

EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
EAST LYME, CT

APRIL 10, 2023

2023 APR 12 P 2:39

6:30

Carroll Hill
Town Clerk

Present: Denise Hall, John Birmingham, Peter DeRosa and Lauren McNamara, Lauren Steel, Paul Maxfield

Also Present: First Selectman Kevin Seery and Finance Director Kevin Gervais

1. **Chairman Hall called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.**
2. **The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.**
3. **New Business**

A. Budget Deliberations

D. Hall thanked the First Selectman and all the town departments for their work on the budget. She summarized the expenditures of the Town, Board of Education (BOE), Debt Services and Capital:

- Town Operations \$21,585,554 increase of \$1,072,808 (5.23%)
- BOE \$58,914,852 increase of \$4,806,374 (8.88%)
- Debt Service \$ 6,198,189 increase of \$1,293,897 (26.38%)
- Capital/Other \$ 610,840 decrease of \$ 610,840 (-10.00%)
- Total \$87,309,435

The Board reviewed the following budgets with no changes:

First Selectman	\$206,616	Assessor's Office	\$ 245,177
Tax Collector	\$206,467	Building Dept.	\$ 275,564
Town Engineer	\$252,484	Human Resources	\$ 145,700
Town Clerk	\$168,663	Ledge Light	\$ 143,064
IT	\$449,403	Registrars	\$ 131,620
Judge of Probate	\$ 21,192	General Gov/Benefits	\$5,099,536
Services to Community	\$ 39,916	Zoning Comm	\$ 114,898
Planning Com.	\$102,253	Finance	\$ 423,765
Contingency	\$550,000	BOF	\$57,055

BOAA	\$2,200	ZBA	\$800
IWA	\$43,526	WELSCO	\$1
Brookside Farm Comm.	\$16,940	Town Building Comm	\$750
Harbor Management	\$1,200	Conservation & Natural Resources Comm	\$1,270
Historical Properties Comm.	\$9,330	Public Safety, EM	\$173,631
Public Safety/Dispatch	\$677,353	Public Safety/Police	\$3,113,586
Public Safety/NFD	\$833,616	Public Safety/FFD	\$592,676
Fire Marshal	\$214,990	Animal Control	\$124,149
PWD	\$3,906,472	Health/Welfare	\$6,000
Culture and Recreation	1,207,755	P&R	\$847,873
Debt Service	\$6,198,189	Capital	\$610,840

First Selectman Seery informed the Board that he had adjustments/reductions to some of the budgets. ARPA funds could be used to offset the one-time cash layouts in Capital line. The BOS removed \$98,160 cash from the capital plan:

- 5 self-contained cylinders breathing apparatus for Flanders
- 6 self-contained cylinders breathing apparatus for Niantic
- Outfitting of Engine 3, including trips to oversee and approve the new engine.

K. Gervais clarified the approximate cost of one police officer, with various benefits:

- \$86,500 for salary and single coverage insurance
- \$90,000 for salary and one dependent coverage insurance
- \$100,000 for salary and family coverage insurance

Private duty the first \$15,000 would count towards the pension. The town gets fully reimbursed for site work/traffic control.

K. Seery stated the ARPA funds proposed for capital expenses are unencumbered, there was a set aside and funds left over from attorney's fees as well. There is still \$17,000 left in the account. As some of the approved projects have closed any balance from those projects along with the set aside was added to the available ARPA funds which grew to \$115,000.

K. Gervais notified the Board of adjustments to the following departments.

MOTION: (Birmingham/Maxfield) to reduce dept. 113, line 114. building maintenance, , overtime by \$9,000 from \$21,000 to \$12,000. Vote: APPROVED unanimously.

MOTION: (McNamara/DeRosa) to decrease dept. 216, Public Safety/Police, wages, by \$43,044 from \$2,194,109 to \$2,151,065. Vote: APPROVED unanimously.

MOTION: (Maxfield/Birmingham) to reduce Audit Services, Dept. 126, from \$52,505 to \$42,375. Vote: APPROVED unanimously.

R. Steele thought there should be a pause on hiring of police officers. K. Seery stated that considering the police chief's persuasive presentation there is a need for two additional officers. He informed the Board that both of the officers would be coming in November and would not be serving the full year. D. Hall is in favor of adding the officers considering the expected overtime.

MOTION: (Maxfield/McNamara) to decrease dept. 418, Commission on Aging, Senior Center Admin from \$ 83,629 to \$ 78,000. Vote: APPROVED unanimously.

The Board thanked the BOS for reductions of \$1.1 million from the originally submitted budgets.

Maxfield recused himself from BOE discussions.

Jeff Newton, East Lyme Superintendent of Schools informed the Board they received an updated insurance rate which was originally estimated at 12% and were recently informed the new rate is 7.25% for a total reduction of \$475,000.

K. Gervais said there are 3 new revenue drivers this year:

1. Use of the fund balance, \$2 million
2. Investment earnings, \$625,000
3. Use of bond premium, \$500,000

He stated this year we would be using \$2.7 million in one-time revenues. Next year that will have to be budgeted for.

B. Hall asked members what they thought was a reasonable cut to the BOE budget in addition to the \$475,000 insurance savings.

- R. Steele thought \$800,000 was appropriate.
- P. DeRosa suggested \$500,000
- J. Birmingham suggested \$766,667
- L. McNamara suggested \$500,000
- D. Hall did not want to raise the mil rate beyond 1 mil. She pointed to the student to staff ratio over the years. The student population is going down and the staff has increased. Superintendent J. Newton said the student population has not gone under 2600 students in the nine years he has been Superintendent. This year SPED students went up from 300 SPED students to 500 SPED students.

R. Steele said he would be comfortable with a \$500,000 cut to the BOE.

K. Seery has spoken to people on fixed incomes and anything above a 1 mil increase would be difficult. He spoke to the town's state representative, and she informed him there is a bill at the state legislature to increase ECS by \$284,73, but it is not a sure thing. J. Newton said taking the BOE budget back to a 6.5% increase meant cutting positions which will activate the community who had come out to support the BOE budget. K. Gervais offered the Board to supply them with a five-year projection of the budget based on historical information.

The Board delayed a decision on the BOE budget until their Wednesday, April 12, 2023, meeting.

4. Adjournment

MOTION: (Birmingham/Maxfield) to adjourn at 8:30. Vote: APPROVED unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Sue Spang

Recording Secretary