

**TOWN OF EAST LYME
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
MAY 11, 2015**

Moderator, Eugene Cushman, called the Annual Town Meeting to order at 7:00 PM at the East Lyme High School.

Assistant Town Clerk, Karen Miller Galbo read the call of the meeting.

Moderator discussed the ground rules for the Annual Town Meeting.

Item #3 of the Call of the Meeting was moved up to be addressed first.

1. To Adopt a Five Year Capital Plan

Motion (1) Ron Stevens moved to adopt a Five Year Capital Plan.

Seconded by Holly Cheeseman.

Mr. Nickerson thanked everyone for coming. He presented and reviewed the Long Range Capital Plan.

Ron Rando, 194 Boston Post Road, East Lyme stated the tennis courts were over budget because there was water under them. They can do fundraising if they want lights. He will do anything to stop this. There is a river under them, and they didn't listen to him when he told him that. He also said they should not be putting new roofs on buildings that they may be tearing down.

David Funke, 185 Upper Pattagansett Road, East Lyme asked about the Sallie Port at the Police Station being installed, if they are considering moving the police station. That is not common sense. He objected to the 1.3 million dollars for the engineer studies in the school plan. He thinks they should go back to the studies that were done when the middle school was built.

Mr. Nickerson stated they won't put the Sallie Port in if they are not staying there, unless it is absolutely necessary to do so. The new school projects all hinge on what the Board of Education does and what the citizens of this Town approve. The Board of Education has slowed the process down so they have time to do it right. He discussed the different options that have been discussed regarding the various town and school buildings.

Mike Schulz, Lovers Lane, East Lyme asked how much has been spent on the school study.

Tim Hagen, Boston Post Road, East Lyme stated the Board of Education has spent approximately \$30,000 on the study.

Mr. Schulz stated \$30,000 seems like a low number. He asked about the two generators at the fire departments, and if that is to replace existing generators.

Mr. Nickerson stated that is to replace two old generators.

John MacDonald, Niantic Fire Chief stated that is to replace two old generators. Currently their generators are old. Every year they have problems with them, they can't get electrical parts for them. They have gotten their money's worth out of those generators.

Mr. Schulz asked if there is any value to the old generators that we can recover.

Mr. MacDonald stated they are propane generators, the town can do whatever they want with the motors.

Mr. Nickerson stated if there is value to them we can sell them or use them as backup.

Mr. Rando asked how much the state will reimburse if they want to remodel the schools.

Mr. Hagen stated 40 to 44%.

Mr. Rando asked how long that has been in effect.

Mr. Hagen stated as long as he can remember.

Mr. Rando stated when they rebuilt the middle school he attended those meetings. He recommended connecting the two schools. The Board of Education told him the State wouldn't reimburse for that so they tore down the building and built a new one. They could have joined those two schools. They should listen to people once in a while.

Mr. Hagen stated the reimbursement rates are complicated. To get reimbursed they can build new or build as new. They don't get reimbursement for band aiding and patching.

John Drabik, 18 Drabik Road, East Lyme, stated the Charter says the Board of Finance presents their budget at the Annual Town Meeting. They should all be here.

Karen Rak, 27 Black Point Road, Niantic, stated there should be a presentation of the budget by the Board of Finance and Board of Education. This Capital Plan is a wish list; they are counting on Grants, which is wishful thinking. She encouraged a no vote.

The moderator called for a voice vote.

The moderator then called for a hand vote, with the Registrar of Voters as checkers.

The Motion Passed.

2. To review and discuss the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

Mr. Drabik stated we can't even get the Board of Finance here for our Annual Town Meeting. Nobody is representing the people at this meeting. A lot of people don't care. Where is the Board of Finance to explain how they got here?

Mr. Funke stated he is bothered by the full Board of Finance not being here tonight. In past years the Town has passed reasonable budgets. There are people in town with fixed incomes. They should start thinking about those people. School enrollment has gone down close to 200 children in the last two years. We should see a decrease in the Board of Education budget, not an increase. Did the Board of Finance ask about the number of students? Every year our budget goes up and the State contributes less.

Mr. Rando stated he was glad to hear Mr. Funke ask questions regarding the enrollment at the schools. There are 188 children not in the system anymore. That is a lot of money. They have been told the Board of Education uses that money for different things. The salary of the new superintendant is less than what the former superintendant was making. What happened to that money? A lot of people are on Social Security, they received a 1.5% raise this year. Nobody he knows gets a 3% raise. Then some employees get a step raise. There are a lot of people on these Boards when their kids are in school, then they move out of town when their kids graduate to a town where the taxes are cheaper. He feels anyone who teaches in East Lyme should live in East Lyme. If teachers want to leave then let them leave, the Town can get somebody else.

James Lombardo, 4 Maple Street, Niantic, thanked the Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen, The First Selectman and the Former First Selectman. He worked in education for 44 years. He did move around throughout his career, and in each of those places he owned a home and paid taxes. The improvements to this Town over the last six years have been impressive, they have great sport areas, all of these improvements benefit all of us. The taxes have barely budged. In other communities he has lived in the taxes have had a large increase. This Town has hard working people who do a lot for a little. The Town does a good job of building reserves, he hopes if the town experiences a large increase in health insurance they use those funds that are in reserve.

Mr. Schulz stated he has had a problem over the years with long contracts with employees. The Town is then committed to salary and benefit increases. He asked if there will be new positions in the Board of Education based on the cutbacks.

Jeff Newton, East Lyme Superintendant, stated there were a handful of new positions proposed in their budget, at this point they are still working on the cutbacks, he has no definitive answer on the new positions.

Mr. Schulz stated there were about 10 new positions proposed even though there has been a reduction in students.

Mr. Newton stated there were 8 to 10 new positions proposed.

Steve Kelley, Board of Finance member, stated he has been on the Board of Finance for 6 years. He has attended 6 of these Annual Town Meetings. They have never presented the whole budget at the Annual Town Meeting. There were hearings on the budget where the Board of Finance did present the whole budget. He is 73 years old; he lives on a fixed income. He goes through the budget and looks at how we can maintain services, in Town and in the schools, and not break the backs of the taxpayers. They do not control the State budget. They attempted to not take away from services, and they never cut the Board of Education or Town budget, they just cut from the proposed increases. He has been in this town for 18 years. He has seen much improvement, and there is quite a difference when you walk downtown.

Lisa Picarazzi, Board of Finance Member, stated the whole Board of Finance was at the Public Hearing. They worked diligently. She does not remember the Board of Finance presenting the whole budget at the Annual Town Meeting in the past. They did talk about the decreased enrollment and did take that into consideration. They do not have any control over union negotiations. There are concerns tonight about tax increases, and there has been criticism because they cut too much. They can't make everyone happy. They are grateful for respectful feedback, and she thanked everyone for coming.


Mr. Drabik stated you should vote on the bottom line, all they do is add to the budget.

- 3. 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 personally qualified to vote in a Town Meeting by referendum by machine vote, which referendum shall take place on May 21, 2015 at the East Lyme Community Center from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

Motion (2) James Lombardo moved to adjourn the Annual Town Meeting to a referendum to take place on May 21, 2015 at the East Lyme Community Center from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Seconded by John Drabik.

Motion Passed.

Respectfully Submitted

Karen Miller Galbo
Assistant Town Clerk