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Lisa Balter
TOWN CLERK

Town Council Public Hearing

Minutes

The East Haven Town Council held a public hearing April 19, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. at the East Haven Community Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, CT

Chairman Deko called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Roll Call-12 Present 3 Absent(Santino, Pompano, and Ruggiero)

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Deko recognized Lorena Venegas, 73 George Street who stated that she feels she has been mischaracterized with regard to who she really is, she was born and bred in East Haven. Has great respect for the police and fire departments as they saved her family from a fire when she was young. She was one of the first families in public housing. She feels that due to the drug overdoses and suicides in her neighborhood a local counseling center is important to help those children in Momauguin who are not able to get to their appoint in another town. Also, the ARPA fund could allow for a skate park.

Chairman Deko recognized Donna Richo, 67 Charnes Drive stated that the Mayor's proposed budget is \$98,461,650. The town's budget is \$50,367,379, EE Cost including Benefits \$35,748,959; %71 of the town's budget; Debt Service \$4,000,000; %8 of the town's budget; \$14,618,420; %10 of the town's budget. Proposing 5 new positions. The 20/21 Budget Increased by \$3,283,200; the 22/23 Proposed budget increased \$5,006,296, which requires a 7 million-dollar increase. Expenditures have exceeded the budget for the past two years. Several times she has heard members using the phrase neighboring towns as a reference to expenditures. We are not Branford, Guilford, or North Haven. Our taxpayer's average income is around \$67,000 while other towns that you compare, their annual incomes are over \$100,000. Also, our self-insurance funds are grossly underfunded and we have not added one penny to the contingency fund in 3 years. Also, it is not appropriate for a council member to verbally berate a presenter on their budget, while the rest remained quiet.

Chairman Deko recognized Donald Thomas, 7 Park Place who is before you to express his displeasure at the abhorrent display exhibited by Councilman Balter two weeks prior. He witnessed a disrespectful rude personal attack on an elected official in East Haven. He was unprovoked and made personal and professional attacks on the Registrar of Voters. The chairman didn't stop this attack nor did any other board members. It is also my understanding that this is not an isolated incident. He has also been verbally abusive to our mild-mannered Town librarian. Any other governing body would censure this elected official; if this action is available to this board I asked you to take it. The register wishes to make the office the best that I can be when she enters the registrar's office; politics are left outside. What drives the registrar are the directives from the Secretary of State to comply with election laws and to make our

elections safe, fair, and accessible to all. Councilman Balter's actions cast a poor light on the entire board.

A resident of 48 Hughes Street addressed the council regarding the air quality and sound pollution caused by Tweed New Haven Airport, he left abruptly.

Bruce addressed the council stating that the library staff is very cognizant of the fact that the town covers the salaries at the library and the need for adequate staffing. He further noted some cost to the library for building maintenance. Inaudible

Cindy Sparago, 42 Caroline Road stated that she had spent the last 3 weeks listening to the budget process. Prior to moving here 3 year ago she lived in a small suburb of Springfield, MA where she attended the budget meetings that were done in one night with no explanations. So she attended tonight to say how impressed she is by this town council and this budget process. It was truly amazing to see every department head come forward and the transparency afforded the public. What was more impressive was how as a council you were all attentive and engaged. She thanked the council for their commitment to this process and this town.

Vice Chairman Pacelli moved to close the public hearing and adjourn.

Councilwoman Cesare second the motion.

Voice vote-All in favor. None opposed. No abstentions.

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Roberta A. DeLuca
Town Council Clerk