

# Minutes of EAST LYME BOARD OF SELECMEN REGULAR MEETING - 04/05/23

**Date and time:** 04/05/23 7:11 PM to: 04/05/23 8:35 PM

**Present:** Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary, BOS Members Present:, Kevin Seery, First Selectman, Dan Cunningham, Bill Weber, Anne Santoro, Rose Ann Hardy, Ann Cicchiello

**CC:** Also Present: , Kevin Gervais, Finance Director, David Garside, Chief Building Official, Lt. Michael Macek

**Location:** EAST LYME TOWN HALL UPPER MEETING ROOM

**Link:** <https://app.meetingking.com/meetings/396734>

## Topics

### 1. Call Meeting to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

**Note** First Selectman Seery called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m. and noted that the Pledge was observed during the Town Meeting, which preceded the regular meeting.

### 2. Additional Agenda & Consent Calendar Items

**Note** Mr. Seery said he has one addition, under new business, a fourth item, appointments to boards and commissions.

#### **Decision** MOTION (1)

Ms. Hardy moved to add appointments to boards and commissions under new business, on this evening's agenda.

Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

### 3. Delegations

**Note** There were none.

### 4. Approval of Minutes:

#### 4-1. Special Budget Meeting of February 22nd, 2023

##### **Decision** MOTION (2)

Ms. Santoro moved to approve the Special Budget Meeting minutes of February 22nd, 2023, as submitted.

Ms. Cicchiello seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

#### 4-2. Special Budget Meeting of March 1st, 2023

##### **Decision** MOTION (3)

Ms. Santoro moved to approve the Special Budget Meeting minutes of March 1st, 2023, as submitted.

Ms. Cicchiello seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

FILED IN EAST LYME  
CONNECTICUT  
Apr 14 2023 AT 1:45 AM/PM  
Brooke Stevens  
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

### 4-3. Special Budget Meeting of March 13th, 2023

**Note** Mr. Weber reported that under his second bullet point, when he asked about the cost per pupil for Salem, the minutes read that "Mr. Newton could not explain why that would be," when he did explain it; he said they're two different school sizes, and that's why it was not comparable.

**Note** Ms. Hardy said on the second page, fifth bullet point down, the minutes read: "In relation to a question that Mr. Weber asked earlier, Ms. Santoro requested that Mr. Newtown..."  
Mr. Newton's name is misspelled.

#### **Decision** MOTION (4)

Ms. Santoro moved to approve the Special Budget Meeting minutes of March 13th, 2023, as corrected.  
Ms. Cicchiello seconded the motion.  
Motion carried, 6-0-0.

### 4-4. Regular Meeting of March 15th, 2023

**Note** Ms. Santoro said on page three of the minutes, in regard to the Board of Trustees of the library, the Board is reviewing the policy on unattended children, and they actually voted, which is not reflected in the minutes; they voted to raise the age at which children may be unattended by a parent or guardian, from 10 years old to 12 years old.

#### **Decision** MOTION (5)

Ms. Santoro moved to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of March 15th, 2023, as corrected.  
Ms. Cicchiello seconded the motion.  
Motion carried, 6-0-0.

### 4-5. Special Meeting of March 27th, 2023

#### **Decision** MOTION (6)

Ms. Santoro moved to approve the Special Meeting minutes of March 27th, 2023, as submitted.  
Ms. Cicchiello seconded the motion.  
Motion carried, 6-0-0.

## 5. Consent Calendar

**Note** There was none.

## 6. Old Business

### 6-1. Discussion and Possible Action - ARPA Funds for FY 2023/24 Capital Items

**Note** Mr. Seery reminded the Board that he mentioned at the last meeting the possibility of using some of the remaining dollars in the American Rescue Plan Account Funds to pay for specific items in the capital budget; these are ones that he looked through, and that were going to be paid in cash, a purchase option, as opposed to five-year lease option, or bonded item.

**Note** Mr. Seery listed the items up for consideration:

The self-contained breathing apparatus for Flanders Fire Department- \$7,460.

6 self-contained breathing apparatus cylinders for the Niantic Fire Department- \$8,700.

Upfitting Engine 3, (portable lights, battery operated smoke injection fans, miscellaneous hose adapters and appliances etc.), for Niantic Fire Department- \$20,000.

Turnout gear and 2 gas meters for the Fire Marshal- \$5,000. (Ms. Santoro previously pointed out that they allocated \$5,225 when Mr. Way was the Fire Marshal, and these funds will be utilized to allow for the purchase of turnout gear for the Deputy Fire Marshal as well.)

Sidewalk repairs for Public Works- \$25,000.

Various Roof Repairs Fund for Public Works- \$10,000.

HVAC Pump Replacement Fund for Public Works- \$20,000.

Total ARPA Funds to be allocated: \$98,160.

Total ARPA Funds left: \$17,066.

\*Attorney Tracy Collins has provided written confirmation that these expenditures meet the ARPA Funds usage requirements.

**Note** Mr. Seery said these are his recommendations, so he would like feedback, and to know whether anyone would like to change anything.

**Note** Ms. Hardy asked if they're sure the various roof repairs can be completed before the deadline, and Mr. Seery replied that this amount is requested every year, so the funds will definitely be expended.

**Note** Mr. Seery said in the case of the Public Works expenditures which are requested every year, this is saving them from having to spend the \$55,000 from capital funds this one time.

**Note** Mr. Weber asked if it's correct that these are not to exceed values, which Mr. Seery confirmed.

**Note** Ms. Cicchiello asked what turnout gear is and Mr. Seery detailed how turnout has an outer shell, a moisture barrier, and then several layers of fabric that make up the thermal lining package; air is trapped in these thermal layers to insulate the firefighter from heat.

**Note** Ms. Hardy asked if the pricing is current, and Mr. Seery discussed the quotes.

**Note** Ms. Santoro asked if additional funds of the \$25,000 allocated for attorney fees for ARPA consultation will be necessary? Mr. Gervais replied that there is still \$17,000 left, and Mr. Seery said he asked Ms. Collins, and she said the lion's share of what they're going to charge has been billed already.

**Note** Ms. Santoro said in the near future, it might be good to get reports from Department Heads as to where these projects are, and Mr. Gervais replied that in the next couple of weeks, they're going to meet with the Department Heads, and this will be one of the topics discussed.

**Note** Ms. Hardy said under the breakdown of expenses from Chief McDonald, she noticed \$5,000 for the inspection trip to the client.

**Note** Mr. Gervais replied with some of the following:

He believes the truck is being built in Ohio.

Every time a truck built, before we take delivery of the truck, they check it out first, to make sure it matches the specs.

The last truck they had built was two different colors, we didn't accept it, and they had to repaint the truck.

If we didn't go out there, they would deliver that truck, and it would have been on us to go out there, to fix it.

**Note** Ms. Hardy said \$5,000 is a lot of money to go to Ohio.

**Note** Mr. Gervais said two people from the Committee have to go and stay overnight. He added that it might be a bit high, they may get money back, and they will have an accurate accounting of it.

**Note** Mr. Seery said it's not to exceed \$5,000.

**Decision** MOTION (7)

Ms. Santoro moved to approve the expenditure, not to exceed \$98,160, from account 32-99-094-900-002 (LEARN Rental Fees) for the purchase of the following items currently listed in the FY 2023/24 Capital Plan:

Flanders' Fire Department - Five (5) SCBA Cylinders - \$7,460

Niantic Fire Department – Six (6) SCBA Cylinders - \$8,700

Niantic Fire Department – Upfitting of Engine 3 - \$20,000

Fire Marshal – One (1) set of Turnout Gear - \$5,000

Fire Marshal – Two (2) Gas Meters - \$2,000

Public Works – Sidewalk Repairs - \$25,000

Public Works – Various Roof Repairs - \$10,000

Public Works – HVAC Pump Replacements - \$20,000

Total - \$98,160

And forward to the Board of Finance for approval. Note: This will require a Town Meeting

Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

## 6-2. Discussion and Possible Action - Fire Marshal Permit and Inspection Fees

**Note** see attached proposed ordinance.

 [Fire Marshal Permit Inspection Fees.pdf](#)

**Note** Mr. Seery said some of the following:

They have discussed in previous meetings the prospect of the fire marshal establishing some permit and inspection fees.

The Town Attorney has been working with the Fire Marshal on this.

The attached is the ordinance prescribing fees for fire marshal permits and inspections that they came up with, and it lists the all the information and fee schedules.

It's in accordance with State Statutes.

**Note** Ms. Hardy asked if the fees seem to be appropriate in comparison to other communities and Mr.

Seery replied that the fees are actually on the lower end, Mr. Bundy wanted to start low since we've never had them before.

**Note** Mr. Seery said the only other area town that does not charge fees in Waterford, but they're establishing a fee structure this year as well.

**Note** Mr. Weber brought their attention to Section 5, he said he suggested they also waive fees for nonprofits, and everyone seemed to agree at the last meeting. He added that the proposed ordinance for building & zoning permit and inspection fees has a comment that the Board of Selectmen can waive fees, and this one doesn't have that same language.

**Note** Mr. Seery said they could add that last Section 5, agencies exemption, to this ordinance too.

**Note** Mr. Weber asked what the vehicle is going to be to do that?

**Note** Mr. Seery said that could be done in house, in the office's downstairs, and Ms. Hardy replied that it says Board of Selectmen.

**Note** Mr. Seery said he would not want them having to go before the Board of Selectmen to hold up a project, and Mr. Weber said he doesn't disagree.

**Note** Mr. Seery suggested they change it to First Selectman, so it can be looked at, but not hold up a project.

**Note** Mr. Garside came forward and said he thinks that would help out tremendously, in cutting down on the timeframe.

**Note** Mr. Weber asked if the Town Attorney suggested that instead of waiving nonprofits, they put the verbiage in there adding someone's discretion and Mr. Seery discussed how it's better to have a check in place, rather than waiving carte blanche.

**Note** Mr. Seery said they can add to the last paragraph of Section 5, agencies exempt from fees, that states "The First Selectman may waive any permit fee, when the First Selectman deems it in the public interest to do so.

### **6-3. Discussion and Possible Action - Building and Zoning Permit/Inspection Fees**

**Note** see attached proposed ordinance.

 [Building Zoning Permit Inspection Fees.pdf](#)

**Note** Mr. Seery called for questions for Mr. Garside, and there was none.

### **6-4. Schedule Public Hearing on Fire Marshal/ Building and Zoning Permit and Inspection Fees**

**Decision** MOTION (8)

Ms. Santoro moved that notice is hereby given, of a public hearing to be held by the East Lyme Board of Selectmen on Wednesday, April 19th, 2023, at the East Lyme Town Hall at 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, Connecticut beginning at 7:00 p.m. to receive comments regarding the following ordinance entitled:

**ORDINANCE PRESCRIBING FEES FOR FIRE MARSHAL PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS**

Said Ordinance proposes the issuance of permits and the imposition of fees by the Fire Marshal's office when conducting state mandated annual inspections of certain businesses and the review of construction plans and structures within the Town.

Copies of the proposed Ordinance is available for review in the East Lyme Town Clerk's Office and on the Town of East Lyme website [www.eltownhall.com](http://www.eltownhall.com).

Interested persons are invited to attend and be heard.

Dated at East Lyme, Connecticut, on this 5th day of April 2023.

**EAST LYME BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Ms. Cicchello seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

**Decision** MOTION (9)

Ms. Santoro moved that notice is hereby given, of a public hearing to be held by the East Lyme Board of Selectmen on Wednesday, April 19th, 2023, at the East Lyme Town Hall at 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, Connecticut beginning at 7:00 p.m. to receive comments regarding the following proposed amendment to the:

S150.015 ORDINANCE PRESCRIBING FEES FOR BUILDING AND DEMOLITION PERMITS

Said amendment replaces the valuation method for calculating building permit fees and demolition permits.

Copies of the proposed amendment are available for review in the East Lyme Town Clerk's office and the Town of East Lyme website, [www.eltownhall.com](http://www.eltownhall.com)

Interested persons are invited to attend and be heard.

Dated at East Lyme, Connecticut, on this 5th day of April, 2023.

EAST LYME BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Ms. Cicchiello seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

### 6-5. Discussion and Possible Action - EMPG Grant

**Note** Mr. Seery said the following:

This item has been given to them by Chief Finklestein, as the Director of Emergency Management.

It's to request a special appropriation in the amount of \$10,154.10.

This Emergency Management Performance Grant was awarded to the Town of East Lyme's Department of Emergency Management February 3, 2023.

\$9,231.00 if the grant funding is to cover a portion of Emergency Management salaries.

The remaining \$923.10 is 100% reimbursable funding for personal protective equipment (PPE) purchased between October 1st, 2022, and September 30th, 2023.

**Note** The Board briefly discussed the grant.

**Decision** MOTION (10)

Ms. Santoro moved to approve the special appropriation in the amount of \$10,154.10. Of the requested funds \$9,231.00 will be utilized to cover a portion of the Emergency Management salaries and \$923.10 is funding for personal protective equipment purchased between 10/01/2022 and 09/30/2023, and forward to the Board of Finance for Approval.

Note: This requires a Town Meeting.

Ms. Cicchiello seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

**Note** Ms. Hardy asked if this item is renewable every year, and Mr. Seery confirmed that it is.

### 6-6. Discussion and Possible Action - Community Center Room Rental

**Note** Mr. Seery noted this is a housekeeping item; the new Parks & Rec Director worked with the Senior Center Director to revamp the community center room rental form, and they asked the Board of Selectmen to take a look at it.

**Note** Ms. Hardy directed the Board to the third page, 3 quarters down, under additional rules, consumption of alcoholic beverages.

Ms. Hardy said it should read "The consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited." She said they've had this discussion numerous times over the years, we have public facilities in town where they're licensed, in charge of alcohol, let them go there. Ms. Hardy said it's not appropriate to have alcohol in a public building, and the number of lawsuits that are going on, we don't need to be waiving the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

**Note** The Board discussed how alcohol has never been permitted there before, and that this waiver has never come up before.

**Note** After further discussion, the Board agreed to state that the consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.

**Note** Ms. Hardy said the form also talks about how insurance may be waived; she hopes that would not happen very frequently, since they all know the state of litigation these days.

**Note** Ms. Hardy said the form is contradictory:  
It reads " Users are required to pay the room fee and associated extra cost 5 working days before the start of the event," it then says "If payment is not made within 30 days, the user will be liable for an interest charge."

**Note** After further discussion, Mr. Seery suggested they table this item and seek clarification from Mr. Lokken and discuss some edits.

## 7. New Business

### 7-1. Discussion - Part-time Grant Writer Position

**Note** Mr. Seery shared the following:

He mentions this because there are numerous grants available at the state and federal level.

He thinks if they have a dedicated part time grant writer to identify and prepare grants, which they may qualify for, it will help them out.

Current thoughts are to explore the option of a 12-hour week position at a rate of pay to be determined.

We've just hired a Curator for Brookside Farm Museum, who happens to have grant writing experience.

He's going to talk to that individual to see if they'd be willing to possibly pick up some more hours, to look at doing this too.

He has also reached out to some nonprofit agencies you have done this type of work, to ask for assistance in crafting a job description.

**Note** Mr. Seery asked the Board to reach out to him by phone or email, with any input. He said he will continue to work on this, and hopefully over the next month or so, they'll have someone in this position.

**Note** The Board discussed grant writing and how helpful it would be to have someone knowledgeable, who's familiar with what's available, to be working on this.

**Note** Mr. Cunningham said he thinks this is a good approach, and Mr. Weber said it seems like a contracted position, not a town employee.

**Note** Mr. Seery said he likes the safeguard that an employee offers; a contracted employee could have work that takes them elsewhere, and their presence may not be as reliable and regular.

### 7-2. Schedule Annual Town Meeting - Monday, May 8th, 2023

**Decision** MOTION (11)

Ms. Santoro moved that notice is hereby given of the Annual Town Meeting to be held on Monday, May 8, 2023, at the East Lyme High School Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. to act on the following:

1. To review and discuss the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, as recommended by the Board of Finance.
  - a. In accordance with Chapter 7.3 of the Town Charter, the moderator shall adjourn the annual budget meeting to a referendum on the voting machines, the budget resolution will be submitted to the persons qualified to vote in a Town Meeting by Referendum, by machine vote, which referendum shall take place on May 18, 2023, at the East Lyme Community Center from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
2. To adopt a Five-Year Capital Plan.
3. To conduct such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

Dated at East Lyme, CT this 5th day of April, 2023.

EAST LYME BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Ms. Cicchiello seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

### 7-3. Discussion and Possible Action - Electronic Citation Grant

**Note** Lt. Macek came forward and said the following:

He's been working on this grant since 2019.

He's trying to act quickly since the vendor is stating that they have an increase in pricing coming up soon. The State is trying to get every police department actively utilizing the electronic citation or E citation system.

Essentially, right now officers handwrite traffic citations if they pull somebody over a speeding ticket, or a traffic light violation.

This system takes the handwritten part away.

It gives them the ability to transfer that data over to the citation and print that out right in the vehicle.

The grant is covering is all the hardware that's required for the citation process.

in order to outfit the 14 marked cruisers, we have, he was able to secure a grant through the DOT and Federal Government, for \$17,558.

That will take care of the 14 printers, associated equipment- the cables, mounts, and so forth.

The only thing that's required by us in the town, is that we procure this three-year extended warranty on the printers itself. He has the funds for the \$2,300 yearly maintenance contract, for the extended warranty.

East Lyme is one of only a handful of departments left in the state that are not currently participating in and utilizing the E-Citation platform.

In 2021, both the Boards of Selectman and Finance approved a special appropriation to modernize our police vehicle Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) computers.

The E-Citation printers are the last component to that upgrade.

**Note** Lt. Macek and the Board discussed how this feature will enhance the safety of the officers.

**Note** Ms. Hardy asked if the equipment is transferable into a new vehicle and Lt. Macek confirmed that it is.

**Note** Mr. Weber said it sounds like this will allow for a safer, more efficient process.

**Decision** MOTION (12)

Ms. Santoro moved to appropriate and transfer for the Electronic Citation Grant, \$17,558.00 from CNRE Fund revenue account 32-04-400-405 (CT DOT Grants – PD) to account 32-25-400-700-402 (CT DOT Grant Equipment – PD) and forward to the Board of Finance for Approval.

Note: This requires a Town Meeting.

Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.



## 9. First Selectman's Report

**Note** Mr. Seery shared the following:

The 161 Corridor Study are going to have a second presentation for the public on April 27th, at 6pm, at the Middle School cafeteria.

Further info is on the town website.

The old carwash is gone, the fence is off, and they're really working hard and getting that done.

Work for the Exit 74 Interchange is has begun.

They're hoping their website will be up and about 10 days from now, and the site will detail lane closures, and items of that nature.

They're also looking to set up a presentation initially for business owners in the affected corridor.

All the permits have been issued for the Niantic Theatre.

They've come to agreement with the Dispatches for a three-year contract.

At the last Water & Sewer meeting, 75,000 gallons a day for the Niantic Project was approved.

They've got a long way to go.

They have to go to Zoning, Planning, Inland Wetlands, and so forth.

Bill Bowyer is retiring from the Police Department on August 30th, and Cathy Wilson has retired from the Senior Center, and her replacement, Kristen Chromatica has been named.

She previously worked as a Program Director there.

He and Ms. Hardy had the pleasure of interviewing her.

Rosa Negra sponsored an event honoring women, who have contributed to the community, in many ways.

Rita Rivera, who's part of Niantic Main Street & the Miracle League was honored.

Melissa Victor who is a lifelong resident and has spent 38 years as an EMT, and also as a driver for the at the Senior Center, was honored.

Patricia Payne, who runs Care & Share was honored.

Rita Fokaidis who runs Village Cafe and constantly donates her time to help the community, was honored.

Rena Powers of Blue Door was honored.

Carol Morelli, who is a former Registrar of Voters, and is a member of the Public Trust was honored.

Elizabeth Urbina and Lena Agudelo told their immigration stories that evening as well.

Joyce Bouvier was also recognized for her contributions to the Arts.

He thanks everyone for their contributions.

**Note** Mr. Seery said the following:

There's countless more people to recognize, one of which we're going to do right now, and this person doesn't even know it yet.

year on the first Friday of May the New London County Bar Association partners with the American Bar Association to host a local Law Day celebration.

This year's theme set by the American Bar Association is cornerstones of democracy, civics, civility. And collaboration.

The London County Bar Association Board of Directors has nominated Roseanne Hardy as this year's honoree, the recipient of the Liberty Bell award.

The BOD is impressed with her level of connectivity to the area, her distinguished career as an educator and her work as a member of the Board of Selectmen for the Town of East Lyme.

The event will take place at the Norwich Inn & Spa on May 5th, at 9:00 a.m.

## 10. Communications

**Note** There were none.

## 11. Public Comment

**Note** There was none.

## 12. Selectman's Response

**Note** Mr. Seery thanked Lt. Macek for all his hard work.

#### 7-4. Boards and Commission Assignments

**Note** Mr. Seery explained the following:

Spencer Clapp has been an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, and John Smith has been a regular member.

Mr. Smith has been unable to make the meetings on a regular basis so both individuals would like to swap roles.

They have resigned from their current positions and switching will not affect minority representation.

They moved this item up quickly because they have a meeting next Monday, and Mr. Clapp actually sat for the first part of that meeting.

**Note** Mr. Seery said he thanks both parties for their desire to continue to serve the community.

**Decision** MOTION (13)

Ms. Santoro moved to appoint Paul Spencer Clapp, of 11 Chadwick Place, Niantic 06357 as a Regular Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term to expire on January 5, 2026, and John Mitchell Smith, of 2 Clarks Lane, Niantic 06357 as an Alternate Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term to expire on January 8, 2024.

Ms. Cicchiello seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

#### 8. Ex-Officio Reports

**Note** Ms. Hardy had nothing to report.

**Note** Mr. Cunningham had nothing to report.

**Note** Ms. Santoro noted the following:

She and Ms. Cicchiello attended the Board of Education budget presentation to the Board of Finance.

The comments previously made to the Board of Education by the Board of Selectmen, seemed to be pretty foundational for some of the questioning and comments that night.


The presentation itself was slightly different and contained different slides.

**Note** See attachment sent to BOF by BOS

**Task**  ~~Ms. Santoro said she thinks it would be helpful to have the list of comments that they made, that Sandy Anderson sent to the Board of Finance, attached to this evening's minutes.~~

*Owned by Kevin Seery, First Selectman*

**Note** See attachment sent to BOF by BOS.

 [Board of Selectmen Comments to BOF Re BOE Budget.pdf](#)

**Note** Ms. Cicchiello said the following:

She attended the Historic Properties meeting last night.

Brookside Farm hired Anna Perch as their part-time Curator.

On June 10, the Samuel Smith Farmstead will have their second annual Farmstead, Vintage Tractor and Truck Show, which will have live music, food, and tours.

On Saturday August 12th, there's a live architectural dig at the Lee House.

The Inland Wetlands meeting was cancelled.

**Note** There was none.

### **13. Executive Session - Real Estate - East Lyme Land Trust - Oswegatchie Hills /Hathaway Farms Property**

**Decision** MOTION (14)

Ms. Santoro moved to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing Real Estate matters (EL Land Trust – Oswegatchie Hills).

Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

**Note** The Board entered into executive session at 8:35 p.m. and returned at 9:08 p.m., and it was stated that no formal votes were taken.

### **14. Adjournment**

**Decision** MOTION (15)

Ms. Santoro moved to adjourn the April 5th, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 9:08 p.m.

Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

**Note** Respectfully Submitted,  
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary

## Task Summary

### New Tasks

**Task**  Ms. Santero said she thinks it would be helpful to have the list of comments that they made, that Sandy Anderson sent to the Board of Finance, attached to this evening's minutes.

*Owned by Kevin Saary, First Selectman*

## ORDINANCE PRESCRIBING FEES FOR FIRE MARSHAL PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS

### Section 1. Permits

- A.** No building or structure subject to the Connecticut State Fire Safety Code and/or State Fire Prevention Code shall be constructed, used, occupied, enlarged, altered or repaired unless a permit has been granted for said activity by the Fire Marshal.
- B.** No person shall undertake any of the operations or activities described in Section 2C of this article until such person shall have obtained a permit from the Fire Marshal. Said permit shall be valid for 12 months from the date of issue. No continuation, expansion, diminution or modification of said operations shall be undertaken without obtaining a permit from the Fire Marshal.
- C.** No person shall install, enlarge, alter, remove, repair or replace any fire protection system in any building or structure subject to the Connecticut State Fire Safety Code and/or State Fire Prevention Code, until such person shall have obtained a permit from the Fire Marshal.
- D.** The permit(s) required pursuant to this section shall be required in addition to any other permits or licenses required by federal, state or local law.

### Section 2. Schedule of fees.

- A.** The fee for plan reviews for new construction, renovations, additions or modernization of buildings or structures shall be at the following rates. For purposes of this subsection, "fast track" is an expedited plan review which will be conducted in one week or less, subject to staff availability.
- (1)** Fire plan review (not including R-3 occupancies): 65% of the building permit fee or 100% for fast track review.
- (2)** Mechanical plan review (fire protection systems): 100% of the building permit fee or 135% for fast track review.
- (3)** Electrical plan review: 35% of the building permit fee or 70% for fast track review.
- B.** The fee for field inspections, approval and acceptance of new construction, renovations, additions or modernization of multifamily residential (not including R-3 occupancies) and commercial buildings or structures associated with the issuance of a certificate of occupancy shall be at the following rates:

<b>Estimated Construction Cost (From Building Permit Application)</b>	<b>Fee Formula</b>
\$1 to \$500	\$10.41
\$501 to \$2,000	\$10.41 for the first \$500 plus \$0.26 for each additional \$100 or fraction thereof up to and including \$2,000
\$2,001 to \$25,000	\$14.31 for the first \$2,000 plus \$1.04 for each additional \$1,000 or fraction thereof up to and including \$25,000
\$25,001 to \$50,000	\$38.25 for the first \$25,000 plus \$0.78 for each additional \$1,000 or fraction thereof up to and including \$50,000

**Estimated Construction Cost  
(From Building Permit Application)**

**Fee Formula**

\$50,001 to \$100,000	\$57.77 for the first \$50,000 plus \$0.52 for each additional \$1,000 or fraction thereof up to and including \$100,000
\$100,001 to \$500,000	\$83.80 for the first \$100,000 plus \$0.46 for each additional \$1,000 or fraction thereof up to and including \$500,000
\$500,001 to \$1,000,000	\$271.18 for the first \$500,000 plus \$0.42 for each additional \$1,000
\$1,000,001 and up	\$479.38 for the first \$1,000,000 plus \$0.26 for each additional \$1,000 or fraction thereof
Manufactured structures setup fee	\$10.41 per section, with a minimum fee of \$20.82 per permit

C. Any person engaged in any of the following operations and/or occupancies shall obtain periodic inspection thereof according to the schedule set forth in C.G.S. § 29-305 as that section may be amended or recodified from time to time. Single-use inspections shall be valid only for a one-time event at a single venue. Multi-use inspections shall be valid for 12 months from date of issue and shall apply to multiple venues if the inspected configuration or process does not change. All inspections include both fire permit and fire inspection. The fee(s) for the annual permit required pursuant to Section 1B, including such inspection(s), shall be as follows:

**Operation Permit Fee Table**

<b>Operations and Materials</b>	<b>Permit Required</b>	<b>Permit Fee</b>
Aircraft hangars	For servicing or repairing aircraft	\$100 per year
Airport terminal buildings	For operation	\$100 per year
Ambulatory health care occupancy	To operate an ambulatory health care occupancy	See Occupancy Permit Fee Table
Ammonium nitrate	For storage	\$250 per year
Apartment buildings and dormitories	To operate an apartment building or dormitory	See Occupancy Permit Fee Table
Automobile wrecking yards	To operate automobile wrecking yards	\$100 per year

### Operation Permit Fee Table

Operations and Materials	Permit Required	Permit Fee
Battery system	To operate stationary lead-acid battery systems having an electrolyte capacity of more than 100 gallon (379 liters) in sprinklered buildings or 50 gallon (189 liters) in nonsprinklered buildings	\$75 per year
Business occupancies	To operate a business occupancy	See Occupancy Permit Fee Table
Candles, open flames, and portable cooking	To use in connection with assembly areas, dining areas of restaurants, or drinking establishments	\$30; single use; \$60 multi-use
Cellulose nitrate film	For storage, handling, or use	\$100 per year
Cleanrooms	For operation	\$150 per year
Combustible material storage	To store more than 2,500 ft <sup>3</sup> (70.8 m <sup>3</sup> ) gross volume	\$250 per year
Commercial rubbish-handling operation	To operate	\$150 per year
Consumer fireworks (1.4G)	For the sale, on-site handling, manufacture, and storage of consumer fireworks (1.4G)	\$150 per year
Covered mall buildings	Annual requirement for facilities that utilize mall area for exhibits or displays with 4 conditions	\$250 per year
Cutting and welding operation	For operations within a jurisdiction	\$30; single use; \$60; multi-use
Day-care occupancies	To operate a day-care occupancy	See Occupancy Permit Fee Table
Dry-cleaning plants	To engage in business of dry cleaning or to change to a more hazardous cleaning solvent	\$180 per year
Dust-producing operations	To operate a grain elevator, flour mill, starch mill, feed mill, or plant pulverizing aluminum, coal, cocoa, magnesium, spices, or sugar, etc.	\$250 per year
Educational occupancy	To operate an educational occupancy	See Occupancy Permit Fee Table

### Operation Permit Fee Table

Operations and Materials	Permit Required	Permit Fee
Exhibit and trade shows	For operation of all exhibits and trade shows held within a jurisdiction	\$250 per event
Fairs, no rides	To conduct the events	\$50 per event
Flame effects	Use of flame effects before an audience	\$180 per event
Health care facility	To operate a health care occupancy	See Occupancy Permit Fee Table
High-piled combustible storage	To use any building or portion thereof as a high-piled storage area exceeding 500 ft <sup>2</sup> (46.45 m <sup>2</sup> )	\$250 per year
Hot work operations	For hot work; for additional permit requirements for hot work operations, see 41.1.5 <i>Editor's Note: See Uniform Fire Code.</i>	\$30, single use; \$60, multi-use
Hotels and bed-and-breakfast establishment	To operate a hotel, motel or bed and breakfast establishment	See Occupancy Permit Fee Table
Industrial occupancies	To operate an industrial occupancy	See Occupancy Permit Fee Table
Industrial ovens and furnaces	For operation of industrial ovens and furnaces covered by Chapter 51 <i>Editor's Note: See Uniform Fire Code.</i>	\$100 per year
Lumberyards and woodworking plants	For storage of lumber exceeding 100,000 board feet	\$250 per year
Membrane structures, tents, and canopies - permanent	For construction, location, erection, or placement	\$100 per structure
Membrane structures, tents, and canopies - temporary	To operate an air-supported temporary membrane structure or tent having an area in excess of 200 ft <sup>2</sup> (18.6 m <sup>2</sup> ) or a canopy in excess of 400 ft <sup>2</sup> (37.2 m <sup>2</sup> ). Exception: temporary membrane structures, tents, or canopy structures used exclusively for camping	\$50, single use; \$100, multi-use
Mercantile occupancies	To operate a mercantile occupancy	See Occupancy



### Operation Permit Fee Table

Operations and Materials	Permit Required	Permit Fee
		Permit Fee Table
Organic coatings	For operation and maintenance of a facility that manufactures organic coatings	\$150 per year
Places of assembly, including special amusement buildings	To operate a place of assembly	See Occupancy Permit Fee Table
Pyrotechnics before a proximate audience	For the display and use of pyrotechnic materials before a proximate audience	\$150 per event
Propane filling station	Where cylinder refilling takes place	\$50 per year
Propane tank installation	Inspection of all propane installation, residential and commercial	\$20 for permit
Propane tank use at events	Tanks used at events or fairs	\$20 per tank
Refrigeration equipment	To operate a mechanical refrigeration unit or system	\$50 per year
Repair garages and service stations	For operation of service stations and repair garages	\$50 per year
Residential board and care occupancies	To operate a residential board and care occupancy	See Occupancy Permit Fee Table
Rocketry manufacturing	For the manufacturing of model rocket motors	\$250 per year
Rooftop heliports	For operation of a rooftop heliport	\$250 per year
Special outdoor events, carnivals, and fairs	For the location and operation of special outdoor events, carnivals, and fairs	\$60 per event
Special structures and high-rise buildings	To operate special structures and high-rise buildings	See Occupancy Permit Fee Table
Storage occupancies	To operate a storage occupancy	See Occupancy

### Operation Permit Fee Table

Operations and Materials	Permit Required	Permit Fee
		Permit Fee Table
Tar kettles	For placement of a tar kettle, placement shall be obtained prior to the placement of a tar kettle	\$30, single use; \$60, multi-use
Tire-rebuilding plants	For operation and maintenance of a tire-rebuilding plant	\$150 per year
Tire storage	To use an open area or portion thereof to store tires in excess of 1,000 ft <sup>3</sup> (28.3 m <sup>3</sup> )	\$150 per year
Torch-applied roofing operation	For the use of a torch for application of roofing materials	\$30, single use; \$60, multi-use
Wildland fire-prone areas	For use of hazardous areas within fire-prone areas.	\$x per year
Wood products	To store chips, hogged material, lumber, or plywood in excess of 200 ft <sup>3</sup> (5.7 m <sup>3</sup> )	\$150 per year

### Occupancy Permit Fee Table

	Occupancy Group 1 Annual Renewal A, E, H-1, I-1 and R (Not Including R-3 Occupancies)	Occupancy Group 2 Biannual Renewal H-2, I-3, I-4, B-Medical and B-College	Occupancy Group 3 Triennial Renewal B, H-3, M, S-1	Occupancy Group 4 Quadrennial Renewal F-1, F-2, H-4, H-5, S-2 and U
0 to 3,000 square feet	\$60	\$60	\$60	\$60
3,001 to 5,000 square feet	\$95	\$95	\$95	\$95
5,001 to 7,500 square feet	\$125	\$125	\$125	\$125
7,501 to 10,000 square feet	\$135	\$135	\$135	\$135

**Occupancy Permit Fee Table**

	<b>Occupancy Group 1 Annual Renewal A, E, H-1, I-1 and R (Not Including R-3 Occupancies)</b>	<b>Occupancy Group 2 Biannual Renewal H-2, I-3, I-4, B-Medical and B-College</b>	<b>Occupancy Group 3 Triennial Renewal B, H-3, M, S-1</b>	<b>Occupancy Group 4 Quadrennial Renewal F-1, F-2, H-4, H-5, S-2 and U</b>
10,001 to 12,500 square feet	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150
12,501 to 15,000 square feet	\$170	\$170	\$170	\$170
15,001 to 17,500 square feet	\$180	\$180	\$180	\$180
17,501 to 20,000 square feet	\$190	\$190	\$190	\$190
20,001 to 30,000 square feet	\$205	\$205	\$205	\$205
30,001 to 40,000 square feet	\$230	\$230	\$230	\$230
40,001 to 50,000 square feet	\$245	\$245	\$245	\$245
50,001 to 60,000 square feet	\$260	\$260	\$260	\$260
60,001 to 70,000 square feet	\$275	\$275	\$275	\$275

**Occupancy Permit Fee Table**

	<b>Occupancy Group 1 Annual Renewal A, E, H-1, I-1 and R (Not Including R-3 Occupancies)</b>	<b>Occupancy Group 2 Biannual Renewal H-2, I-3, I-4, B-Medical and B-College</b>	<b>Occupancy Group 3 Triennial Renewal B, H-3, M, S-1</b>	<b>Occupancy Group 4 Quadrennial Renewal F-1, F-2, H-4, H-5, S-2 and U</b>
70,001 to 100,000 square feet	\$285	\$285	\$285	\$285
100,001 to 150,000 square feet	\$305	\$305	\$305	\$305
150,001 to 200,000 square feet	\$340	\$340	\$340	\$340

**D.** All permit fees established pursuant to this section are due when an application is submitted to the Fire Marshal.

**Section 3. Penalties for offenses.**

- A.** Any person who commences any work which is subject to the permit requirements of Section 1A or 1B without first obtaining a permit shall be required to pay a penalty of \$500 in addition to the permit fee otherwise applicable. No such penalty shall be imposed upon a person who commences emergency repair work without a permit, provided that a permit is sought promptly thereafter.
- B.** Any person who conducts any operation which is subject to the permit requirements of Section 1B without first obtaining a permit shall be required to pay a penalty equal to the amount of the permit fee otherwise applicable. Said penalty shall be payable in addition to the required permit fee. No such penalty shall be imposed upon a person who commences emergency repair work without a permit provided that a permit is sought promptly thereafter.

**Section 4. Penalties for nonpayment.**

Failure to pay fees as prescribed in this Ordinance may result in an injunction to cease and desist and a penalty of interest on delinquent bills will be charged at the rate of 1 1/2% per month from the due date (18% per annum). For purposes of this Ordinance the "due date" shall be 15 days from the date the Fire Marshal issues a bill. No additional permits will be issued regarding any property until the fees are paid in full. Emergency work will be considered if it poses a threat to life safety. The Fire Marshal may choose to write infractions for operating without a Town permit in accordance with the Fire Prevention Code.

Section 5. Agencies exempt from fees; exception.

Agencies of the Town of East Lyme and the East Lyme Board of Education shall be required to obtain all permits and/or inspections required pursuant to this article but all fees associated therewith shall be waived.

William J. Bundy  
Fire Marshal Town of East Lyme

# §150.015 ORDINANCE PRESCRIBING FEES FOR BUILDING AND DEMOLITION PERMITS

**I. Residential Building based on the following valuation formula (does not include plumbing, heating & electrical work for alterations, additions, renovations and swimming pools):**

Sheds (under 600sf)	\$25.00 per square foot of building area
Above Ground Pools	\$15.00 per square foot of building area
In Ground Pools	\$50.00 per square foot of building area
Finish existing basement without bathroom	\$40.00 per square foot of building area
Finish existing basement with bathroom	\$50.00 per square foot of building area
Decks	\$55.00 per square foot of building area
Unfinished Garage & Outbuildings over 600 sf	\$65.00 per square foot of building area
New Homes	\$125.00 per square foot of building area
New Custom Home	\$225.00 per square foot of building area
Interior alterations or renovations	\$55.00 per square foot of building area
Siding and Roofing	\$6.00 per square foot of building area

**II. Commercial Building based on the following valuation formulas:**

Renovations in existing buildings	\$55.00 per square foot of building area
New Commercial Buildings	As per current International Code Council fee schedule or contact amount ( <i>This does not include sprinklers, commercial kitchen hoods, electrical wiring, alarm systems, plumbing and or mechanical equipment includes but not limited to propane tanks or gas unit heaters.</i> )

**III. Building Permit Fee Rule summary**

- a. 13.00 per thousand or portion thereof, in value, with a minimum fee of \$30.00 for the first thousand. As of 7/1/2010 twenty-six cents (\$0.26) per thousand for State Education Fee. Permit fee includes Certificate of Approval.
- b. Certificate of Occupancy \$50.00.
- c. Plan Review fee, commercial projects over \$150,000.00 in construction cost based on the current ICC fee schedule.
- d. In the event of permit expiration or cancellation, applicant may request in writing an 80% refund of the building permit fee – 20% plan review fee in nonrefundable.
- e. Demolition Permit Fee is \$100.00
- f. A re-inspection fee of \$50.00 will be charged to the property owner or contractor for any of the following conditions:
  1. Failure to comply with building code requirements that were cited during a previous inspection.
  2. If the work to be re-inspected is not ready for inspection upon arrival of the building inspector or assistant building inspector.
  3. If no one is present to meet the inspector and prior arrangements have not been made. The inspector at his discretion may waive the fee if an emergency situation is demonstrated.
  4. If the scope of work has changed and prior approval was not obtained from the building official. The fee must be paid prior to scheduling another inspection.
- g. No permit fee shall be payable for any work to be done by or for the town.
- h. The Board of Selectmen may waive any permit fee, in whole or in part, for any work to be done by or for a non-profit organization, when the Board deems it in the public interest to do so.

## Kevin Seery

### **HEALTH BENEFITS**

Currently, the BOE is budgeting 12% for health benefits (the percentage recommended by Brown and Brown). With the estimated costs coming in significantly less than anticipated, a reduction in this line of approximately \$325,000 is recommended (based on current estimates).

### **BUDGET INCREASE OF 8.88%**

The tax increase required to support this level of increase would place a burden on a significant number of individuals and families in Town. The initial increase sought by the Superintendent was 6.97% and identified 18.5 staff positions being eliminated. It is understood this would have an impact on the educational district and an examination of available resources would help avoid this type of reduction without eliminating other important programs.

### **Questions Asked (w/some answered) / Comments from the March 13<sup>th</sup> BOS Meeting:**

- 437 - Repairs and Maintenance: Significant increase- is this related to the computer issues?
  - NO- this is carpet and rugs and such like that.
- Question for Chris Lund: Have we looked into Solar for the schools?
- Could we save a lot of money is we reduce the number of busses?
  - Short answer no.
- Here again, it's a difficult year. One town. One budget.

## Capital

- Air Quality Standards: We may be able to cut from \$100k to \$50k.

## Kevin Gervais

- The BOE Maintenance employees are going to be putting in the carpets?
  - Chris Lund stated electrical work is outsourced.

# Anne Santoro

## **PROCESS**

Chapter 6, Section 6.1 of the Town Charter governs the yearly preparation of the Town's budget. Section 6.1.1 expressly requires the Board of Selectmen to present the proposed budget to the Board of Finance for its review, along with both comments and recommendations concerning the Board of Education's budget as well as adjustments made to the Town's operating expenditures and revenues. Section 6.1.1 clearly establishes a comprehensive, not bifurcated, review of budgetary information by the Selectmen prior to forwarding a proposed budget to Finance.

The Board of Selectmen forwarded an adjusted budget to the Board of Finance on March 1, however, without its analysis of the proposed Education budget which was presented to the Selectmen on March 13. This is the second year in a row in which the Selectmen's required oversight has been thwarted by a late presentation of the Board of Education's budget. Process exists for a reason—here, for a desired, wholistic oversight by the Board of Selectmen and, as a provision of our Charter, it needs to be followed.

## **MINIMUM BUDGET REQUIREMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BUDGET**

These two numbers provide perspective for the Boards of Selectmen and Finance, as well as for the public who will be voting on the proposed budget.

I've asked for the estimate of the FY '23-'24 Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) for the district (it will be submitted to the state in August). The '23-'24 Education budget essentially cannot fall below the previous year's adopted Education budget unless extraordinary circumstances exist (i.e., the closing of a school). Any yearly increase to the Education budget therefore has built-in, permanent consequences, especially for the mil rate and taxpayers. --Using current proposed numbers, the Board of Education budget would amount to 67.44% of the total FY '23-'24 budget, not including a proposed \$1,860,000 to be bonded or borrowed short term for Education capital projects. This percentage is part of an upward trend over the last number of years that needs examination, in particular, how the continual increase affects the three other categories of expenditure—General Government (Town operations), Debt (Service), and Capital. Comparative expenditure percentages reveal spending priorities as well as borrowing habits—would these reflect a budget in '23-'24 that responsibly meets the needs of Town operations and the schools?

## **REVENUE**

As Covid relief ends and if the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) state grant is recalculated as planned and not restored as hoped, our education revenues for FY '23-'24 are less. Only 15.85% or \$9,336,403 of the Education budget is paid for by state, federal, and other dollars. The remaining approximately \$50 million in operating expenses must be borne by our taxpayers, along with the cost of borrowing for school capital projects.

There is talk that the ECS grant may be fully restored to last's year amount. This would result in an increase in education revenues of \$303,225. Superintendent Newton and First Selectman Seery stated at the March 13 Selectmen's meeting that lobbying efforts are underway to encourage the state legislature to restore the grant. These efforts are good news and need to continue.

As concerns revenue generated from Salem and other tuition, it should be noted that it has declined over at least the last 5 years (\$3,117,368 in '17-'18 to \$2,534,081 in '22-'23/same projected for '23-'24). The base tuition for Salem students for '23-'24 is \$15, 329.42 per vote of 1/23/23 and the Salem/East Lyme agreement. This agreement allows for the contribution by Salem to the cost of high school capital projects. Has this contribution been pursued? Considering that Salem students use our high school



facilities and that East Lyme's per pupil cost is \$20,224, we may wish to pursue cost sharing of these projects with Salem.

Finally, at the March 13 meeting I asked Finance Director Stevens to provide revenue information from programs or other sources such as the Integrated Preschool; before or aftercare; Creative Playschool; rentals to organizations, etc. This information was not included in the budget booklet or in the slide presentation.

#### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS; REPAIR/MAINTENANCE; PROJECTS**

The capital request of \$1,860,000 is large and is in addition to the budget total of \$58,914,852. I've asked Director of Facilities Lund for more detail as well as corrected information about the various projects that comprise this request.

A Capital Improvement Plan for the schools should be provided to indicate priorities for FY '23-'24 as compared to expected capital outlays 5-10 years out.

A brief summary/list of requirements vs. recommendations for school air quality that are expected to impact capital or maintenance projects should be provided.

Note that there are no cash projects in capital, so bonding and short-term borrowing would be needed, even for duct cleaning which I think should really be a maintenance item.

For Object Codes 436 and 437, detail is needed as to the cost totals of repairs and projects to justify the increases requested.

#### **SALARIES AND BENEFITS**

Of the proposed \$4,806,374 total increase requested in this budget, \$4,008,287 is due to increases in salaries and benefits, driven in large part by increases in employment contracts and union agreements.

\$1,697,622 is attributed to an increase in health insurance costs, calculated using a 12% expected rate of increase. Currently the state has indicated that the rate is about 7%. The Town used a rate of 8.01% in its calculations. I recommend reducing the rate used in the Education budget to align more with that used by the Town. I understand that the state will confirm its expected increase by early April.

As for the Certified salaries (Object Code 111) for 8.5 positions previously paid with ARP ESSER funds—why are these positions continuing in the absence of Covid relief funding? During the review of FY '21-'22 and FY '22-'23 Education budgets, Selectmen and Finance members clearly advised against using Covid relief funding to create and/or pay for ongoing positions rather than one-time expenses.

Further, I concur with Selectman Weber's point at the March 13 meeting about the proposed reduction of 18.5 staffing positions put forth by Mr. Newton—this proposal needs a second look by the Board of Education as in making the suggested reductions, Mr. Newton apparently found them workable. I understand that 7 of these positions have been funded using Covid relief resources—an additional reason to take a second look.

#### **TRENDS IN STUDENT ENROLLMENT, SPECIAL EDUCATION, AND STAFF**

The Selectmen wondered whether trends in student enrollment could help further explain the very large proposed increase in salaries and benefits. We asked for updated data. I've pieced together here available information.

Superintendent Newton presented a chart of projected future enrollment to the Selectmen on March 13. It is not clear what data what was used to create the chart. In any event, the chart indicates a decline in enrollment from the current FY through 2027. More importantly, this would follow a decline in enrollment of 251 students over the past 10 years—or an 8.75% decrease—according to state data. Special education status has trended in the opposite direction. It has increased over the last 10 years by 5.84% and is currently about 19% of students enrolled, evident from the March 13 presentation and state data. It would be very helpful to know how much of this increase has resulted in increases in staffing.

Staffing, but not staffing of classroom teachers, has increased since 2017-2018, evident in state data as well as a bar graph provided last year by Mr. Newton. Social workers, psychologists, paraprofessionals, OT/PT/other related services have all increased since '17-'18.

### **FUEL AND UTILITY COSTS**

These items (Object Codes 627, 410, 411, 412, 620, 621) total \$2,355,806. Any percentage savings here would be desirable. Town operations have benefitted greatly from locking in rates. (See Department 117/PW and 113/Maintenance of Town Buildings budget amounts for fuel and utilities). Perhaps it's not too late to share information or lock in rates to reduce the expected increase.

### **Questions Asked (w/some answered) / Comments from the March 13<sup>th</sup> BOS Meeting:**

- She is hopeful that there will be room for reductions.
- Crisis Data: we have data from this year, what % increase year over year?
  - Jeff Newton said its up 10-15%.
- How is the crisis data tracking?
- Enrollment: Looking to see staffing, enrollment and administrators year over year.
- Since so much of the \$4.8 million increase is staffing, having a picture of this would be helpful.
- Wants chart and graph of the enrollment data as it relates to SPED students, administrators and staffing.
- 8.5 staff added under ESSR funds- are those positions added into this budget?
  - These positions are added into this budget.
- Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) - do we have a working number on that?
  - Maryanna Stevens said it is filed in August.
- Would like to see an estimate of the MBR.
- Revenues: Does the district have a plan to lobby the state legislature to restore the proposed cuts?
  - Yes, working with the first selectman to advocate and lobby our representatives.
- Salem: Pays a substantial amount- Has tuition increased? What is the total number of 8th graders at Salem?
  - Rates are based on contracts negotiated between the two boards of education.
- 136 - Safety Personnel: 10.5% increase - What is driving this?
  - Two new positions.
- 119 - Computer Consultant - What is driving this increase? 6.3% increase.
  - One individual took on additional duties.
- 212 - Retirement Severance - Using nearly \$225k for retirements.
- 121 - Long Term subs Substitute Certified: Could you explain these increases?
  - More aligned with actual expenses.

- 641 – Textbooks.
  - BOE asked for an extension. NO decision yet. This is a state mandated a reading program.
- Revenue - Only 15.85% of your budget is paid for by intergovernmental dollars. The rest is funded by tax dollars.

**BOF TO FOLLOW UP** with the question - Integrated preschool, after school care, etc. - can you break out the revenues of these programs?

## Ann Cicchiello

As stated at the hearing on March 13, 2023, the BOE Budget this year is \$54.1 million dollars. The proposed budget increase for the 23/24 budget is \$4.8 million dollars which would effectively increase the BOE budget from 54.1 million dollars to 58.9 million dollars. Each year the BOE automatically receives by law the total budget they received the previous year which means that the BOE for the 23/24 budget year will automatically receive \$54.1 million dollars. The BOE is requesting an increase of \$4.8 million dollars. This is an 8.8% increase to the budget.

The town residents have always supported and continue to support the BOE. Most recently the residents invested over \$45 million dollars in renovating the elementary schools. The town wants to support the BOE, but unfortunately, the proposed budget increase of \$4.8 million dollars is not sustainable for residents on fixed incomes given the current inflation, and the increased prices for basic necessities such as utilities, food, and medicine.

### **BUDGET INCREASE OF 6.97%**

I did attend all the BOE meetings and public hearings on the budget. The budget was thoroughly and diligently reviewed by the BOE. At the January 9, 2023 budget meeting, Superintendent Newton proposed a budget increase of 6.97% which included removing 18.5 positions. I am in favor of this proposal because Superintendent Newton proposed these cuts with an in-depth knowledge of his schools. He is in the trenches every day with the students and teachers. He knows that with these cuts the students can still be provided a quality education which is our top priority.

### **HEALTH BENEFITS**

The BOE voted to put aside 12% for the estimated increase for health benefits. The latest information from the Town's Director of Finance said that the estimated increase in health benefits for next year will be 7.1%. The Town is putting aside 8.1%. I am proposing that the BOE put aside 10% instead of their proposed 12%. This would still give them extra money in the event that the health benefits did increase.

### **MAINTENANCE**

Chris Lund, the Director of Maintenance for the schools, spoke of replacing all the carpets in the high school's main office, guidance office, and A22. I am proposing that we put this project on hold even though the carpets may not be aesthetically pleasing to the eye. This is not the year to be concerned with appearances; we need to prioritize the education of our students.

### **Questions Asked (w/some answered) / Comments from the March 13<sup>th</sup> BOS Meeting:**

- 18.5 Positions - IF you cut two elementary school teachers, will you still be below guidelines?
  - Jeff Newton said that it might work.
- Administrative 5.5% increase.
  - Addition of Student Athletic Director. No additional cost- stipends paid out to individuals will be used to create this position.
- Can we reduce number of Para's if students are leaving the district?
  - Potentially if the 4 SPED students who have Paras leave the district.
- Education Cost Sharing - How much would East Lyme get as compared to other years?
  - Down \$302,000 - EL number is \$5.8 million.
- Public Act 22-118 HVAC indoor Quality Grant- Did we apply for this grant?

- It appears we do not qualify for this grant- our schools are in good shape- our schools have AC and are prioritized at the bottom of the state list.
- Health Insurance - Are you keeping it at the 12% Health insurance increase?
  - This is a BOE issue.

## **Bill Weber**

In response to your request for Board of Selectman comments on the Board of Education budget presented to the Board of Selectman 3/13/23 I submit the following suggestions:

In my opinion the requested 8.8% BOE growth is a significant challenge to our town's economy, especially to low-income fixed income senior citizens and to all low-income families. The BOE growth to approximately 67.5% of the total town budget seems unbalanced with significantly higher increases than all other departments in town. 40% of our town population is over 55 and they also look for and deserves town services.

Where I work, we have subject matter experts (SME). We depend on them to provide technical guidance, especially in difficult situations. I consider our Board of Education Superintendent the subject matter experts when it comes to understanding what our school system needs to get through this difficult budget year. Not what they want, but what they need. This does not excuse the BOE, BOS or BOF from doing their due diligence to ensure all costs and services are manageable, but when the superintendent make difficult decisions, they should be heard.

While the 7% growth proposed is significantly higher than the remainder town growth, I believe it reflects the superintendents best efforts at constraining budgetary growth while maintaining necessary student services and as such should be adopted.

### **Questions Asked (w/some answered) / Comments from the March 13<sup>th</sup> BOS Meeting:**

- Increase in health insurance went up because we have more family plans?
- When you went from 10.3% to 7%, you made professional decisions to reduce the budget. Explain.
  - Needs vs. Wants discussion.
- The 2017-2021 District Performance Index is missing the 2017 Science KPI.
- Cost per Student: Why is Salem's per pupil expenditure less than East Lyme's?
  - Jeff Newton says the Salem school district is not comparable as the size of the schools are different.
- Will you be utilizing the Town's purchasing agent?
  - No.
- Athletic Director- where is the budget?
- 437 - Projects - What are these projects?
  - Carpet replacements, things of that nature.
- Federal and State Revenue are holding zero- is there any growth?
  - Maryanna Stevens said we won't know until State and Federal govt's budgets are approved.
- Population of students, staff, administrators over time.

## Dan Cunningham

### Questions Asked (w/some answered) / Comments from the March 13<sup>th</sup> BOS Meeting:

- Major Budget Drivers: Salaries represent 43% of budget increases. Trying to reconcile to narrative with 2.25% contractual increases.
- What percentage of the increase was attributed to the settlement of the union contracts? 8% increase.
- What percentage of the increase was due to increased state minimum wage?
  - Recess aides were below minimum wage so that had to increase.
- 43.92% - factors into the ESSR/ARPA positions that now have to be paid out of operating expenses per Maryanna Stevens.
- Benefits: Pointed out 7.1% increase in Health insurance.
  - \$373k between 12% and 7.1%.
- Are there any initiatives by Eversource to take a look at the buildings and see if the lights are LED and auto shutoffs, etc.
- Revenue side: Education Cost Sharing: Discussion of phase out of grant.
- Supplies and Materials have gone down across the board- are we shortchanging teachers and students by cutting supplies?
  - BOE response: Less requests from teachers.

## Rose Ann Hardy

### Questions Asked (w/some answered) / Comments from the March 13<sup>th</sup> BOS Meeting:

- IF this budget is approved as submitted- will there be no staffing cuts?
  - Per BOE: NO cuts.
- Does this provide for any new positions?
  - NO, but one new AD, so yes.
- BOE would be saving money by having a Full time AD.
  - Clarification - the assistant athletic directors (stipend teachers) would not lose their jobs, just the stipend.
- Will the FT AD replace any coaches?
  - No.
- Substitutes: are there not enough available substitutes or is it a matter of pay?
- The Town determines the salaries for the Kelly Services substitutes?
  - Yes
- Are we competitive in substitute field? Are other towns paying more?
  - BOE: Yes, and I don't think so.
- SPED Expenses: Students who begin in SPED in elementary school, are they still in SPED when they graduate HS?
  - Goal of IEP for students, goal is to move out of SPED program.
- Salem Tuition: DO they get a reduced rate because we are the preferred school for their students?
- Per Pupil expenditure: Why isn't Salem paying the amount closer to the East Lyme Per Pupil expense?
- Do we have any indication from the state that they will fulfill its commitment to fully fund special education?
  - 70% is current earmarked excess cost dollars.
- What is the minimum class size, elementary, middle and high schools.
  - Ranges from 15-25. Last year had a 30-student math class in the high school.
- Address the issue of recruitment and advertising for more students- worried we don't have enough space.