

**EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
AFTER PUBLIC HEARING
Monday, APRIL 29th, 2019**

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

FILED IN EAST LYME
CONNECTICUT
May 2 2019 AT 10:04 AM/PM
Brooke Alberti
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

A. Call Special Meeting to Order

Acting Chairperson Picarazzi called this Special Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance to order at 11:31 PM after the previously scheduled Public Hearing on the Proposed FY19/20 Budget.

B. Deliberations & Action to Send Proposed FY 19/20 Budget to Town Meeting on May 13, 2019

Ms. Picarazzi called for any additional comments/discussion they might like to make as a result of the public comments they had heard this evening.

Ms. Alberti said that while cuts from the Board of Ed do not sit well with them, she feels that it is because this Board does not have any control over where the cuts are made that the Board of Ed will cut the items cited. She said that if they were to reduce the BOE request by \$225,000 instead that they would have to come up with another \$275,000. While there is the \$175,000 they want for the undesignated fund balance; perhaps they could take \$25,000 from the BOE Capital plan, take another \$25,000 from the Town side and \$225,000 from the taxpayers. This would increase the BOE budget by 2.52%. She said that while the support this evening should not be ignored that they also cannot make the Town unaffordable to others as 67¢ of every tax dollar goes to the schools.

Mr. Pazzaglia said that he agreed with Ms. Alberti dollar wise and with her breakdown.

Ms. Picarazzi said that the \$225,000 from the taxpayers - ouch!

Ms. Santoro said that the \$175,000 has to stay with the undesignated fund balance as otherwise they never get out of the cycle.

Mr. Birmingham suggested that they reduce the cut to the BOE request to \$300,000 as he is not comfortable with Ms. Albert's numbers -- the \$225,000 to the taxpayers is a burden.

Ms. Picarazzi said that they were originally reducing the BOE request by \$500,000 and while she has heard the people tonight she is not willing to restore \$500,000 but probably half - \$250,000. She would suggest taking \$25,000 from BOE Capital, \$25,000 more from General Government and \$200,000 from the taxpayers to make up the restored \$250,000.

Ms. Santoro said that she was concerned with putting another burden on General Government as they have already had to do mid-year hiring adjustments to be able to reach the cuts already made. Further she said

that she is still in the neighborhood of \$500,000 for the BOE reduction to the requested increase as she did a line by line review of their budget that was presented to them and she found issues with the revenue and expenditure side.

Ms. Alberti recapped that she would restore \$275,000 to the BOE request and reduce BOE Capital by \$25,000; General Government by another \$25,000 and look to the taxpayers for the other \$225,000 to make the adjustment.

Mr. Birmingham said that he would reduce the reduction to the BOE request from the \$500,000 to \$300,000 and look to the taxpayers for the other \$200,000.

Ms. Santoro said that she was thinking back to Mr. Weber, who could not be here and that he had originally said that he felt that reducing the BOE request by \$350,000 could be justified – she is in that neighborhood and as for finding the remaining \$150,000 – they could look to the taxpayers as they said that they would pay more this evening.

Mr. Pazzaglia asked what is in the BOE CIP – the phone system and paving - .

Ms. Johnson said that the Middle School phone system was in the acquisition plan and that the paving was in the bonding on the Town side of the budget. Technology is more like \$40,000.

Ms. Picarazzi said that she would entertain a motion.

****MOTION (1)**

Mr. Pazzaglia moved to restore \$250,000 to the BOE request and to make up the remaining \$250,000 from the taxpayers.

Ms. Alberti seconded the motion.

Ms. Santoro said that it is not a significant enough amount for the BOE to have reduced.

Mr. Birmingham said that he is still stuck on the \$300,000 reduction figure for the BOE.

Vote: 2 – 3 – 0. Motion failed.

For: Ms. Alberti, Mr. Pazzaglia

Against: Mr. Birmingham, Ms. Picarazzi, Ms. Santoro

****MOTION (2)**

Mr. Birmingham moved to restore \$200,000 to the BOE request and have the taxpayers pick up the remaining \$200,000.

Ms. Santoro seconded the motion.

Ms. Picarazzi said that she wants \$25,000 more taken from General government and to restore \$250,000 to the BOE.

Vote: 2 – 3 – 0. Motion failed.

For: Mr. Birmingham, Ms. Santoro

Against: Ms. Alberti, Ms. Picarazzi, Mr. Pazzaglia

****MOTION (3)**

Ms. Picarazzi moved to restore \$250,000 to the BOE budget request and to reduce the General Government request by another \$25,000.

Mr. Pazzaglia seconded the motion.

Ms. Alberti said that if they further reduce General Government by the \$25,000 that they would have to have the first Selectman come back before them.

Ms. Santoro said that she thinks that it would be pretty difficult to reduce General government any further.

Ms. Picarazzi said that she would amend her motion.

****MOTION (3) Amended**

Ms. Picarazzi moved to restore \$250,000 to the BOE budget request.

Ms. Alberti seconded the amended motion.

Ms. Picarazzi said that she was not comfortable adding to the tax burden.

Ms. Santoro said that the \$300,000 reduction to the BOE request and the \$200,000 to the taxpayers is the better option.

Ms. Alberti said that she was good with this.

Vote: 4 – 1 – 0. Motion passed.

For: Ms. Alberti, Mr. Birmingham, Ms. Picarazzi, Mr. Pazzaglia

Against: Ms. Santoro

C. Discussion & Possible Action on the Capital Improvement Plan

There was no discussion.

D. Public Discussion

Ms. Picarazzi called for Public Discussion.

Diane Swan, 7 North Beechwood said that she had not meant any personal attack on them. She added that it is not unless it is a cut that affects them that they will come out to speak.

Tim Hagen, BOE Chairman said that he would still echo that he was very disappointed with this as they had tried to work closely together and come up with an austere budget but they still seem to think that there is money here to reduce. Further, the discussion on revenue bothers him. He thinks that they have to work harder to try to make this work. He said that they had saved \$600,000 by re-districting and that there are some tough things before them. He said that they should watch what happens here when they are looking for a 4% increase next year.

Mr. Birmingham said – not to be disrespectful but you are going to have to do more with less.

Mr. Hagen responded that he is not sure that the more is there.

Krysti Behbehani 63 Upper Pattagansett said that as a teacher that she has trouble with the do more with less concept. She thinks that they need to see the technology that they have and are working with. She also thinks that they came into the meeting with a number in mind and went with it. Further, she takes Ms. Santoro's comments as an insult.

Ms. Santoro said – 'Excuse me – I'm insulted that you say that we have pulled a number out of somewhere or came pre-disposed on a figure.'

E. Board Comments

Ms. Picarazzi said – with respect to Mr. Hagen's comment – regarding an austere budget and they do not understand – she feels that they have not listened to them and to come here and put sports out as an emotional level is something that did not belong here tonight.

Mr. Newton said that they do not understand the numbers.

Ms. Santoro said that she thinks that they need greater detail and narrative and also feels that the answers that they gave them to the 32 questions were short on any information and that they come with some sort of 'papal blessing' so this could go on forever. She said that she was not alone in this as there was quite a bit of missing information and they had noted it throughout the process.

Ms. Picarazzi said that they asked for information and did not get it and some of it just did not fit or work with what was actually happening.

Mr. Hagen said that they need to do more work together for the common ground.

Ms. Picarazzi said that they are asking them to put a different set of glasses on when they do negotiations.

Mr. Newton said that is not how the process works, with binding arbitration there is only so much room.
Ms. Santoro said that the dynamic may change with time and that being open minded is very important.

Ms. Picarazzi thanked everyone for their participation.

Lisa Timothy, Library Director said that they did not address her \$15,000 for books and that she asked them to move that amount from capital for the carpet to the books and they could wait on some of the carpet replacement.

Ms. Alberti explained that it is all about compromise and that when Mr. Nickerson presented his reductions that they agreed with them. Further, she said that they want to see all of the carpeting done together at the same time.

Ms. Timothy said that she does not want to do what they want, she wants the books and they can do less carpeting. People came to support her this evening and she has sat here for five and a half hours waiting to have her issue addressed. She said that over the years that they have reduced the book budget by around \$80,000 (composite). She wants it back.

Mr. Pazzaglia said that he could guarantee that piecemealing the carpeting will certainly cost more as they would have to do the dismantling and set up for the work two times. That involves the greater -

Ms. Timothy said that they do not understand -

Ms. Picarazzi said that maybe if they can think about it without her talking over them –

Mr. Birmingham asked about the Foundation making up the difference.

Ms. Timothy said no they can't.

Ms. Alberti said that the LION increased by 4.6% and that a lot of the increases in her budget are greater than 4% with less traffic from the information that she provided them with.

Ms. Timothy said no, that is wrong, she is the professional she knows the numbers and they should come to her about it and she will provide them again. They did not understand.

Ms. Picarazzi asked Ms. Johnson what they would have to do.

Ms. Johnson said that it would have to be done tonight.

Ms. Picarazzi asked what the Board what they want to do –

Ms. Alberti apologized to Ms. Timothy regarding what Ms. Timothy sees as their difference of interpretation on the numbers – but said that it still does not change her decision on the reduction.

Mr. Birmingham and Ms. Santoro said that they would leave it as it is as there are three funding sources for books.

F. Adjournment

****MOTION (4)**

Mr. Birmingham moved to adjourn this Special Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance at 12:38 AM (4/30/2019).

Ms. Alberti seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,
Recording Secretary