

**EAST HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2014**

The East Haven Town Council held a special meeting Tuesday, April 22, 2014, at 7:00PM at the East Haven Senior Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512.

Chairman Richard Anania calls the meeting to order at 7:00PM.
He asks all to stand for the pledge of allegiance.

Item #1

Roll Call-all 15 members present.

Councilman Joseph Badamo makes a motion for the Democrats to enter into a caucus.
Councilman Nicholas Palladino seconds the motion.

Councilman Robert Parente makes a motion for the Republicans to enter into a caucus.
Councilman Ken Mckay seconds the motion.

Democratic and Republican caucuses begin at 7:01PM.
Democratic caucus ends at 7:12PM.
Republican caucus ends at 7:13PM.

Item #2

Approval of minutes from March 27, 2014 Special Meeting (State of the Town)

Councilman Joseph Santino makes a motion.
Councilman Mckay seconds the motion.
Voice vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

Item #3

Approval of minutes from April 1, 2014 Regular Meeting

Councilman Santino makes a motion.
Councilman Henry Butler III seconds the motion.
Voice vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

Item #4

Approval of minutes from April 15, 2014 Public Hearing

Councilman Mckay makes a motion.

Councilman Santino seconds the motion.

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

Item #5

To consider and act upon a Resolution enacting and approving an “Ordinance adopting the Town and Board of Education Budgets and fixing the tax rate in mills for the 2014-2015 fiscal year of the Town of East Haven.”

**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 2014-2015 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, 32.05 for the 2014-2015 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	\$ 63,343,723.00
State and Federal Grants for Education	\$ 21,876,739.00
State Grants and Payments in Lieu of Taxes	\$ 1,779,884.00
Other State Grants	\$ 87,570.00
Income from Short Term Investments	\$ 24,500.00
Licenses, Permits, Fees, and Services	\$ 1,203,800.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,319,658.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES	\$ 89,635,874.00

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

APPROPRIATIONS

General Government	\$ 2,691,450.00
Employee Benefits	\$ 8,844,975.00
Public Services	\$ 5,051,055.00
Public Safety	\$ 11,051,255.00
Health	\$ 252,341.00
Social Services	\$ 79,597.00
Housing Code	\$ 0.00
Counseling & Community Services	\$ 596,615.00
Housing Authority	\$ 13,861.00
Urban Renewal	\$ 47,987.00
School Building Committee	\$ 2,600.00
Library	\$ 739,124.00
Recreation	\$ 451,255.00
Recreation/Ice Rink	\$ 282,350.00
Senior Center	\$ 205,011.00
Debt Service	\$ 6,897,841.00
Community Services	\$ 93,700.00
Insurance	\$ 2,908,500.00
General Services	\$ 2,116,000.00
Fund Balance Contribution	\$ 900,000.00
Total Board of Education Appropriation	\$ 46,410,357.00
TOTAL BUDGETED APPROPRIATIONS	\$ 89,635,874.00

Section 3. This ordinance shall be deemed to approve the budget proposed to the Council by the Mayor on March 27, 2014, except as modified by the Finance Director 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 22, 2014 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

Councilman Mckay makes a motion.

Councilman Santino seconds the motion.

Public comment:

- William Richardson- 136 Bennett Road, East Haven, CT- Mr. Richardson states that he is a former Town Council member and budget time was very important to him as he's sure it is to all of the current members. He was one of the few people who attended the Mayor's budget hearing and he was very impressed with what the Mayor proposed. The budget he put forth he feels is financially sound and fiscally responsible; the Departments are funded sufficiently. He knows that nobody wants to pay more taxes than they have to, and they have seen taxes go up on the State and Federal level. He really thinks the Mayor's proposed budget is a workable budget and it is a sound budget. If he were a member of the Council he would certainly vote in favor of this budget as the Mayor presented it. He reminds Councilman Riolino, Councilman Badamo and Councilman Santino that when Mayor Capone presented a 17% tax increase they all voted for it. So he hopes all of the members, Democratic and Republican look favorably on the budget the Mayor presented because it will put the Town in the best light that it can and keep it fiscally responsible.
- Jim Farrell- 7 Erico Drive, East Haven, CT- Mr. Farrell states that he is a former Board of Education member and he realizes the importance of the monies that are allocated for the educational system. He knows there was talk about cutting the funding by \$700,000. There is a lot involved with running our school system; there are State and Federal mandates that at the beginning of the school year you don't know you will be required to fund. They are getting special needs students coming into the district that they didn't plan for and there is also an influx of ELL students that they are mandated to have so many teachers teach those students. The salary benefits account for almost 76% due to contractual obligations. They need to let the new superintendent get her feet wet and give her an opportunity. He personally feels that in the future they should look into closing some of the schools to get away from the neighborhood school concept. It is a long lengthy process, he was involved in the five year strategic plan for the Board of Education and that is one of the areas being looked into, but it doesn't happen overnight. He states that they cannot cut funding in order to not affect the services they provide to students. If the budget is cut by \$700,000, on average for a home with an assessed value of \$100,000 it is a \$30 per year savings and he feels our students educations are worth more than \$30 a year.

Council comment:

- Chairman Anania thanks the Council for sitting through the budget process, working together and getting it all taken care of. It is a lot of time and a lot of hours.
- Councilman Henry Butler III states that he is new to this; it is his first time going through this process. He thinks that they could have looked at a few more things; he thinks they sort of rushed it.
- Councilman Michael Riolino refers to Mr. Richardson's comment. He did vote for the tax increase in 2009 or 2010. He recalls the current Mayor saying he would roll it back and instead they voted to increase the taxes that year and he is tired of increasing the taxes.
- Councilman Robert Sand states that he proposed in a workshop to cut \$700,000 out of the Board of Education and he feels his reasoning for that is justified this year. The Superintendent made a request for "x" amount of dollars and the Mayor reduced that request and presented an option which gives a \$1.2 million increase. Over the past 10 years there are 700 students less in the system and 50 less teachers. If you average out salaries and cost per student, somewhere in the \$10,000,000 or \$20,000,000 is where he saw that expenses should have come down. We have been funding the Board of Education and 4 or 5 years ago it was still on the increase and then it leveled off. Test scores are still down; he has not seen an improvement in the scores. Money was returned in 2011 and there were no teacher layoffs, a school was not closed, bills were paid. He feels that the \$500,000 coming from the State is sufficient for this year because it has to be passed on to the Board of Education. He is still requesting the \$700,000 decrease; the Finance Director gave the Council a document tonight with those revised numbers and that is here for discussion still.
- Councilman Joseph Badamo states that he doesn't feel they had enough time to go over the Town side of the budget. They never opened up the budget line item by line item; he opened it up more at home than here. He doesn't feel they had enough time; they should have used tonight as another workshop and chosen another night to set the budget.
- Councilman Paul Thompson Jr. agrees that they needed a little more time to look over everything again to stop the taxes from going up and see where they can minimize.
- Chairman Anania states that they did have the workshops and the public hearings and everyone was able to give their input then and they had a general review. Nothing else was brought to the table then.
- Vice Chairman Robert Parente states that he is baffled by the comments because they had every Department head sit at the table and they asked questions and had the opportunity line item by line item to go through every department. To say we didn't have time when everyone sat there baffles him. It

was also asked to everyone who sat before them if they could live within the budget, can they operate and every department head said yes they could make it work. During one of the workshops he asked the Council if there is any reason that anyone on the Council would vote no for the budget contingent upon what they heard from a particular Department head, and everyone said no they were satisfied with the department and no one spoke up to question any line items. They had more than enough time and everyone said they agreed with the departments, with their final numbers, the ability to work within those numbers and that they would vote on the budget. He thinks it would be ludicrous for someone to say that they don't approve the budget; it would be hard for him to understand when they agreed during the entire process. He hopes there is no grand standing tonight and that they do the right thing for the people of East Haven; the taxpayers and the children.

- Councilman Nicholas Palladino states that Mr. Parente's comment is a little incorrect, he did question the Superintendent and never got a straight answer or the answers he wanted, and he never agreed to vote for the budget. He states that he is new to the Council but not politics, he was Chairman of the Board of Education and each year they asked for money, each year they made cuts. His final year they came in \$100,000 under budget and turned it back to the Town. His biggest problem with the Board of Education is what he refers to as the "white elephant on Dodge Avenue"; the Adult Learning Center. He says it is not being used as an adult learning center, it is being used as an alternative High School, and it has been used for that since its inception. We cannot as a community, afford to run two high schools. If anyone has been reading the paper, the amount of people moving to the suburbs at or below the poverty level has increased 78%; they are moving out of the cities and that is a serious problem. Our Town in particular has a 28% increase of immigrants coming into Town working minimal jobs with minimal wage living day to day paycheck to paycheck. For us to make a tax increase which will affect people in this economy is a disservice to the taxpayers of the Town. Even if the person is not a homeowner, their rent will be going up too. He is all for education, he believes strongly in it and it would be great to have this alternative high school but he doesn't think we can. At this point, adult education has to be turned into a part time thing after school in a building we already own at a minimal expense. Instead of having full time adult education employees, it should be done by the teachers already employed and already receiving benefits. They should receive a stipend just like the coaches and band director like other Towns do. We can still provide adult education to adults, but not have an alternative high school. If the students going into the high school can't abide by the rules, we should train them and teach them to follow the rules rather than giving them a place where

they don't have to. In his opinion, they can flat line the Board of Education and they can still survive except the building on Dodge Avenue has to go.

- Councilman Joseph Santino says the Council did not do their due diligence to the tax payers of this Town. He feels they could have made cuts, he mentioned numerous times things he felt they could cut, and he was going to go along with the cut for the schools. He thinks they are doing an injustice to the tax payers by raising the taxes. There were cuts that could have been made and they should go in and make the cuts.
- Councilwoman Beverly Gravino says she personally feels they had ample time to go through the budget. She had more questions than she ever had and they were all answered to her satisfaction. It had to be taken home and looked at, at home. She supports both the Town side and the Board of Education. Particularly the Board of Education because they had a difficult 5 or 6 years. She trusts the Superintendent, Mr. Rizza and Ms. Lewis to make the right decisions and spend the money wisely and finally get our test scores to where they should be. We need to help our students who are doing well and the ones who aren't so they can get into college.
- Councilman Ken McKay states that he was present at all of the budget workshops and he thinks they adequately addressed all of the department heads in a proper manner. They questioned just about every line that was written in the budget this year. He doesn't think they skipped over any departments in any way. He thinks they have more than enough money and hopefully at the end of the year they will turn money back in if they were given too much. He has budget books that go back 20 years and he digests them and looks at them every year. He sees the increases of things in his household, let alone running a Town; health insurance, attorney fees, DOJ reports, etc. they are growing right now just like the Board of Education is. He states that he has a grandson in the education system at Deer Run and there is a language teacher in his classroom because many of the students don't speak the English language. He can't justify cutting \$700,000 out of the education system because he knows right away the first thing they will do is cut out the language teachers. Doing that will hurt the education of other students because the teachers will have to spend more time educating the second language students. He agrees with this budget, he thinks they should give the Superintendent a chance to bring up the test scores which hasn't been done in the past 10 years. It's time that we change the scores; he knows it is a tough road ahead with the diversification that the Town has gone through in the last 5 years. He wishes the Superintendent luck and he is in favor of the budget the Mayor has presented.
- Councilman Fred Parlato states that he agrees with the newer Council members that they didn't give enough to the individual workshops, they could have gone line item by line item and he apologizes for it. Between him and Councilman

Mckay they have 37 budgets between them, so it comes easier for them but he can see where it may have been a problem for the newer members. He has been in East Haven for 74 years. He states that there is a new sheriff in Town when it comes to Education, one who has no political ties, she has a vibrant personality, she seems to be able to organize people and motivate them. He states that he was impressed with her presentation, she had all the right people there to answer all of the questions; questions she couldn't answer she delegated to her staff and questions they couldn't answer they were going to bring paperwork back on it. His message to the Board of Education is they have 12 months, they want to see some drastic great changes; he looks forward to consolidation of schools, reduction in staff, etc. We are going to go up 1.1 mills, the city of Hartford's mill rate is going to 77 mills, they are looking at an excess of \$47,000,000 budget deficit this year and they have a large minority population. We are going through a transition where we will be similar to that on a much smaller scale. He has grandchildren in the school system and he looks forward to them being able to reap the benefits of the school system that we finance and fund adequately. He states that he will be voting in favor of this budget, but it won't be a majority not everyone will vote for this budget because that is how a democracy works. There were some good points brought up by Councilman Sand and some other members, they have agreed to disagree. It will be on the members who vote for the budget to make it work, everyone will be backing the Board of Education and the Town itself. He looks forward to a successful year.

Roll call vote: 8 yes- 7 no (Santino, Palladino, Sand, Thompson Jr, Badamo, Riolino and Butler III). Motion carries.

Item #6

Adjournment of Special Meeting

Councilman Parente makes a motion.

Councilman Riolino seconds the motion.

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

Meeting is adjourned at 7:39PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danelle Feeley, Clerk, East Haven Legislative Town Council,