

EAST LYME BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 22, 2021
MINUTES

This meeting was held via Zoom online meeting services and was available for the public to view, listen and participate via videoconference and dial-in options. This meeting in its entirety, as well as all the budgets discussed during such meeting, are available to view by visiting the East Lyme Town Hall webpage.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Finance Director Anna Johnson, Registrars Mary Smith and Wendi Sims, Tax Assessor Diane Vitagliano, Tax Collector John McCulloch, Historic Properties Members Mark Christensen, Benn Bullock and Steve Marks-Hamilton

Mr. Nickerson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Budget Review

418 Commission on Aging – Senior Center Director Cathy Wilson was present to speak on this budget and overall, it is up 5.79%. She stated that COVID-19 has been a big factor and things have not been business as usual. She explained that there is an increase in line 311; the former administrative assistant left in October of 2019 and they had decided at the time to hold off until February 2020 to begin accepting applications. When the pandemic happened, it halted the process completely until the end of October 2020 when the new assistant started; Ms. Hardy noted that Candy is an East Lyme High School graduate. Mr. Nickerson, Ms. Hardy, and the entire Board acknowledged Ms. Wilson and her staff for working so hard and staying so positive through the pandemic and all the extraordinary challenges this has brought to the Senior Center and its clientele.

110 Registrars – Registrars Mary Smith and Wendi Sims were in attendance to speak on this budget. Mr. Nickerson noted that this budget is down due in part to the fact that there will be no Presidential elections or primaries this year. Ms. Smith stated that they also received a subsidy from the State for COVID-19 expenses, and she feels confident that we have enough supplies on hand for the budget referendum in May. It was noted that there will not be enough time for mail in absentee ballots for this referendum. Ms. Sims noted that they had requested an additional \$3,886 in line 111 but that the First Selectman did not support that increase. Mr. Nickerson stated that no other departments have any increases in salary above the contractual increases.

102 Tax Assessor – Tax Assessor Diane Vitagliano was present to speak on this budget. This budget has stayed flat with the 2.25% contractual salary increases and various other slight increases in fees and expenses. Line 412 PT Clerical is for seasonal help in June and a little in December. It was noted that this seasonal help was cut from last year's budget so this department could really use the extra help in the upcoming year. Mr. Dagle inquired as to the cost of conventions in in 242 during the pandemic, and Ms. Vitagliano stated that the online courses are a little more expensive.

FILED

March 3, 2021 AT 8:30 AM/PM

Brooke Honey ATC
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

BOS Special Budget Meeting
February 22, 2021

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103 Tax Collector – Tax Collector John McCulloch was present to speak on this budget. This budget has a slight increase, including the standard contractual raises and an increase in line 251 Tax Bill Printing as the bills will be sent out this year to be printed and stuffed. This line item does not include the cost of postage; this expense comes from the First Selectman’s budget for the town, excluding the Board of Education. Mr. McCulloch noted also that there is a reduction in line 412 PT Clerical as this help will not be needed since the bills are being sent out. Mr. Nickerson stated that they have also increased the hours for one of the aides in the office, and he noted that she helps in other offices when she is able, and that both Tax Aides are doing a great job. Mr. McCulloch stated that even though we approved an extension for taxpayers to pay their taxes by April 1st this year, we have received 95% of the taxes due.

134 Brookside Farm Museum – Mr. Nickerson reported that this budget has a very slight increase this year in the utilities line item, but otherwise it is a flat budget. He reported that they will be bringing back a Curator this year, and that they have done significant work on the front porch, which Ms. Hardy noted was all done by volunteers. Mr. Seery reported that they plan to paint in the spring.

139 Historic Properties Commission – Acting Chairman Mark Christensen was present to speak on this budget, accompanied by Mr. Benn Bullock and Mr. Steve Marks-Hamilton. Mr. Christensen reported that a lot of work has been done at the Samuel Smith Farmstead, and Mr. Nickerson agreed and stated that everyone should take a ride by and see the great progress. Mr. Christensen stated that they have seen a nice increase in activity on the website, so they are putting extra resources into the further development and maintenance of such. Mr. Bullock reported that they have some great activities scheduled for this year, and that the Revolutionary War Day this year will be bigger and better than previous years. Mr. Christensen reported that a couple of the projects happening right now is the expansion of the Giving Garden to Church Street; and thank you to Flanders Baptist Church for gifting the land for use. Also happening is the Pollinator Pathway’s work around town, and the grant that they have secured through Sustainable CT to be used for their project at the Samuel Smith Farmstead.

120 Contingency – Ms. Johnson stated that line 500 includes funding for UPSEU bargaining group as their contract expires on June 30, 2021; she noted that this item is on the agenda tonight and that she expects these funds to be moved into their respective account shortly. She noted that a line item has been added in anticipation of the public safety building coming online, and that the operating expenditures for this building are currently included in the building maintenance department 113 budget.

522/523 Debt Service – Interest/Principle – Ms. Johnson stated that these accounts cover various issues, mostly General Obligation Bonds (GOB). She reported that the market is doing well so she expects to go before the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance soon to get approve for refunding of approximately \$12M in GOBs.

104 Building – Building Official Steve Way was in attendance to speak on this budget. Mr. Nickerson stated that there has been a significant increase in applications this past year, and that in turn yields a significant revenue stream for the town. Mr. Way stated that because people have been home more during the pandemic a lot of people are doing renovations, which are a lot more labor intensive for his department than new construction. This budget includes increased hours for the building inspectors to accommodate the increase in inspections, and he also requested an increase of 8 hours in the PT Clerical line, but the First Selectman reduced that to an increase of 4 hours.

724 Capital – Mr. Nickerson reviewed all the items in this budget. Chief Finkelstein spoke on the boat motor, which is in line 100 CNRE, and he stated that this is the last payment of \$8,500 and he expects to go out to bid for a new motor in the summer. Mr. Nickerson thanked the Chief for instituting the vehicle acquisition program which is now fully self-sufficient and is funded by revenues received for road jobs; this is a great benefit to the department and to the town.

3. UPSEU Labor Agreement

DISCUSSION: Mr. Nickerson stated that the Board had met and discussed this matter at the last meeting, but that they did not take any action that night. He explained that this union encompasses the bulk of the employees except the unaffiliated group, the police, the dispatchers, and the fire fighters.

MOTION (1)

Mr. Seery MOVED to extend the current UPSEU Labor Agreement for one year as discussed and as presented.

Seconded by Mr. Salerno. Motion passed 6-0.

MOTION (2)

Mr. Salerno MOVED to adjourn the February 22, 2021, special meeting of the East Lyme Board of Selectmen at 7:32 p.m.

Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Sandra Anderson

Sandra Anderson
Recording Secretary

