "reveal" document, because it reveals in detail almost all the Town and School District personnel compensations for FY 2019/2020 where the information was available. Many areas of concern jumped off the pages, which I will list as few.

1. Stipends from \$6000 to \$11,000.
2. Compensation increases from \$3500 to ~\$8600 in the education budget, with the town compensations \$300 to \$3000.
3. A Park Maintainers compensation increase at the town will be \$1400, while a similar position, Groundskeeper at the school will have a compensation increase of ~\$4500. Over three times as much!

Submitted BOF PH 4/29/19

4. A certified teacher advancing from step 11 to step 12 will have a compensation increase of \$5200. That's 6.9%. Past step 12 a certified teacher will receive a .85% increase, which amounts to only \$700 to \$800.
5. Not shown in contract is an East Lyme BOE Teachers Salary Schedule. Close examination reveals that of approximately 270 Certified Teachers holding a Masters Degree, 145 of them are at or above step 12, or ~54%. However, ~106 of these certified teachers have obtained what is considered an "Administrative Degree Level" which is required to obtain an Administrative position up to Asst. Superintendent. The recognition for this accomplishment is to advance them an addition column, referred to a MA+30 or 6th Year. This over qualification is costing the tax payer an extra \$582,000 annually and will continue to grow. The town would be far better served by providing a stipend, such as \$1000 per year and eliminate column three on the salary schedule.

Tax payers have to remember that we are also being burdened with health care cost overage to the tune of some \$700,000 plus.

School Renovation >\$38 Million

Water Plant Mods >\$4.64 Million

Safety Complex >\$6.0 Million

Special ED Lawsuit >\$.5Million

Respectfully submitted for Public Comment by Mike Schulz, Lovers Lane, East Lyme. BOF Public Hearing. 4/29/19

EAST LYME BOARD OF EDUCATION TEACHERS

2019-2020 SALARY SCHEDULE

STEP	BA	BA+30 or MA	MA+30 or 6th Year
1			
2	46,129	49,853	53,588
3	48,392	52,302	56,223
4	50,766	54,873	58,993
5	53,260	57,576	61,905
6	55,924	60,410	64,955
7	58,628	63,388	68,164
8	61,512	66,514	71,529
9	64,538	69,795	75,067
10	67,717	73,238	78,776
11	70,923	76,487	82,078
12	75,339	81,041	86,776

- o BASED ON 2019/2020 DATA, THE DISTRICT HAS ~270 CERTIFIED TEACHERS.
- o OF THAT NUMBER, ~145 ARE AT OR ABOVE STEP 12 ON THE SALARY SCHEDULE, OR ~54%.
- o THEIR GWI WILL BE .85%, \$700-800 THIS YEAR
- o HOWEVER, ~106 OF THESE CERTIFIED TEACHERS HAVE OBTAINED AN "ADMINISTRATIVE DEGREE (MA+30 OR 6TH YEAR), WHICH IS REQUIRED TO OBTAIN A ADMINISTRATIVE JOB UP TO ASST. SUPERINTENDENT. THAT

BA TO BA+30 OR MASTERS
CAN TRANSFER FROM
ONE COLUMN TO ANOTHER

STEP	BA	BA+30 or MA	MA+30 or 6th Year
1	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	3.90	4.00	0.00
5	5.00	7.00	5.00
6	2.10	21.80	2.70
7	1.00	9.00	8.00
8	0.00	7.50	7.00
9	0.00	7.80	5.00
10	0.00	8.50	5.00
11	0.00	7.60	7.00
12	2.00	77.45	66.00
	14.00	150.65	105.70

TOTAL	IS AN EXTRA COST TO THE TAXPAYERS OF ~\$582,000
0.00	
0.00	
0.00	
7.90	
17.00	\$216,45
26.60	\$12,272
18.00	\$38,202
14.50	\$35,105
12.80	\$26,360
13.50	\$27,690
14.60	\$39,137
145.45	\$378,510
270.35	\$581,927

2019-2020 TOTAL COSTS

STEP	BA	BA+30 or MA	MA+30 or 6th Year	TOTAL
1	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0
4	197,987	219,492	0	417,479
5	266,300	403,032	309,525	978,857
6	117,440	1,316,938	175,379	1,609,757
7	58,628	570,492	545,312	1,174,432
8	0	498,855	500,703	999,558
9	0	544,401	375,335	919,736
10	0	622,523	393,880	1,016,403
11	0	581,301	574,546	1,155,847
12	150,678	6,276,625	5,727,216	12,154,519
	791,033	11,033,659	8,601,896	20,426,588

Total Salary Account:	20,426,588
General Wage Increase:	0.85%
General Wage Increase At Max:	0.85%
Step:	Y
Increase Over Prior Year:	678,531 3.44%



EAST LYME PUBLIC SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 220 • East Lyme, Connecticut 06333 • (860) 739-3966 • Fax (860) 739-1215

Jeffrey R. Newton
Superintendent of Schools

Amy Drowne
Assistant Superintendent of
Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Kimberly Davis
Director of
Student Services

Maryanna Stevens, CPA
Director of Finance, Marketing,
and Growth Management

"East Lyme Public Schools will inspire, engage and educate each student to become a contributing citizen and a responsible, independent, and critical thinker."

Important Notice to Parents

April 25, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

On April 10, 2019, the Board of Finance voted and approved a significant reduction to the East Lyme Board of Education 2019-2020 budget in the sum of five-hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000).

A drastic cut of \$500,000 would be detrimental and at least one or more of the following will occur due to this reduction:

- Staffing reductions across all schools
- Reduced opportunities for student programs and activities across all schools
- Increased Elementary class sizes
- Elimination of Middle School sports
- Pay for Play sports/activities at the High School level
- Elimination of the MS/HS Late Bus

The Board of Finance will be holding a Public Hearing on the town and education budget this coming **Monday evening, April 29, 2019, at 7:00 p.m., at the East Lyme Middle School Cafeteria**. This is an opportunity for you to attend and speak publicly regarding the negative impact of this reduction, while asking the Board of Finance to amend this cut to reflect what our community expects from us.

If you would like to view any documentation regarding our budget for next year please feel free to visit our website at <https://www.eastlymeschools.org/board-of-education/budget-information>.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey R. Newton
Superintendent of Schools

East Lyme Public Schools will inspire, engage and educate each student to become a contributing citizen and a responsible, independent, and critical thinker.

Attachment BOT PH 4/29/19