

EAST HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2019

Stacy Gering
TOWN CLERK

In accordance with Chapter III, Section 6 of the East Haven Town Charter, the East Haven Legislative Town Council held a Public Hearing meeting on Wednesday, April 17, 2019, at 7:00PM at the East Haven Senior Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512.

Chairman Ken Mckay calls the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

Item #1

Roll Call for Public Hearing #1-11 present- 4 absent (Santino, Deko, Badamo and Butler III).

A quorum is present.

Chairman Mckay asks all to stand for the pledge of allegiance. Councilman Robert Parente asks for a moment of silence for Babe Messina who was read her last rights today.

Item #2

To conduct Public Hearing #1 to discuss an "Ordinance adopting the Town and Board of Education Budgets and fixing the tax rate in mills for the 2019-2020 fiscal year of the Town of East Haven." - Board of Education Side of the Budget.

**AUTHORIZING ORDINANCE OF THE
East Haven Town Council**

An Ordinance adopting the Town and Board of Education Budgets and fixing the tax rate in mills for the 2019-2020 fiscal year of the Town of East Haven.

WHEREAS, in accordance with the provisions of the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut and the Town Charter of the Town of East Haven, this Council is empowered to adopt a budget and set the tax rate in mills, 32.42 for the 2019-2020 fiscal year;

AND WHEREAS, the Town Council has reviewed the budget submitted by the Mayor and has held public hearings and budget workshops thereon and made various changes;

NOW THEREFORE, be it **ORDAINED**:

Section 1. Total estimated revenues for the fiscal year are as follows:

REVENUES

Current & Delinquent Town Taxes	\$ 65,765,925.00
State and Federal Grants for Education	\$ 19,582,656.00
State Grants and Payments in Lieu of Taxes	\$ 1,879,091.00
Other State Grants	\$ 94,950.00
Income from Short Term Investments	\$ 275,850.00
Licenses, Permits, Fees, and Services	\$ 1,641,303.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 2,780,046.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES	\$ 92,019,821.00

Section 2. Total appropriations for the fiscal year are as follows:

APPROPRIATIONS

General Government	\$ 2,977,976.00
Employee Benefits	\$ 11,254,955.00
Public Services	\$ 5,634,097.00
Public Safety	\$ 13,864,820.00
Health	\$ 266,722.00
Social Services	\$ 130,142.00
Counseling & Community Services	\$ 757,633.00
Housing Authority	\$ 850.00
Urban Renewal	\$ 42,450.00
School Building Committee	\$ 2,600.00
Library	\$ 846,561.00
Recreation	\$ 518,196.00
Recreation/Ice Rink	\$ 293,749.00
Senior Center	\$ 228,621.00
Debt Service	\$ 2,706,478.00
Community Services	\$ 109,200.00
Insurance	\$ 2,388,000.00
General Services	\$ 2,002,500.00
Total Board of Education Appropriation	\$ 47,994,271.00
TOTAL BUDGETED APPROPRIATIONS	\$ 92,019,821.00

Section 3. This ordinance shall be deemed to approve the budget proposed to the Council by the Mayor on March 28, 2019, except as modified by the Finance Director or the Town Council throughout the budget workshop process, and except as the same may be specially amended by this ordinance. The Director of Finance is directed to adjust all figures and summaries in the budget services reports to reflect the

amendments, if any, to the Mayor's proposed budget which are set forth in this ordinance as finally approved.

This Ordinance was approved by the Town Council on April 24, 2019 and shall be effective in accordance with the provisions of the East Haven Town Charter.

Respectfully,

Submitted by:

_____	_____
Danelle Feeley, Council Clerk	Date
_____	_____
Stacy Gravino, Town Clerk	Date
_____	_____
Joseph Maturo, Jr., Mayor	Date

No public comment.

Item #3

Adjournment of Public Hearing #1.

Councilwoman Loria Jaffe makes a motion.

Councilman Louis Pacelli seconds the motion.

Roll call vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

Item #4

Roll Call for Hearing Committee- 11 present- 4 absent (Santino, Deko, Badamo and Butler III).

Item #5

Hearing Committee report to the full Town Council to recommend action on Public Hearing #1.

Council comment:

- Councilman Robert Parente says he thinks we are in trouble up at the board in several aspects. One concern to him is the waste of money and he will point out 3 or 4 things he is aware of that are not only charter violations but it shows a lot of the ineptness in running a budget up there. The board is looking for more money and if you look at the \$650 per day someone was getting paid who is no longer there or if you look at the company Emcor they brought in for \$200,000

worth of work on the boiler and air conditioner situations. The company is a great company but they come from Manchester and for the past 20+ years we have used two companies from East Haven and as far as he knows their services were to everyone's satisfaction; he sat on the board for 14 of those years. They took in house work away from an East Haven company and bring it out to Manchester. They buy paint from North Branford instead of going to Goodys when Goody's not only meets the price but also gives a 10% discount. They also have several purchase orders that he is aware of that total over \$7,000 which is a blatant violation of the charter and the bidding process; not one time did they go out to bid for these items and he thinks that in itself shows the disrespect they have been given as a Town when they don't go through the proper channels that the Charter specifies. He knows of at least 10 violations in that respect and he is sure there are several more. He finds it curious that the day after they met with the Council last week they put a budget freeze in place, he hopes they are aware that whatever monies they don't spend between now and June 30th gets returned back to the Town, by the town charter. He hopes they save a lot of money because that can certainly be looked at as reimbursement for all the mistakes they have made over the past several months. He is very disenchanted with the way the board is run and the money that is being spent and it's a slap in the face to the taxpayers of this Town.

- Councilwoman Loria Jaffe says if those items are true that he mentioned, what can be done?
- Councilman Robert Parente says Councilman Palladino mentioned this in a discussion earlier tonight that the board acts under the onus of the word autonomy which means at the conclusion of the budget process, as of July 1st the money that is allocated to them no longer is part of their domain in any respect. It doesn't mean we can't ask them to appear here to tell us what is going on month to month. He thinks they should look into something like that. We get an appropriation report from Bruce at the Library on a monthly basis and we should enact a policy and have someone there every month to go over where they are in their budget with regard to expenses. We can't tell them what to do with it but we have a right to have them tell us how they are doing it.
- Chairman Ken McKay asks for clarification from the Town Attorney if they can request that now or during a Council meeting.
- Town Attorney Joseph Zullo explains this is their hearing committee report to the full Town Council on the 47,994,271. If it turns out that the Council wants that report they can incorporate it with the motion at the end.
- Councilman Joseph Carfora says his biggest concern is what the Mayor came back with, the \$1.7 million dollar cut, or his recommendation. Like he said during the budget process, his biggest concern is the children, he hopes that \$1.7 million dollar recommendation doesn't cheat the kids out of anything. If she has

to look for cuts within the Department, he is concerned that it doesn't come away from the kids.

- Councilman Louis Pacelli says we can give them \$100 million dollars but looking at the budget requests and the workshops they have had, he is in agreement with a lot of things Councilman Parente said, he was on the Board of Education as well as Councilman Palladino and he has a lot of respect for the board members but the budget that was presented should have been looked at closer. He feels that not enough of the money is getting to the kids and that needs to be worked on a little bit better. They need to have better discussions about their finances at the appropriate times, the people that come to the meetings are there about the kids they don't want to sit through a meeting for three hours for discussions about interim finance directors and what not. He wants to see better security, Councilman Deko asked for a report on the security. He himself has made recommendations in the past, which were not costly and he doesn't see it, they say they are doing it behind the scenes but this is the place to let them know about it. He adds that he thinks it is a good idea to get a monthly report.
- Chairman Ken McKay says any discussions on the security would have to be discussed in executive session.
- Councilwoman Judy Esposito says she agrees they should receive a monthly report. As far as contractors, they should be from within our own Town. We shouldn't be going to Manchester when we have good businesses here that do a good job and it should be kept within the community.
- Councilman Louis Pacelli says Councilman Palladino made a good point when he has asked for as long as he has been on the Council to have security officers in the schools, they are asking for increases for other things why aren't they asking for increases for that.
- Chairman Ken McKay says he can go to the board of education meetings and ask these questions, they give the opportunity to speak and they should do that. He also has a big problem with them outsourcing to Manchester. He doesn't know if they did bid it out or not. It also really irks him that they are not using Goody's to buy paint. What they give to support the functions and groups within Town is unheard of and outrageous so someone's hand should be held to the fire for that one.
- Councilman Big Steve Tracey mentions when Erica was here at the last meeting, she said the employee cost share was \$1.5 million and school rental was between \$150,000-\$200,000 which is \$1.7 million. Is that in this or is that extra money they are getting besides this?
- Chairman McKay says he doesn't know where the money goes for the outside rental of the facilities or the cost share.
- Attorney Zullo says the board of education's total expenditure is substantially larger than the approx. \$48,000,000 they are allocating. The bottom line is that

they have money coming in from grants, the alliance fund, employee cost share, etc. that come in. So he is not wrong for saying that, it is not incorrect.

- Councilwoman Linda Hennessey asks Councilman Carfora for clarification on what he was asking about the Mayor's proposal.
- Councilman Joseph Carfora says the Mayor recommended \$1.7 million dollars less than the board asked for and his biggest concern is where she is going to make up that money; is she going to take it away from children's programs? He knows she is under some contractual obligations at the tune of about \$1.2 million dollars that she has to pay no matter what.
- Councilwoman Linda Hennessey says she wasn't sure where he was going with that; does he feel that they should get that additional money? Partial or close to it?
- Councilman Joseph Carfora says he is reluctant with that because we are trying to balance a budget here and it is a sizeable cut.
- Councilwoman Linda Hennessey says it's not a cut; he is just not giving them what they requested. Her question to him was if he feels it should be something more, not the \$1.7 million, but somewhere close to it?
- Councilman Joseph Carfora says well she does have a contractual obligation of \$1.2 million.
- Councilwoman Linda Hennessey says her biggest concern is that it is always a great presentation by the Superintendent when you look at the power point with all the bells and whistles, but the bottom line is the students. Progressively every year between test scores and absenteeism presentations, money is not going to fix those issues; it won't solve students doing better on tests. Something is wrong with the system, like she said last year and again this year after having 4 kids put through the system, every 2-4 years they change the curriculum. They need to make up their minds; 2+2 is still 4. She knows they have to change with the times and everyone talks about magnet schools, she doesn't know why because we are a public school system and the money is there. We need everyone to do their job and do it right and all get on the same page. She has many high school students working for them, she is embarrassed because math, forget about it, penmanship forget about it. For \$1.7 million dollars, what would they give them for that? Let's get it right first and then maybe reward them; the money is always for salaries and other things. She is sorry to say they can't give them anything but they have to be prudent with what they have.
- Councilman Robert Parente says in his 14 years on the Board of Education they had one change in curriculum and it was pretty much a state mandate and test scores were going up significantly. Since that time, they have had 11 curriculum changes that he knows of; it seems like every time someone new comes in they have a special new idea that will work. It is confusing to teachers, students and certainly to parents, which it is most important for parents to get involved and be

on the same page. Also, there is a new door company that opened up in Town on Dodge Avenue yet we get all of our door and lock supplies from Manchester. We have at least 5 companies in East Haven that do roof repairs yet we get roof repairs from a company in Manchester. They are told not to use Goody's or Home Depot as well as several other vendors in East Haven. Yet we use 4 or 5 vendors from Manchester and low and behold our \$650 per day finance director lives in Manchester. What a shame. They should be embarrassed.

- Councilwoman Judy Sittnick says our scores have not done anything in years.
- Councilman Louis Pacelli asks what are ratings are right now.
- Councilwoman Judy Sittnick says she looks at the scores in the paper and they are pathetic.
- Councilman Nicholas Palladino says everyone knows he was a cop for 27+ years and 1/3 of his career was spent in the school system so he has a lot of knowledge of what goes on in the schools because he worked in every single school building in this Town at one time or another over the course of nine years and he saw a lot of waste and things that boggled his mind and then when he got on the board of ed. it really boggled his mind. They ask for money, get it and it doesn't get spent for that. They need all of these consultants and that has to stop. Security in our school systems is beyond a joke, North Branford, North Haven, Branford all have armed security which are people that they hire that have to have a minimum of 15 years in law enforcement or be retired from law enforcement or have left law enforcement under good circumstances. They must pass an extensive background and take a test with state police and the academy; it is the best program and we don't have to invent it; it has already been done by everyone in comparison to us, which are the small towns around us. North Branford, where his son and daughter in law and their granddaughter is going to go to school, is the typical one horse town, their police department is probably half our size so they know they need an officer in each school in case something happens. He mentioned it to the superintendent the other night and she said they found out how much it would cost and it is too much money. He mentions the full time adult education center, she claims a study was done where they would only save \$50,000-\$60,000 but the figures he looked at were a lot different and even giving her the benefit of the doubt on \$50,000, that can be spent on security. No Town our size in the State of Connecticut has a full time adult education center. We are too small of a community to have a full time adult education center, we need it but it should be part time and in the buildings we have. We hire full time teachers and two full time secretaries and an administrator and it is a total waste of money the way it is being done. Until the Board of Education can say they see these problems and everything will be going out to bid then he can see giving them a little more money each year, he knows there are contracts but for them to continue to waste money like a drunken sailor then ask for another million

dollars, they don't see test scores or graduation rates going up. They gave more money to the police and fire departments and they see changes for the better and have 24/7 paramedic service. They gave money and saw results. With the board of education they give money and see bills. Until they go in the right direction he doesn't think they should give them more than they gave last year.

- Chairman Ken McKay questions Councilman Carfora who was concerned about the money going to the Board of Education, he asks him if he wants to give them additional money and if he wants to raise the taxes because this is the time to do it.
- Councilman Joseph Carfora says no he doesn't want to raise the taxes. Maybe they should address the problems that Councilman Parente said and Councilman Palladino said so they can get to a reasonable solution.
- Chairman Ken McKay says he has been on the Council for 22 years along with other Council members who have been on for a long time and he remembers four years they flat lined the board of education and it is amazing how they survived. He mentions one of his grandson's who entered the Academy this year and the teachers saw something that was not seen at Tuttle School and after less than 7 months at the Academy they noticed he needed glasses and he comes home with homework. His other grandson goes to the middle school and he doesn't have a book to bring home, he isn't getting an education his grades are failing and he came out of Ferrara School with honors the whole time. He says everyone has good comments tonight and it needs to go to the board of education. They can do things, try to fix it, ask for reports but once they give them the money they spend it how they want.
- Councilwoman Linda Hennessey says the hardest part about giving them more money is that when they do, it is out of their control.
- Councilman Nicholas Palladino says he is right about the Academy, they use a totally different methodology and his question has been even when he was on the board why are not all of the schools doing what they find to be working. Why is our superintendent not saying to all administrators that this works, so do it.
- Councilwoman Judy Sittnick says the Academy has the ability to grab parents and someone once said to her their daughter hasn't brought a book home in three years and she asked where the problem was, it is the parent who isn't going to school and saying why.
- Councilman Nicholas Palladino says our top teachers are making \$85,000 per year and they should be able to see if a kid is struggling to see.
- Councilman Robert Parente says another point is you can find 10-15 line items right now where 10% of the money has been spent- for example their budget allocated \$100,00 and there is still \$90,000 in there which has to be spent in the next two months. There could be back payments over due but if you look at the line items he doesn't think they all fall into that category. He will also say another

problem in this town is that when a parent complains, especially to a teacher, which he has heard from many, many parents, they are afraid to complain because something usually happens to that poor student. These teachers have a way of trying to get even with kids if their parents complain. He can prove it 100 different times with several different students, when they make a comment about something being wrong in the classroom there is fear there will be repercussions to the students. Parents don't want to suffer the consequences of going to a board meeting and saying something, and that isn't fair.

- Town Attorney Zullo says he will ask him to reflect on this carefully and if he has knowledge of something like that which would amount to malfeasance within our school system, he would hope that he bring it to the attention of the chairperson of the board who is there tonight or to someone immediately. This is the first he is being made aware of it, and if he were aware of it he would make someone aware of it immediately because that is a problem. He says he is looking at stunned faces from the audience and he is equally stunned and if there is an issue he should leave here tonight and then speak to one of them or tomorrow morning speak to someone within the system.
- Councilman Joseph Carfora says his biggest concern is with the kids because our grades are down, when he announced last week he was going to seek the Mayor's spot, he said there was a declining school system and he feels that way because our scores are not going up. That is why he asked Erica the other night what was going to get cut if she couldn't do it and his biggest concern is the kids.
- Chairman Ken Mckay asks how she answered that question.
- Councilman Joseph Carfora says she didn't. She said she would cut from here and there and when he asked about the kids he didn't get a response. He wasn't aware of what Councilman Parente said tonight and if that's the case then he believes someone from the board of education should come here without a doubt.
- Councilwoman Linda Hennessey asks Councilman Carfora if he feels they should make an amendment tonight too.
- Councilman Joseph Carfora says no.
- Councilwoman Loria Jaffe says it is about the kids but if they were to give them \$5 million more dollars it wouldn't get to the kids. It goes to the toplevel administrators and waste and it doesn't get to the kids. And they have no control over it, which is even more frustrating.
- Councilman Louis Pacelli says the bottom line is they all support the children of this town but they want the best education and to make sure the education is getting to the children.

Councilman Robert Parente makes a motion to report to the full Town Council to recommend action on Public Hearing #1 with the recommendation to receive monthly reports.

Councilman Nicholas Palladino seconds the motion.

Roll call vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

Item #6

Adjournment of Hearing Committee.

Councilman Nicholas Palladino makes a motion.

Councilman Louis Pacelli seconds the motion.

Voice vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:47PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danelle Feeley, Clerk, East Haven Legislative Town Council