

**EAST HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2013**

The East Haven Legislative Town Council conducted a Public Hearing meeting on Monday, April 22, 2013, at 7:00PM at the East Haven Senior Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512.

Chairman Anania calls the meeting to order at 7:00PM

Chairman Richard Anania asks all to stand for the pledge of allegiance.

Mr. Anania states that anyone is allowed to speak; all comments will come through the Chairman. The Council will not be answering any questions that are asked tonight.

Item #1

Roll Call for Public Hearing #1: all 15 members present.

Robert Parente arrives at 7:06PM.

Michael Riolino arrives at 7:12PM.

Item #2

To conduct Public Hearing #1 to discuss the 2013-2014 Budget Ordinance – BOE Side

Public comment:

- **Gary Naylor- 94 Prospect Place Ext, East Haven, CT-** Mr. Naylor states that his son was accepted into Sound School along with three other kids. They received a letter indicating that Sound School will be choosing 2 out of the 4 students now. He asks what is going on with this matter because he spoke with someone from the State who mentioned it was a state statute as to how many students have to be accepted into the school.
- Chairman Anania explains that this public hearing is just for comment on the budget. Any questions regarding this matter should be directed to the Superintendent.
- **Vicky Piscitelli- 10 River Road, East Haven, CT-** Ms. Piscitelli states that she has students at Deer Run and the Academy. She is here because of the discussion about funds being cut and she has safety concerns. Post Newtown there was a lot of discussion about safety and nothing has been done. If the budget keeps getting cut, nothing will be done. She states that most classrooms at Deer Run do not have telephones, they have a buzzer system. If there is no one to answer the buzzer and there is an emergency, there will be an issue. A lot of the doors lock on the outside, so in a lock down the teacher has to leave to

lock the door and someone from the inside has to let them in. If there is only one teacher, a kindergartener will have to let the teacher in, which puts the students and teachers at risk. Another issue is bathroom doors, they do not lock. The main door that leads to the hallway does not lock which causes a problem in a real emergency. Loss of teachers and paraprofessionals means 20-30 students will be in with one teacher at a time, how will that work in an emergency. If the classrooms are made bigger, how will they all fit into a closet or under a desk in an emergency? There are children who can't walk, if a teacher is required to carry the student who can't walk what do the other children do, plus the teacher has to go outside to lock the door. The last place the Town needs to take money from is education.

- **Rena Voira- 112 Borrmann Road, East Haven, CT-** Ms. Voira states she has a daughter in 11th grade at the High School and a son in 4th grade at Tuttle School and both have multiple medical problems. She states she has 26 years healthcare experience and knows it is necessary for trained personnel to be in the school at all times. Cutting back funds for school nurses or special education teachers will compromise the health and safety of children, faculty and staff. These priorities should be number one to the Town Council and Board of Education. Children today have allergies, medicines to be given throughout the day and require professional services which need to be provided. These things should be taken into consideration when determining the amount of money to be given to the Board of Education in this budget. She asks the Council to carefully reconsider the amount funded to the Board of Education to alleviate this health risk to the children, faculty and staff.
- **Phoebe Barbine- 100 Hughes Street, East Haven, CT-** Ms. Barbine states she has a child at Momauguin and one at DC Moore and both have special education needs. She states that children with special education needs either have an individual education or a 504 plan. If the budget gets cut and special education paraprofessionals then get cut, parents are going to want their children out of the district because there is not enough staff to provide services. If they pull kindergarten paraprofessionals, children will not make the progress they need to make. Additionally, school nurses need to be in every building. Her daughter has a seizure disorder and asthma. If the school principal has to step in and act as a nurse, she won't be qualified to check the breathing or seizures, she will have to call 911, placing additional stress on EMS services in Town. In 1997 IDEA indicated schools have to provide nurses in school buildings where there are special needs. The Board of Education budget is still about \$600,000 short, and it needs to be given so they can provide services to all kids. Lastly, special and regular education kids need math and literacy coaches in the building. They help our Town with Connecticut Mastery Test scores. If the budget is reduced, the funds will not be there to help these kids.

- **Camilo Florentino-119 Hemingway Ave, East Haven, CT-** Mr. Florentino discusses potential budget cuts in sports/activities. He states that these sport programs are crucial for interaction of kids and how they grow up. Sports teach them how to encourage each other and be kind to other kids. It gives them another outlet instead of hanging around, smoking cigarettes, etc. These outlets get them away from the streets. He has one son in Momauguin and one in JMMS on the Football team. He hopes we can come together as a Town to give the kids what they need to succeed and they can be a part of the community and not leave. He hopes these activities can stay in their lives and keep them off the street.
- **Maria Gallucci- 38 Gordon Street, East Haven, CT** (Letter read by Lina Travers in her absence). Ms. Gallucci is a parent and PTO Treasurer at Tuttle School. She writes that she has one student at JMMS and one at Sound School. She is concerned about the quality of education and our competing with other district and maintaining States standards. We need to work to keep more of our students in our district. We need to maintain staffing and resources and need to provide 6.5 hours of intensive education and services. She adds that she is worried about maintaining quality staff including principals, teachers, special education paraprofessionals, secretaries, nurses, library aids, literacy and math coaches, lunch and instructional aids; they all take part in the education of our children. Educators should want to come to East Haven and stay in East Haven. Please do not reduce the funding for the Education budget so we do not reduce the chances for our children to be successful, safe and happy.
- **Lina Travers- 355 Laurel Street, East Haven, CT-** Ms. Travers is a concerned parent. Our students need a strong education to survive; it starts and ends with education. Parents are here pleading that what our children need, they get in the Town of East Haven. The parents of East Haven advocate for all of our children and we want them to be safe, educated and happy. We want to know that the staff and the kids are getting all the resources we can provide. She states that politics becomes toxic when it becomes an obstacle for moving forward; nobody wins not the democrats, not the republicans, not the independents and not our kids. She states that the parents want to help the Town help their kids, but we need to work together.
- **Nick Bagnoli- 53 Estelle Road, East Haven, CT-** Mr. Bagnoli states that he appreciates all the work the Board of Education and the Town Council have been doing. He states that in one of the Board of Education meetings Tom Hennessey gave a figure of 615 employees under the Board of Education. He asks if he can ask Mr. Serio for a breakdown of how many teachers are in the 615. Is there a breakdown of how many administrators we have, maintenance men, etc.? Does it include bus drivers? He asks what the total capacity is at the school, it was said we are below the capacity. He asks for a percentage of space we are using.

- Chairman Anania asks that it is not in order to ask Tony Serio for this information during this public hearing but he suggests Mr. Bagnoli call the Superintendent's office to obtain any information he would like. Chairman Anania says that it was broken down in the packet given to the Council which is available to the public. He states that it just includes Town employees. He advises that he can obtain a copy of this breakdown from Town Hall.
- **Edwin Salmon- 9 Wheaton Road, East Haven, CT-** Mr. Salmon states that he is a business owner in Town, a member of the Arts Commission and has kids in the school system. One of the things that kept him in East Haven was the TAG program and that the kids had the potential to be challenged in the school system. When the school system falters, some of the best and brightest families leave town. When you cut the budget for the school system a lot of people leave town, he has considered putting his house on the market. The TAG program kept him and now there is no TAG program what so ever and he feels every school needs this program. He feels they should increase the funding for the school system. He asks if there is a grant writer for the Town, there are a lot of grants out there and money available but someone has to do the work.
- **Carol Kanare- 60 Coleman St, East Haven, CT-** Ms. Kanare states that she has a daughter in the Academy and she has done excellent, they love the teachers, the principal and the students. Prior to that she went to a magnet school in New Haven because she could not deal with issues that occurred with the public school. She states that if they are considering closing the Academy, they need to think about what is going to happen in all of the schools. The Academy, whether tested or not anymore, they are one of the best schools and closing it will make the schools drop lower and lower and people are going to look outside at private or magnet schools. We need to find any kind of money we can to keep the good teachers. If we are going to keep decreasing the budget, it will not help our children, they will not be bright educated students because they will not get the education from the great teachers we have now. We should look at grants and whatever we can find to help our children, and maybe decrease some of the salaries in the administration. The children are the future.
- **Heather Coleman- 103 Hemingway Ave, East Haven, CT-** Ms. Coleman states that the parents had a meeting to try to organize all of these ideas before tonight, but what she didn't hear mentioned was that about 20% of children in East Haven are going to other schools, and we pay for that as well. That number seems to be getting larger. She states that she has children at the Academy, DC Moore and Momauguin School. She would like to see children stay in our Town. There is a bus that comes for a Magnet school and they don't get home until 5:00, she would like to see us do whatever we can to keep our kids in Town.
- **Michelle Lucatino- 15 Mill Hill Circle, East Haven, CT-** Ms. Lucatino states that she has a child in college who went to East Haven School, one in EHHS, one in

Ferrara School and she is the Vice President of Ferrara PTO. She feels bad that the education has changed from when her son was in school to now, so many field trips, programs, etc. have been cut. There are always budget cuts and that money cannot be found, but it all ends up being political. She keeps hearing about the Academy, we are all part of East Haven schools not just the Academy; no schools should be closed any more than one. If the Academy system is so great, then it should be incorporated into all of the schools so that they can achieve the same things and learn the same way. Every year parents get in an uproar that there isn't enough money so they will be cutting nurses, teachers, paraprofessionals, etc., where is all the money going that they have every year? The Town is going to be giving them another \$900,000 which isn't enough to cover what needs to be covered, how are we always in the same boat. The kids have been through redistricting, schools have closed, they have been put in uniforms but their test scores haven't gone up so something needs to be done to help with the grades so people want to stay in this Town. She has heard that the High School is not up to capacity, they are only housing half of the capacity that it can. Before they rush and start closing schools, think of a plan that will work 10 years down the road rather than just until next year.

- **Sal Maltese- 11 Holland Road, East Haven, CT-** Mr. Maltese states that he is a member of the Board of Finance. After all of the things he has heard tonight, it seems as though according to all of the rumors his grandkids won't be going back to school. He has four girls who graduated from East Haven Schools; he has two grandkids in Tuttle, one at Overbrook 3 at Saint Vincent's, a grandson at the Academy. He doesn't know where all these rumors started, but he doesn't think any schools will be closed or sports programs will be cut. He agrees with the previous woman about the Academy, his grandson now has honors once he was accepted into the Academy. He hears a lot of parents ask why those in the Academy are doing better than the Middle School. But as far as the other things being discussed, he doesn't remember hearing they are cutting anything in the Schools. The national average is \$12,000 per student and East Haven is \$14,000. The Town is giving another \$900,000 and it is up to the Board of Education to make this work and he doesn't think cuts are the way to go but he hasn't heard any of these rumors about closing schools. He doesn't think these cuts are going to happen. They will find ways to make it work.
- **Joan Dupliessie -70 Prospect Place Ext, East Haven, CT-** Ms. Dupliessie states that the gentleman sitting with her got a letter stating that due to cuts in education in East Haven, they will not be accepting the 4 children that did the testing and got accepted, two of them have to go. It is apparent some kids are getting cut, the letter was signed by Sound School and Mr. Serio's office sent it out. She asks how they pick 2 out of 4 kids. Why can't these kids go to school, two kids won't change the budget in East Haven.

- **Renae Voira- 112 Borrman Road, East Haven, CT-** Ms. Voira states that she noticed a lot of people are addressing them as the Board of Education, but they are the Town Council. But the Council is here to help the Board of Ed and the Town. Her concern is whether there are any creative ways by the Board of Finance to try to make money for the Town, allow money to be better utilized for the students and the Town in general. Health and safety are number one priorities within the Town.

Item #3

Councilman Joseph Santino makes a motion to adjourn public hearing #1

Councilman Paul Carbo seconds the motion.

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

Item #4

Roll Call for Hearing Committee: all 15 members present.

Item #5

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

Councilman Michael Riolino makes a motion.

Councilman Santino seconds the motion.

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

Item #6

Councilman Carbo makes a motion to adjourn.

Councilman Santino seconds the motion.

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

Meeting adjourns at 7:48PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danelle Feeley, Clerk, East Haven Legislative Town Council