

# Minutes of East Lyme Board of Finance April 1st, 2025, Special Meeting - 04/01/25

**Date and time:** 04/01/25 5:30 PM to: 04/01/25 7:37 PM

**Present:** Brooke Stevens, Rec Secretary (\* Ms. Stevens was not in attendance), Paul Maxfield, John T. Birmingham, Lauren McNamara, Denise Hall, Chairperson, Scott McAllister, Richard Steel

**CC:** Dan Cunningham, First Selectman, Kevin Gervais, Finance Director, Jeffrey Newton, East Lyme Superintendent of Schools, Betsey Goetsch, Historic Properties Commission Member, Annaliese Spaziano, East Lyme Assistant Superintendent of Schools

**Location:** East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Niantic, CT, 06357.

## Topics

### 1. Call Meeting to Order & Pledge

**Note** Chair Hall called the April 1st, 2025, Special Meeting of the Board of Finance to order at 5:30 p.m. and led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 2. Delegations

#### 2-1. Betsey Goetsch of the Historic Properties Commission

**Note** Ms. Goetsch highlighted the significant cost savings they experience due to the volunteerism of many individuals in East Lyme. She expressed appreciation for the financial support they receive from both the Board and the town.

### 3. Additions to the Agenda

**Note** There were none.

### 4. New Business- Budget Reviews

**Note** Ms. Hall noted that it's their first night of deliberations and that they'd begin with the Board of Education.

**Note** Ms. Hall thanked the BOE members present and the staff, for their support and for answering questions. She congratulated them on their accomplishments with students, highlighting the value of experiential learning for all students, regardless of what their future paths might be.

**Note** Ms. Hall said there are approximately 19,000 residents and almost 2,500 students and the goal is to balance needs with the financial challenges in Connecticut, such as the high property taxes and the highest electricity costs in the nation.

**Note** Further deliberations are scheduled for Monday, April 7th, and potentially concluding on April 9th. The budget will be presented at a public hearing on April 28th at the High School, followed by a special meeting for final adjustments based on public input.

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**Note** The Annual Town Meeting for the final budget presentation is on May 12th at the High School, leading to a town-wide referendum on May 22nd at the Community Center (8 am - 8 pm).

**Note** Ms. Hall addressed the process if the budget fails in the referendum:

\*According to the Town Charter, the BOF must revise estimated expenditures (without altering revenue estimates, except for specific errors or state revisions) and submit a revised budget to a referendum within 14 days.

\*This process, including at least one public hearing, will repeat every two weeks until a budget is adopted.

\*If no budget is adopted by the third Wednesday in June, business will be conducted according to specific State Statutes.

**Note** Ms. Hall expressed hope for a budget that the town embraces, acknowledging the challenges of every budget year but highlighting unforeseen issues from the past year carrying over, such as increased pension contributions, costs related to the Police Chief situation, the failed seawall, and investments in Fire Safety and IT.

\*These issues have led to the use of almost a million dollars of the fund balance.

**Note** She also emphasized the challenge of retaining Staff in various town departments and the Board of Education due to competitive salaries in neighboring towns.

#### 4-1. Board Of Education Budget

**Note** Ms. Hall reminded those present of the following:

\*The Board of Education's proposed budget increase is \$4,032,725, which represents a 6.72% increase, bringing the total budget to \$64,057,400.

\*Of this increase, \$1.9 million is attributed to salary increases and additional positions.

**Note** \*\*The student population at the High School, has dropped by 135 students (13%) over the past five years.\*\*

\*\*Despite this decrease in students, the High School staff has increased by one.\*\*

\*\*A 13% reduction in students might logically lead to approximately 14 fewer staff members, based on extrapolation.\*\*

\*They observe that other towns adjust staffing levels with population changes and question why East Lyme appears unable to make similar adjustments.

**Note** Ms. Hall asked how many open teacher positions there currently are at the High School.

**Note** Jeff Newton, Superintendent of Schools, came forward and offered the following response:

\*Of the 1.6 new positions requested for the next year, one is a full technology position, and the other 0.6 is for a mandated literacy course now required for all high school students by the State.

\*The current Staff capacity is insufficient to offer this course, necessitating an increase from a 0.4 to a 1.0 FTE (Full-Time Equivalent).

**Note** \*There are only around three retirements expected next year, so a large number of savings through non-replacement isn't immediately feasible.

\*Not replacing these three retirees could save roughly \$80,000 to \$100,000 each, but these are positions that likely need to be filled.

**Note** \*There were 14 open positions across the district at the last count, potentially now down to 10 currently.

At the High School, there are four open positions.

**Note** \*Not replacing paraprofessional positions at the High School isn't a straightforward solution, as some of these positions might be mandated through IEPs (Individualized Education Programs) and the PPT (Planning and Placement Team) process.

Any decisions about not filling positions would need to be made across the entire district to minimize disruption to student needs.

**Note** Ms. Hall said she really wants to discuss the issue of student population and class sizes. While everyone loves small classrooms, the data provided shows that the average class sizes at the High School are:

\*\*English at 14.2 students, Math, Science, and Social Studies at 15, and World Language at 14, while neighboring towns class sizes are typically 20 to 22 students; such small class sizes in East Lyme are more akin to those found in expensive private prep schools (costing \$70,000-\$80,000 annually) rather than typical public schools.\*\*

**Note** Ms. Hall acknowledged the high academic outcomes but noted that they come at a really high price. Other towns achieve similar high outcomes with significantly lower costs and given the financial constraints on the rest of the town's budget, she believes that Staffing, specifically at the High School, might be the potential cost savings where efficiency improvements can be found.

**Note** Mr. Newton replied that the BOE will need to re-examine all positions across all schools to ensure a comprehensive approach to potential budget adjustments. He reiterated that the lack of a significant number of retirements makes cost-cutting challenging, as any reductions are likely to impact people's jobs, which is an unfortunate consequence. The decision on where and how to make cuts rests with the BOE, who will need to undertake this review.

**Note** Ms. Hall asked Mr. Newton to elaborate on the roles and responsibilities of the seven coach positions that will remain after the federal funding ends. She asked who these individuals are and what their primary duties are.

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

They're primarily instructional coaches.

Their role involves going into classrooms and working in cycles (typically 6-8 weeks) with teachers to build the capacity of both the teachers and the students.

They often have a greater level of training or have taken specific coursework in areas like core reading or math.

They also play a key role in bringing teams together, such as grade-level teams.

This coaching model has been in place for a couple of years and is used in many districts.

**Note** Ms. Hall said she didn't understand the 244% increase in the professional development and asked if he's saying that the State and Federal mandates dictate that we pay that \$85,498, and that there's no way to deliver that professional development at a lower cost?

**Note** Annaliese Spaziano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, offered the following response:

The State doesn't mandate a specific dollar amount for professional development (PD), but it does require the district to provide PD for both certified staff and paraeducators for a certain amount of time annually.

The requested \$85,000 increase for PD is attributed to items, some of which are State-mandated, such as the Playful Learning initiative and the rollout of the literacy program at the elementary level.

More PD could be delivered electronically, but that doesn't automatically equate to lower costs.

**Note** They use a "train-the-trainer" model with vendors like Wit and Wisdom, where vendors train the coaches, who then train the teachers.

This model is seen as a cost-saving measure.

**Note** Mr. Birmingham inquired about paraprofessionals assisting teachers in classrooms and Mr. Newton shared the following:  
Assistant personnel are primarily paraeducators, with a total of 114 positions.

**Note** The number of paraprofessionals in any particular classroom depends entirely on the individual needs of the students, particularly those with IEPs (Individualized Education Programs.)

**Note** A classroom might have two paraprofessionals if two students require one-to-one support. Sometimes, an attempt is made to share a paraprofessional between two students if appropriate.

**Note** The law under special education dictates the amount of support required for students with IEPs and the number of paraprofessionals in a classroom can vary daily.

**Note** Mr. Steel asked about the approximate cost for an AP class and Mr. Newton explained the difficulty in quantifying how many teachers teach only AP (Advanced Placement) courses versus a mix of AP and other subjects:

Some teachers might teach a small fraction of their workload as AP, while others teach more alongside other classes.

To determine the exact number of teachers solely dedicated to or primarily teaching AP, a detailed breakdown of individual teacher schedules would be necessary.

**Note** Mr. Steel inquired about offering AP courses on a less frequent basis and Mr. Newton had the following remarks:

While offering courses less frequently might save money, students might not have the opportunity to take specific AP courses during their desired year.

The district already attempts to combine AP courses with other classes to increase enrollment numbers and avoid very small class sizes (e.g., three or four students).

They aim for a minimum of 10 students to run an AP course.

AP class sizes can vary throughout the year due to students adding or dropping courses after the initial enrollment, making initial numbers unreliable.

**Note** Ms. McNamara said she knows Ms. Hall asked about the teachers that are retiring, and she believes it was said that it's mandated that their positions be filled. She wants to make sure that she is understanding this correctly.

**Note** Mr. Newton clarified that while not explicitly termed a mandate, the requirement to offer a literacy course to all high school students is a state obligation. Failure to provide enough teachers and course sections to accommodate all students would result in the district not meeting the state's graduation requirement of 25 credits.

**Note** Teaching this literacy course requires specific certifications, a Science or English teacher, for example, cannot simply teach it without the appropriate endorsement. The relevant certifications include literacy, math, and CTE (Career and Technical Education).

**Note** Ms. Hall asked if the idea of existing teachers having to obtain this certification is being explored and Mr. Newton replied that Teachers would need to go back to school to earn a degree and certification in the required field, and the district cannot compel current teachers to pursue additional certifications.

**Note** Mr. McAllister inquired about the following:

1. Coaches vs. Paraeducators-

\*Mr. Newton explained that Coaches are certified instructional staff focused on teacher professional development and instructional support.

Paraeducators are non-certified staff supporting students, often those with IEPs

**Note** 2. Paraeducator Flexibility-

\*Mr. Newton detailed that while the number of paraeducators (currently 114) isn't strictly state-mandated, their presence is often driven by IEP requirements.

The district has cut five positions and reviews each vacancy but needs vary.

**Note** 3. Teacher Workload-

\*Mr. Newton said high school teachers typically teach four to five class periods a day, including a duty and a planning period.

Middle school is structured differently with kia teams.

**Note** 4. Professional Development Travel-

\*Mr. Newton replied that most professional development is on-site or virtual, using a "train-the-trainer" model.

Travel to conferences is less frequent but can occur based on need.

**Note** 5. IT Department-

\*Mr. Newton noted that the district currently contracts out IT services but is transitioning to an in-house model for the next year, expecting to save \$41,000.

They will have a head of IT and two support technicians.

Managed services will still be through a contractor for specialized engineering.

**Note** 6. Mentoring Program-

\*Mr. Newton said the district has a state-mandated mentoring program ("TEAM") where experienced teachers support new teachers.

**Note** Mr. Birmingham inquired about lunch aides and Mr. Newton shared the following:

The district currently hires recess and lunch aides at the elementary level, costing roughly \$250,000.

There are a few at the middle school as well.

In the new contract with certified staff, teachers will be taking on lunch and recess monitoring duties; this change will eliminate the need for these paid aides.

The need for dedicated aides is greatest at the elementary level due to recess and the need to monitor safety, including choking hazards, in the lunchroom.

**Decision** MOTION (1)

Ms. McNamara moved to adjust the Board of Education Budget by \$150,000 per savings in health insurance.

Mr. McAllister seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

**Note** Ms. Hall observed that this adjustment ensures they have the correct baseline to work from for their deliberations (\$63,907,400.)

**Note** MOTION (2)

Mr. Steel moved to alter the Board of Education proposed increase from \$4,032,725, (\$3,882,725 after the \$150,000 health insurance reduction), to \$2,999,940, (\$2,849,940 after the \$150,000 health insurance reduction. Total increase= \$2,849,940.

Ms. Hall seconded the motion.

**Note** \*Mr. Steel clarified that the budget was \$64,057,400 and he was looking to reduce the \$4,032,725 increase by \$2,250,000, resulting in a final budget of \$61,807,460. Ms. Hall confirmed that this is the number she seconded.

**Note** Mr. McAllister inquired if he's permitted to ask what items might be cut and Ms. Hall replied that they can't specifically say what they think should be cut but can suggest a general focus.

**Note** Mr. McAllister clarified that he meant can they say what they were thinking when arriving at that number?

**Note** Mr. Steel said he had the following in mind:

1. Limiting new hires to essential business needs.
2. Reducing software costs, specifically the necessity of the current Zoom contract and the suggestion to explore concurrent or shared licenses.

**Note** 3. Requesting administrators (17.5 FTE) to forego their proposed salary increases (\$113,000) as a gesture of solidarity; a request he intends to extend to town Department Heads, the Board of Selectmen, and the First Selectman.

**Note** 4. Ceasing with the continued coverage of mileage.

5. Re-evaluating the need for Coaches and ARPA funded positions.

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**Note** Mr. Steel also expressed concern about the \$400,000 in savings expected from the discontinuation of the Coastal Connection program, as it hasn't been realized yet and emphasized the unsustainable nature of the proposed budget increases as well as the difficulty in making these suggestions, given his past support for the school board, but the current financial realities require the need for budget restraint.

**Note** Mr. Gervais addressed two housekeeping items, adding \$120,000 for Salem tuition and \$37,000 for miscellaneous finance office revenue.

**Note** Mr. McAllister discussed how he's struck by the small class sizes.

**Note** Ms. Hall said this is a tough decision for her and that they need to get this number down:

**Decision** MOTION (1) Vote:

2-3-0, Motion failed.

Yay- Mr. Steel and Mr. Birmingham.

Nay- Mr. McAllister, Ms. McNamara, Ms. Hall and Mr. Maxfield.

**Note** MOTION (2)

Mr. Maxfield moved to reduce the proposed budget by \$1,350,000 combined with the previously discussed \$150,000 reduction related to health insurance, bringing the total proposed reduction to \$1,500,000. Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.

**Note** The Board and Mr. Gervais discussed how the resulting proposed school budget, if the motion passed, would be \$62,557,400; this represents a 4.32% increase over the previous year's budget and an increase of \$2,532,725 from the previous year.

**Decision** MOTION (2) Vote:

Motion carried, 5-1-0.

Yay- Mr. Steel, Ms. Hall, Mr. Birmingham, Mr. McAllister and Mr. Maxfield.

Nay- Ms. McNamara.

**Note** Mr. Gervais noted that the entire Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) package will be approved at the end of the deliberations, so it doesn't need a separate vote at this point.

**Note** Mr. Gervais added that Maryanna Stevens felt comfortable increasing the revenue projection by \$120,000 from tuition due to the student numbers; this would bring the new total to \$3,085,560.

**Decision** MOTION (3)

Mr. Birmingham moved to increase the tuition from other districts revenue number from 2,965,560 by \$120,000, to \$3,085,560.

Mr. Maxfield seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

**Note** Mr. Gervais explained that the next item revenue budget - miscellaneous finance department, comes from cell tower space rentals and has increased to \$7,300 per month, totaling around \$87,600 annually, due to additional cell carriers on the tower.

**Decision** MOTION (4)

Mr. Birmingham moved to increase the miscellaneous finance department revenue budget projection from \$50,000 to \$87,600; an increase of \$37,600.

Ms. McNamara seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

**Note** Mr. Maxfield and Mr. Gervais discussed how the final grant numbers from the State (including educational grants) won't be available until May, likely right before the public hearing, allowing for adjustments before the final budget submission.

## 4-2. First Selectman Budget

**Note** MOTION (5)

Mr. Steel moved to keep the First Selectman's salary at \$116,428 and to eliminate the \$10,434 stipend for the Board of Selectmen for the current year.

Ms. Hall seconded the motion.

**Note** Mr. McAllister said he doesn't understand why only the First Selectman isn't getting a cost-of-living increase, especially since he believes the First Selectman has done a good job. He indicated that he will likely vote against the motion.

**Note** Mr. Steel clarified that the intention wasn't solely about the First Selectman. His idea, previewed during a discussion about the Board of Education, was for department heads with salaries exceeding \$100,000 to forego raises as a sign of solidarity with taxpayers and the town. He notes that other department heads (Youth and Family Services, Aging Commission) earn less than \$100,000. He presents it as an idea he wanted to put out there and is open to it being rejected.

**Note** Ms. Hall asked for clarification on the Board of Selectmen stipend and Mr. Cunningham replied that each Selectman receives a small stipend, around \$200, and the Deputy Selectman receives slightly more.

**Note** Ms. Hall noted for the record that the Board of Finance members receive no stipend. She also noted that the First Selectman's position is as a full-time job, unlike the part-time, volunteer nature of the Board of Selectmen roles.

**Note** Mr. McAllister expressed concern that denying a cost-of-living increase to the First Selectman could set a negative precedent, making it less appealing for qualified individuals to take on leadership roles in the future.

Mr. Maxfield mentioned the possibility of other town heads seeking employment elsewhere if their positions don't keep pace with inflation.

**Note** Ms. McNamara acknowledged Mr. Steel's diligence but worries about the town's ability to retain talent if consistent cuts are made. Ms. Hall observed that if you look at the First Selectman's compensation in terms of hours worked, he's making very little.

**Note** Based on the discussion and lack of support, Mr. Steel withdrew his motion. He mentioned reading comments in the newspaper made by people who don't fully realize the work that city officials do.

**Note** Mr. Steel inquired if someone was hired for this part-time role in the past year and if there were any results.

**Note** Mr. Cunningham said that due to a hiring freeze, the part-time grant writer position was not filled. There has been some success with other individuals within the town (Alex Klose, Dan Cleary, and Sarah Firman) have taking initiative in grant writing. He acknowledged that a dedicated grant writer could potentially secure more funding.

#### **4-3. Assessors Budget**

**Note** No changes were made.

#### **4-4. Tax Collector & Town Clerk Positions**

**Note** Mr. Maxfield asked about negotiating these salaries and Mr. Gervais confirmed that the positions of Tax Collector and Town Clerk will no longer be elected roles after the next election. They will become administrative hired positions. The current dollar amount in the budget for the Tax Collector and Town Clerk is understood to be the salaries for the currently elected officials.

**Note** Mr. Cunningham said they have developed a process to determine who will fill these positions. This process involves an interview process with a panel.

#### **4-5. Building**

**Note** No changes were made.

#### **4-6. Human Resources**

**Note** Mr. Steel expressed confusion about the changes in the title of the HR leadership role: It was initially a Human Resources Director. It then changed to a Human Resources Manager. Now, it has reverted back to Human Resources Director. It now reports directly to the First Selectman when it initially reported to the Finance department.

**Note** Mr. Gervais clarified that the HR position never reported to the Finance department, Ms. Konakowitz was initially hired as a manager and after a year in the Manager role, she was promoted to Director, and she reports to the First Selectman.

#### 4-7. Town Clerk Budget

**Note** Mr. Gervais said an error has been discovered within the Town Clerk's budget. The Assistant Town Clerk is part of the UPSEU union, and the town already has existing budget lines for UPSEU contingency and personnel contingency. He proposed making the correction and reducing the Assistant Town Clerk's salary by \$2,000, back to \$58,695.

**Decision** MOTION (5)

Mr. Maxfield moved to reduce the Assistant Town Clerk's salary line from \$60,309 back to \$58,695 with the idea that any potential increase would be covered by contingency.

Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-1-0.

Nay- Mr. McAllister.

#### 4-8. Ledge Light Health District

**Note** No changes were made.

#### 4-9. Information Technology

**Note** Ms. Hall asked about the miscellaneous town supplies line within the IT budget.

**Note** Mr. Gervais explained that the IT Director initially proposed \$35,000 in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for a 5–7-year computer replacement cycle. After some discussions, a compromise was reached to bring the budget closer to the approximately \$8,000 used annually for such supplies, with the \$35,000 being inclusive of office supplies and computer screens/monitors beyond just replacements.

**Note** Mr. McAllister inquired about the 14.9% increase in non-union wages within the IT budget.

**Note** Mr. Gervais detailed how the budget for the prior year only included four months of funding for a third IT position (an IT engineer for Public Safety who was hired in November). The current budget needs to fund this position for the full 12 months. The increase is due to a full year of salary for this position, not significant raises for existing staff (who received a flat \$2.75 increase).

**Note** Mr. McAllister asked about the \$116,000 budgeted for "other IT services." He wondered what kind of impact a lower number might have.

**Note** Mr. Gervais provided a breakdown of the line item:

- \*Replacement equipment (\$3,400)
- \*Internal IT training (\$3,600)
- \*End-user cybersecurity training (\$4,000)
- \*Security transfer certificates (amount unclear)
- \*Link from Town Hall to Nantic Fire (dark fiber communication - moved from Emergency operations)
- \*Utility communications contract (Everbridge - moved from Emergency Management)
- \*Camera maintenance (\$5,200)
- \*Town radio maintenance (\$5,000)
- \*Phone maintenance (\$2,000)

**Note** Mr. Gervais and the Board discussed how the replacement equipment (\$3,400) and potentially the camera, radio, and phone maintenance (totaling around \$12,200) are potentially more discretionary compared to the public safety-related communication and training costs.

**Note** Mr. McAllister discussed how they need to ensure budget cuts are applied across multiple departments, similar to the earlier discussion they had about the school budget. Mr. Gervais observed that if a piece of hardware breaks, it can be covered by the "miscellaneous supplies" budget.

**Decision** MOTION (6)

Mr. McAllister moved to reduce the replacement equipment line item by \$3,400.

Ms. McNamara seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

#### 4-10. Registrars of Voters Budget

**Note** Ms. Hall asked about the election day expenses line item, and whether it includes costs related to early voting.

**Note** Mr. Gervais clarified that the budget includes funding for 14 days of early voting, at a cost of \$26,000. He proposed moving the \$26,000 budgeted for early voting to the contingency fund. This would allow the funds to be readily available if early voting does indeed take place but would free up the funds in the meantime.

**Note** Mr. Gervais and the Board discussed how the upcoming election is a municipal election, and therefore less likely to have primaries, which would typically drive higher early voting turnout.

**Note** MOTION (7)

Ms. Hall moved to move \$26,400 from the election day expenses line item to the contingency fund.

Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.

**Note** Mr. McAllister asked what happens to the \$26,400 if early voting doesn't occur and the money isn't used. Mr. Gervais replied that the \$26,400 would revert to the town's fund balance at the end of the fiscal year if it's not spent on early voting or another approved project.

**Decision** MOTION (7) Vote:

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

#### 4-11. Judge of Probate

**Note** Mr. Gervais reported that explained that the majority of the 16% budget increase for the Judge of Probate is due to rising costs for HVAC for the facility where the Probate Court is located. He gave an example of a recent unexpected cost- a septic system backup that cost almost \$1,000.

#### 4-12. Maintenance of town buildings

**Note** Ms. Hall noted that there's a substantial 34% increase in the town's electricity costs. The primary driver of this increase is believed to be the potential elimination of public service benefits, but there has been no recent update or confirmation regarding whether these public service benefits will indeed be discontinued.

#### 4-13. Services to the Community

**Note** Mr. Gervais reported that he reached out to Waterford as requested and he and the Board discussed some of the following:

Waterford's services to the community line includes regional services memberships (like CCOG and CCM), which we list separately.

Our approach is to place these regional memberships within the budget area they most directly influence, rather than grouping them all under services to community.

**Note** There is a 23% increase in charitable contributions within this line for this year. In a difficult budget year, the significant increase in charitable contributions is questionable, especially when other departments haven't received similar increases.

**Note** Given that some donations were moved to more specific budget lines (e.g., veterans' services, historic preservation), the actual increase in the services to community line would have been even larger without these reallocations.

**Note** MOTION (8)

Mr. McAllister moved to reduce the services to the community line from \$25,000 to \$22,500 and ask the First Selectman to determine how to allocate those funds.

Ms. Hall seconded the motion.

**Note** Ms. Hall expressed that taxing residents to make donations to charitable organizations feels inappropriate, especially when residents can donate directly and receive tax deductions themselves.

**Note** Mr. McAllister expressed his desire for equitable treatment across different budget items, and suggested the idea of applying a small, proportional reduction to all the organizations receiving funds under this line.

**Note** Mr. McAllister acknowledged that this reduction is unlikely to significantly affect the town's overall budget or mill rate but serves as a matter of principle.

**Note** Mr. Steel suggested prioritizing supporting organizations addressing fundamental needs like food and shelter in the future.

**Note** The Board a brief **discusses** whether the 10% cut should be applied uniformly to all recipients or left to the discretion of the Board of Selectmen. The preference is to leave it to the Board of Selectmen but with the understanding that the proportional reduction outlined makes sense.

**Decision** MOTION (8) Vote:  
Motion carried, 6-0-0.

#### 4-14. Historic Properties Budget

**Note** No changes were made.

#### 4-15. Parks & Recreation Budget

**Note** No changes were made.

**Note** Ms. Hall inquired where they stand at this point and Mr. Gervais replied that the current proposed budget is just under a 7% overall increase. The current tax increase calculation uses an older tax collection rate of 98.7%. The Board of Selectmen increased this rate by 0.55% and there's a possibility it could be raised further to 99% for a more conservative estimate. This potential increase in the collection rate could generate an additional \$675,000 - \$676,000 in revenue.

**Note** Increasing the collection rate to 99% would impact the overall budget by about a quarter of a percent.

**Note** An example is provided for a home valued at \$500,000 (with an assessed value of \$350,000 at 70%). The estimated property taxes would increase from \$9,200 this year to just under \$9,900 next year.

**Note** Commercial properties are assessed at the same 70% rate as residential properties. The possibility of providing similar tax impact examples for commercial properties at different valuation levels (e.g., \$2.5 million) was discussed. It's believed this can be easily calculated using the existing formula.

#### 5. Public Discussion

**Note** There was none.

#### 6. Board Comments

**Note** The Board briefly discussed how difficult their charge is.

#### 7. Adjournment

**Decision** MOTION (9)

Mr. Birmingham moved to adjourn the BOF April 1st, 2025, Special Meeting at 7:37 p.m.  
Mr. Maxfield seconded the motion.  
Motion carried, 6-0-0.

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

#### Next Meeting

Meeting title: Board of finance april 7th, 2025, special meeting  
Date and time: 04/07/25 07:06 pm to: 04/07/25 08:06 pm  
Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Niantic, CT, 06357.