

**EAST HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 31, 2011**

The East Haven Town Council held a special meeting on Tuesday, March 22, 2011, at 7:00p.m., at the East Haven High School, 35 Wheelbarrow Lane, East Haven, Connecticut, 06512.

Chairman Dougherty called the Meeting to order at 7:10p.m.  
Chairman Dougherty asks all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

*Roll Call-*

11 Present- (Camera, Dougherty, McKay, Donahue J, Thompson, Cofrancesco, Garguilo, Riolino, Badamo D, Badamo J and Carbo)

4 Not in Attendance –(Santino, Arpino, DePalma and Anania)

Staff- Hongo, Paul (Deputy Director), Tom Thompson (Finance Director), Attorney Patricia A. Cofrancesco (Town Attorney)

Chairman Dougherty invites Mayor April Capone Almon for her presentation.

Mayor April Capone Almon presents.

Welcome ladies and gentlemen of the Town Council, Town Staff, taxpayers and friends, thank you for joining me here this evening as I present the 2011-2012 budget. Before we talk about the details of the budget I would like to highlight some of our departments and the things we have accomplished and plan to work on for the future of East Haven. Let's take a look at what we've done and what we plan to do.

With regards to the Fire Department, we responded to over 5500 calls – one of the busiest years to date. Most calls were medical. Added a new rescue truck and two paramedics to the Foxon station to increase paramedic service in the Foxon area. New truck was a used rescue unit from southern California that had fewer than 20k mile on it and in excellent condition. Program also generates funding from bundled billing system. Ytd over \$60,000 and we have only expended \$13,000 to replace medics sent to the hospital with patients.

In regards to severe repetitive loss, houses were identified by FEMA as 'sever repetitive loss' properties. Houses that had flooded over and over. FD worked with Congresswoman DeLauro and the State of CT to purchase these houses. Houses were burned for training purposes and practice.

Land must stay vacant and we will be using a portion of it for a community dog park thanks to PW. Also remember that our FD had over 600 hydrants to shovel out every time it snowed.

The Police Department had Staffing changes in line with both DOJ and PERF studies. We have a New Deputy Chief of Police, new Captain of Police, new grade C police officer, new Traffic Maintenance person—keeping fleet in better shape than ever. Computerized system for maintenance and safety checks. The Police Department Training Room, \$25,000 of asset forfeiture money was used to upgrade training room. State of the Art equipment to include two 42" flat screen televisions, an overhead projector, additional computer equipment, new training desks and chairs.

Allows our department to train officers in house and invite neighboring towns. Our PD did not have these capabilities before. The Police Department has replaced the entire infrastructure of the computer network and radio systems to keep up with the changing needs of police work. Insurance money from leak or more forfeiture. \$53,000 State of the Art Multiple Server System which is capable of handling all the needs of our department far into the future. Seven (7) new work station PC's to include a new booking computer, which has enhanced photographic capabilities. New software programs have been purchased and installed in relationship to internal functions, training, scheduling and Policy & Procedure. \$22,000 radio software up-grade. Essential because the FCC has mandated that in the year 2014 all radio systems convert to short banding radio communication.

The Police Department Physical Plant was messy, chaotic, unhealthy and unsafe. We have now done more improvements through the efforts of Public Services. A new ceramic floor was installed in the Radio Room. Cell blocks were completely renovated and painted. The entire first floor of the building has been painted. The exterior of the building to include the rear parking lot was cleaned and exterior lighting was replaced and repaired.

Public Works continued the many projects that improve quality of life in town. Paving, drainage, tree removal, sidewalk repair, ball fields, parks and maintenance of town buildings keep PW very busy. We will continue those projects into the new year. As mentioned earlier we are working on creating a new dog park near the ice rink. Minimal

cost and will keep pet owners from taking dogs onto ball fields. Snow Month of Jan the snowiest month on record. Squirreled away \$57,000 in state money from last year— saved us. Our Christmas tree was one of the prettiest ever. Tree already growing on the green. Saved roughly \$20k in labor and equipment to cut and transport a tree. Lit with energy efficient lighting purchased in a partnership with UI. Uses a fraction of the energy that the old lights did. Safe playgrounds have been very important and upgrades done throughout the last 3 years.

Used state money to upgrade playgrounds at the East Haven Beach and Memorial Field. Cosey Beach Park will be dedicated on Memorial Day weekend.

In regard to the S-Curve; When I took office in late '07 the downtown revitalization project was mired in controversy and litigation. Town designed project without owning the land necessary to complete the project properly. Resulted in a losing eminent domain lawsuit. I settled the case resulting in the state of Ct releasing funds for the work already completed. Redesigned the project and completed it with the help of a grant received through Rosa. The final product is not a perfectly straight Main St. but a much safer road.

Town Engineering has undergone a clean-up and filing project. Reorganized filing systems and streamlined procedures and protocols to maximize Departmental efficiency. Acquired multi-function large format copier/scanner/plotter to replace inoperable copier better serve the public. Construction inspection services for the Central Business District Project (CBD) Phase 3B, saving Town over \$200,000 in Consultant Engineering Fees. Provided Technical support to the Town's Shoreline Greenway Trail (SGT) Project, State and Federal funding is over \$500,000. Also worked on by P&Z.

Engineering Traffic Lights- Main St -5 Traffic Signals to be replaced via DOT contract, State and Federal funding of over \$1,000,000. Many of those lights have not been working and we have been putting band-aids on them waiting for the funding to come thru. We appreciate the public's patience and we are told the project will commence soon. Southern Connecticut Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG) grant application for Laurel Street Mill and overlay project submitted, State and Federal funding is over \$500,000. Working with Sen. Blumenthal on a HUD grant that will allow the revitalization of the West End Talked about but when I came into office found no plans for this project. Sorely needed will begin this year and will have all energy efficient lighting.

Planning and Zoning has worked to enforce new blight ordinance and addressed and resolved 118 blight complaints. Fantastic start but many more to address. Because of new ordinance needs full time hours. If we want it to work we have to allocate the resources. P&Z along with Building reviewed and inspected over 7 ½ million worth of construction.

Finance, Collector, Assessor

Finance took advantage of low interest rates to refinance and Refunded General Obligations Issue that saved the Taxpayers \$173,000. The Assessor's Office did Personal Property Audits for every business bringing in thousands of dollars of unexpected revenue. Out of State Registration over 150 vehicles added to the tax rolls. If you live here you pay taxes here—it's only fair. Note we put in last year's tax bills was helpful. New Real Estate Software in the spring will help insure accuracy, be more efficient for staff and user friendly for the public. Tax Collector collected over \$74,000 for PPAs. Rate is at 97.7% which is right on track. In Town Hall we are also looking at revamping our 20 yo phone system and install a computer network for security.

There have been a tremendous amount of changes to the library recently. (see new windows)Window blinds and shutters throughout the library following the installation of new energy-efficient windows. The entire building has received a face lift with the help of a state grant. Inside the library, automated rear entrance doors for handicap access, early Literacy Computer Station for the children's room, netbooks and e-readers for loan, new service desk in the children's room. The library desks created by members of a work program in the State Corrections system and installed by public works The Senior Citizen Van was Donated by AMR and sponsored by Jim Krebs, Frank Capone, Red Jack Automotive and the East Haven Lions Club. Used to take seniors to out-of-town Dr's visits. Has wheelchair lift, gps, new shocks, breaks and is running well. Staffed by volunteer drivers (need more).

Federal lunch program was cut by one day. Town picking up the cost and SC staff and Jan cooking lunch at a minimal cost. Serving as a model for other towns and cities. For some seniors it's their only hot meal. Also important for interaction – keeping up entertainment as well. Ice Cream Socials, dances, parties, live music and so on. The Teen Center opened its new 5000 sq. foot teen center facility off of Main Street. Town residents have donated many, many items. New space has led to increased participants and revenue. Through Youth Service Commission secured \$10,000 grant to combat underage drinking in town. Activities include the EHPD conducting compliance checks of retailers that sell alcohol-something they could not do without this funding. Secured \$5000 grant from United Way of Greater New Haven to provide

educational activities for kindergarten parents and their children. To date 45 families have participated. Mention Petrucelli, Licata and Board.

When we think of Rec we often think of hockey and we have a lot to talk about tonight at the rink. Additional Tenants: Branford H.S. Girls, Shoreline Sharks (full year).

Additional paid Locker Room for Guilford H.S. Girls

Ice rink- Add State of the Art, computer controlled heating system. Converted Concession Stand from Electric to Gas( cost savings). Added State of the Art, Fire suppression system in the concession.

Rink Skate park! Take ice up in the summer to save \$\$\$ Innovative idea: been asked for a skate park, couldn't generate enough interest but keep getting asked. Indoor skate park skateboard/roller skating combo--Trail basis Will be supervised and contained. Won't bother neighbors or have problems with vandalism. If it works this year we will look at expanding hours and days.

I'd like to take a moment to express my gratitude to East Haven Town employees.

Times have been challenging; money is scarce and services are even more in demand.

I believe that East Haven Town employees have risen to the demands of a national economic crisis and I am grateful to them.

- The Global, National and State Economy Continue to Challenge East Haven's Ability to Drive Revenue Growth
- Jobs, Housing Market, Healthcare Costs at The National Level Continue to Affect a Full Economic Recovery
- \$3.3 Billion State Deficient Resulting in Less Discretionary Funding.
- Unemployment, Under Employment, Foreclosures , Higher Fuel Costs , Healthcare, Utilities and Food Prices Continue To Burden Our Citizens
- Foreclosures have risen 467% in EH since '05
- We are not alone.
- For a 3rd Straight Year We Have Under Spent Our Budget While Maintaining Consistent and Dependable Services to the Taxpayers of East Haven
- Actual audit reports
- 07-08 **Under spent: \$956,798**
- 08-09 **Under spent: \$1,036,675**
- 09-010 **Under spent: \$947,788**

Key Inhibitors of shortfall

- Years of Overinflated Revenues Coupled With The Economic Down Turn
- Runaway Health Care and Employee Benefit Costs
- 3 Straight Years of Reduced Revenue from Historic Reliable Sources of Income:

- Real Estate Taxes Down
- MV & Personal Property Down
- Interest, Penalties and Liens Down
- Delinquent Taxes Down
- Investment Income
- Coupled With the Delay of Tweed Sale of \$1.5 Million
- **In Total, We Did Not Recognize Millions of Projected Revenues in 2009/2010**

How we are eliminating the deficit

- June 30, 2010 Deficit ( \$5.2MM)
- 2010/2011 Fund Balance Appropriation + \$2.8MM
- 2011/2012 Fund Balance Appropriation + \$900,000
- Sale of Town Property + \$1.5MM
- **July 2011 0 deficit**
- Coupled With Continuing To Budget Realistic, Conservative Revenue Projections and Under-spending we have wiped out the deficit. Though 2010/2011 is Not Over, We Project Generating Revenues In Excess of Expenses, Further Contributing To A Positive Fund Balance.
- Our Plan to Restore the Fund Balance Has Worked, Will Continue to Work and Will Enable Us To Consistently Build Up Our Fund Balance A Minimum of \$250,000 /Year With The Recently Passed Fund Balance Restoration Ordinance

**Mayor's budget proposal**

Mayor's 2010/2011 Budget/Approved Request: \$85,670,735

Mayor's 2011/2012 Budget Recommendation: \$84,429,946

Budget Reduction: \$1,240,789

- Mill Rate 2010/2011 – 26.84  
Mill Rate 2011/2012 – 26.25  
Reducing Your Taxes .59 Mills
- Between this budget and the upcoming capital budget the allocation to the BOE INCLUDES all-day kindergarten. A long overdue service in East Haven.
- However, BoE is autonomous by state law so I can give them the money but it is up to the board to make it happen.

Folks, last year I asked you to be patient as we faced a national economic crisis coupled with years of over estimated revenues. The time has come when the processes and plans I put in place have become successful. **By July 2011 we will no longer have a deficit**, we will have money in our fund balance and we are also

lowering taxes to ease some of that burden. I thank you for your patience and faith in me. It is an honor and a pleasure to serve the people of the town of East Haven. And like my friend Gov. Malloy, I too believe our best days are in front of us. Thank you. God bless you and your families and God bless East Haven.

Chairman Dougherty thanks the Mayor.

Councilwoman Donahue reads #3, the following:

**To consider and act upon setting a Public Hearing Date and time for *An Ordinance Authorizing the Fire Department to transfer to Overtime Wages (\$ 96,000) from Accounts in the amount of \$96,000.00*, to be held at the East Haven Community Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, Connecticut, on Thursday, April 14, 2011, at 7:00p.m.**

2<sup>nd</sup> by Santino.

No Public Comment.

No Council Comment.

Roll Call Vote.

All in Favor.

None Oppose.

Motion Carries.

Councilwoman Donahue reads #4, the following:

**To consider and act upon setting a Public Hearing Date and time for *An Ordinance Authorizing Building Maintenance to transfer to Sewer Use (\$2,600.00), Water (\$ 5,000.00) and Natural Gas (\$ 45,000.00) from Accounts in the amount of \$ 52,600.00.*, to be held at the East Haven Community Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, Connecticut, on Thursday, April 14, 2011, immediately following the previously scheduled Public Hearing.**

2<sup>nd</sup> by Badamo.

No Public Comment.

No Council Comment.

Roll Call Vote.

All in Favor.

None Oppose.  
Motion Carries.

Councilwoman Donahue reads #5, the following:

**To consider and act upon setting a Public Hearing Date and time for *An Ordinance Authorizing the Police Department transfer to Overtime Wages (\$ 276,000.00) from Accounts in the amount of \$ 276,000.00*, to be held at the East Haven Community Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, Connecticut, on Thursday, April 14, 2011, immediately following the previously scheduled Public Hearing.**

2<sup>nd</sup> by Camera.

No Public Comment.

No Council Comment.

Roll Call Vote.

All in Favor.

None Oppose.

Motion Carries.

Chairman Dougherty states he will begin budget workshops next week. They are to be held at the Community Center beginning at 7:00p.m., for the departments to present their budget. We are looking for the best budget for the best interest of the Town.

**Motion by McKay to Adjourn.**

2<sup>nd</sup> by Santino.

**Special Meeting ends at 7:54p.m.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Bianca N. Genovesi  
Council Clerk**