

**EAST HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2016**

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Stacy Gravano, CTC
TOWN CLERK

In accordance with Chapter III, Section 6 of the East Haven Town Charter, the East Haven Legislative Town Council conducted a Public Hearing meeting on Tuesday, April 19, 2016, at 7:00PM at the East Haven Senior Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512.

Chairman Fred Parlato calls the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

Item #1

Roll Call for Public Hearing #1- 13 present – 2 absent (Sand and Hennessey)
A quorum is present.

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 2016-2017 fiscal year of the Town of East Haven." - Board of Education Side of the Budget.

Public comment:

- Gene Ruocco- 74 Bennett Road, East Haven, CT- Mr. Ruocco says he was at all of the budget workshops and he took down some notes. He asks if they already adopted the budget for \$90,130,581.00, after all of the workshops is this the budget they are accepting?
- Chairman Fred Parlato says this is the proposed budget.
- Mr. Ruocco says they have listened to the Department heads and haven't made any changes?
- Chairman Parlato says any changes to the budget will be presented by Mr. Rizza. The problem with this budget is they are not sure what type of State aid they will get; it has been fluctuating back and forth.
- Mr. Ruocco says they kept the ECS money for education; the \$20 million is being increased by \$1,400. If this is the budget they are proposing, the registrar asked for \$9,000 more, so is it correct that they have denied that?
- Chairman Parlato says this is only the education side of the budget.
- Mr. Ruocco says as far as the Board of Ed. he heard the Board say they closed DC Moore and Hays and that closure helped them with \$1.6 million yet they still need another \$1.5 million. He asks if the Council has had an education budget workshop.

- Chairman Parlato says they did have a workshop and as far as the closing of DC Moore School and saving \$1.6 million that is not correct.
- Mr. Ruocco says he thought he heard the Superintendent say when they asked how much the schools saved them, they said around \$1.6 million but they still need more to do what they need to do for the next year.
- Chairman Parlato says officially, the Town has not been notified of the closing and it being turned over to the Town. Depending on what budget they give them, the amount of dollars in it, they are going to have to use those dollars to reconfigure the schools as they see fit with the money they have available. He does not see them getting the full amount they requested, the Mayor's recommendation was \$250,000 more this year and that may be what they have to work with as it stands right now.
- Mr. Ruocco says he knows some questions were asked, if they don't get the money what would happen and he is sure tonight they will let them know what might happen if they don't get that money. There was an opportunity to do something with Tyler Street which may be worth closing more than one school, which opportunity has gone by the wayside because now the Administration wants to do Senior Housing. He knows that still has to be voted by them but the bigger picture is every Department head that came and he heard the Finance Director say the same thing, our buildings are old and we spend more on maintenance for our buildings than most of the surrounding Towns do per student that is enrolled in our system. As these buildings get older, sooner or later nobody likes bonding but we are going to end up having to bond because for the last 5-10 years when money was available, Towns like New Haven, Hamden, etc. renovated their buildings and we didn't. These schools are still old and are going to have to be renovated, 3-5 years down the road what is this Town in for? Big tax increases, more bonding? He is saying they still have an opportunity with Tyler Street to bond or do whatever we have to do and then they can close more schools and maybe sell those properties; sell Hays, sell DC Moore. These schools need to be renovated; the last school renovated was Momauguin that he can recall and that was 25-30 years ago. He knows they will have an answer why everything he said can't be done but he wants it on the record what he said because he believes in 3-5 years they are going to be bonding and going up on taxes and having to fix these schools and the opportunity is going to be gone to consolidate and make 200 Tyler an elementary campus and end up with one school in the south, one in the middle and one in the north and one middle school and one high school.
- Chairman Parlato says 200 Tyler Street was never in the equation, people are under the impression that the Town Council can tell the Board of Education what to do and they can't. The only control they have as far as Board of Education is what they give for their budget. Early on the Board of Education had long range

plans and the amount of money needed to turn 200 Tyler Street into a usable building for education could be anywhere from \$59,000,000-\$79,000,000, it wasn't in their master plan.

- Mr. Ruocco says that is questionable, they had a committee on that 5 years ago and that amount of money was never discussed.
- Chairman Parlato says he was on the school building committee in the early 90's when they did \$13,000,000 worth of work in renovations and additions and bringing schools up to ADA acts. That building on Tyler Street if you look at it the Fire Marshal, Building Office and in terms of ADA, they told them it was cheaper to knock it down and start from scratch. We know the buildings we have are old and we know that our population is pretty much stagnant and depending on the geographics of the Town our enrollment is not going to increase and we know eventually we will have to bond to do some renovations. But until the Board of Education comes up with a master plan and gives them dates and projections of what they want to do to bring the educational system up to the educational standards that will be needed in 5-10 years, all they can tell them is this is the amount of money we can afford to give you to run the operation and then have them give them justification for going out to bond. We are still in a favorable bonding percentage he thinks it is close to 70%. We have a High School that will take 1500 students and we have 900, there are a lot of kids that go out of district after the Middle School, there a lot that chose not to go to our High School because of the other schools. All this Council can do is say they have to give a general picture of what they need and have to give some heads up, they only serve for 2 years at a time and they want to make sure in those two years funding is adequate and progress is noticeable and their long range plan is feasible. They have had a million proposals for 200 Tyler Street and he made the comment that nobody showed up with a check. He says his address is 146 Tyler Street; he has a personal interest in it like many other people in that area. His house is probably his biggest investment so anything that would adversely affect 200 Tyler Street is going to affect 146 Tyler Street.
- Mr. Ruocco says he doesn't think it matters where you live, he thinks the school system in this Town affects everyone. When there are families who won't come here because the school system is not up to snuff it affects him and he lives in Foxon. The Board of Education is here and the Town Council is here and the time has come where the issue should be put to bed, no matter what party they are in, when the Administration should put politics aside and say let's do what is right for this Town, let the Administration and the Board of Education get in a room and iron out what is right for this Town. He asks them to think about what is going to happen when these schools need to be brought up to speed.
- Donna Richo- 67 Charnes Drive, East Haven, CT- Ms. Richo says the cuts that are coming are coming, we skated by with ECS and got \$1500. What that is

saying is that the educational system is in enough trouble, not to be cut but to get a little bit. They really need to start reining in some of the expenses and what many people don't know is the ECS is only one part of what we get from the State. School transportation, special education, etc., all of them are going to be cut. Five years ago she said this, take a little bit out of the budget every year so that they can get ahead of this and be in a position where they can handle what is coming down the road. They haven't done that and aren't doing that today, she seriously suggests they pay attention to the fact that the State and Feds don't have any money, our finances are really better than most. Let's not get away with taking this money, thinking it is coming and putting us in a position where we are dependent on it, let's get ahead of the game. Take a small reduction across the board, she would like to see 10%, 5% would be nice. To give anyone an increase is foolish. She thanks the Council for all they do.

Item #3

Adjournment of Public Hearing #1.

Councilman Robert Parente makes a motion makes a motion.

Councilman Vincent Spaduzzi seconds the motion.

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

Item #4

Roll Call for Hearing Committee- 13 present – 2 absent (Sand and Hennessey)

Item #5

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

Councilman Joseph Santino makes a motion.

Councilman Nicholas Palladino seconds the motion.

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

Item #6

Adjournment of Hearing Committee.

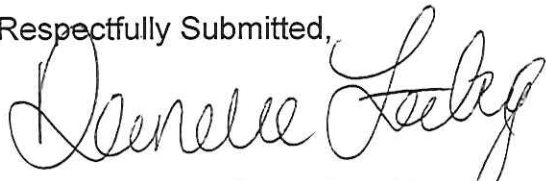
Councilman Parente makes a motion.

Councilman Santino seconds the motion.

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

Meeting is adjourned at 7:22PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Danelle Feeley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Respectfully Submitted,".

Danelle Feeley, Clerk, East Haven Legislative Town Council

