



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND  
INCORPORATED 1786

# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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## BOARD OF FINANCE

JOHN P. RACHEK  
Chairman

DOUGLAS B. HARDING  
MARK A. JOYSE  
DAVID J. OLENDER  
BARRY C. PINTO  
MICHAEL D. VARNEY

## BUDGET DELIBERATIONS APRIL 13, 2017 MINUTES

### Board of Finance

#### Present:

J. Rachek-Chairman, D. Harding, M. Joyse, D. Olender, B. Pinto

### Board of Finance

#### Absent:

M. Varney

### Others Present:

N. DiCorleto-Fin Officer, L. Spielman-First Sel, Dr. S. Nicol-Supt of Schools, T. Webb-DPW Dir, G. Feldman-Chief EVFD, C. Pippin-Chief CLFD, N. Stillman-Pres EVAC, P. Hany, A. Lawrence-Fire Marshal, J. Hollister-Dir Human Svs, E. Graziani-Dir Sr. Ctr., R. Tedford-Dir P&R, D. Lasher-Penti-Dir Youth Svs, Members of the Board of Selectmen, Fire Departments, Ambulance Corps and members of the Rescue Post 512, Member of the Press, Residents

Chairman John Rachek called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

### Citizen's Forum

Peter Hany, 203 Mountain St spoke as an advocate for the reinstatement of the \$25-28,000 budget for the Ellington Rescue Post salary for this budget year. This group has been in existence for decades and he would like to see the funding brought back and possibly form a committee to reevaluate the program.

April Phelps, 27 Kibbe Rd stated that she is the president of Rescue Post 512 and read a prepared statement in favor of the funding. She stated that without being paid for their time, the members would have to find other jobs and it would cut into the time they are available for the post.

Nancy Stillman, President of EVAC, stated that on behalf of the EVAC, the ambulance corps supports the Rescue Post and would like to preserve it. The EVAC discontinued the pay

because they felt it was not fiscally responsible to staff 4 people on an ambulance. This decision was not taken lightly and they are one of only two rescue posts in the state that pays their post members. They are in support of Post 512 but not the payment of the salaries.

Melissa Doyon, 230 Mountain Rd spoke in favor of funding the salaries for the Rescue Post. She stated that the program has helped in the maturity of her daughter.

Mr. Rachek stated that he supports the organization and asked if she was not paid would she quit. He was told that she may not be so involved due to time constraints with another job.

Alison McDonald, 4 Pioneer Drive stated that the pay is an integral part of the Rescue Post hours. She felt that this would be the beginning of dissolving the Post. This is a character building program.

Matthew Phelps, 27 Kibbe Rd stated that \$25,000 in the grand scheme of the budget is not a lot.

Mark Joyse asked how many are involved in the Rescue Post. There are currently 15 that respond.

Ms. Stillman stated that they did not feel the program should be funded and that it was not fiscally responsible to pay four people to staff an ambulance. She would rather see their funds be used for supplemental volunteer staff.

Annalise Hurley, 19 Standish Rd stated that the Post is a time commitment and that she worked and played sports when she was a member. She feels that the retention problem after graduation is because they are paid when in the Rescue Post but upon graduation they become volunteers. She supports the discontinuance of the funding.

Rhonda Villanova, Buff Cap Rd stated that if balancing the Rescue Post with the theater arts position, she would be in favor of the funding of the Rescue Post.

Dan Cargill, 151 Maple Street, stated that young adults today have to work and that members of the Post become the future medical workers. Rebecca Cargill stated that she works and is on the rescue post as well as volunteers at Johnson Memorial Hospital. She may have to cut back on post hours for a second job.

Matthew Lontz, 19 Sunset, stated that he is the compensation coordinator for the EVAC and was in favor of funding the Post, however the Board felt they had to reduce their budget similar to last year's request and the Post is where the cut back was made.

## **Budget Deliberations**

Mr. Rachek proposed that the Board of Finance deal with the budget as submitted with the State Troopers increase from the Governor only. The mill rate would go from 30.5 to 31.7 or a 1.2 mill increase. He had not taken into account the increase in the grand list of 1.94% and he stated that the fund balance will be less than it was last year. He would like the members to help set a goal for the unavoidable increase in the 2017-18 budget. He does not want to recognize the teacher pensions in this budget, but he does want to include the State Police, and the ECS and special education grant, the difference being \$126,000.

Mr. Joyse stated that the State is in deficit and if the pension contribution doesn't go through, they may come up with something else.

Mr. Rachek stated that if other costs come through from the State after the budget is passed, a supplemental tax could be levied or major reductions would have to be made. Mr. Joyse stated that a sinking fund for possible state contributions could be set up for the pensions.

Mr. Olender felt that a 1 mill to 1.2 mill increase would be necessary for a goal. Mr. Harding agreed with a 1.2 mill increase with funds put aside for unknown State budget items. Mr. Pinto felt a 1.2 mill increase would be a goal with an adjustment into a sinking fund.

Dr. Nicol, Superintendent of Schools, stated that he agreed it was wise not to consider the worst case. He felt that an adjustment to the Board of Education budget in the amount of \$500,000 would become a net loss to the education budget. The transportation contract is still under negotiation. He stated that his budget could survive a \$200,000 cut but it would be tight and that they would have to lose some positions. At the same time they would still be in a good position to move forward. The BOE Finance Committee would decide what is cut. This is a responsible budget and if more cuts become necessary, there will be reductions to the school program.

First Selectman, Lori Spielman agreed that a 1.2 mill ceiling should be kept.

Selectman J. Turner spoke in favor of keeping the tanker in the budget but to delay the Crystal Lake Fire Dept. forestry truck for 1 year until the emergency study could be done. The SCBA units should be funded.

Chief Pippin stated that the forestry truck is a multi-purpose truck and will be replaced two vehicles 20 and 30 years old. The price is currently \$200,000 down from \$230,000 after some negotiation and he has come in with a zero increase in his operating budget. He would like to keep it in this budget.

Mr. Olender stated that these old trucks need to be replaced and that the purchase is definitely worth it.

The revised price on the forestry truck is \$200,000 so \$30,000 can be reduced. The SCBA for CLFD can be reduced by \$25,000 due to the compressor already purchased. Continuing in the capital improvement budget, the Pool Car was questioned. The First Selectman will receive a new car, and the Building Official will receive her car. The Building Official's vehicle is wearing out. The DPW Dump Truck was questioned. Mr. Webb stated that this will replace the last of the 2002 trucks. Mr. Olender asked about hiring outside contractors to do the plowing and Mr. Webb stated that he presently hires out to do the school yards but for the street plowing it would be costly and unreliable. Mr. Joyse asked about the sidewalk project on Route 83. Tim Webb stated that CRCOG told him that 80% of the preliminary design would be reimbursed if the project did not go through. Mr. DiCorleto stated that the offsetting grant would leave a net cost for 2017-18 of \$19,461. He also stated that he had some corrections to the budget since the public hearing that he will be making tonight.

Mr. Olender asked about the new generator for Station 243 Nutmeg Drive. Chief Feldman told him that the existing generator will not power the heat pump to keep the pipes from freezing should the power go off for any length of time. The existing generator will be sold at auction.

Mr. Joyse asked about the police account. Lori Spielman stated that the police are increasing their fees for special duty/traffic. Nick DiCorleto stated that there is a revenue item on the other side for this. It was decided to increase the revenues by \$20,000 for Police Special Duty to account for the increase in fees.

There was discussion regarding new positions. The secretary in the First Selectman's office is proposed to go from part time to full time. The salary is \$39,180 with benefits of \$20,952. This is due to increased workload. She is being replaced in P&R with a part time secretary.

The Youth Services position is already partially funded by the Town. The Governor has eliminated the funding for this position. The salary is \$39,494, for a 25-hr position. She is currently being funded by the Town in the amount of \$21,000 so the difference is \$18,000 and the position already has some benefits. The net with benefits will be \$35,000.

The Senior Center front desk secretary will cost \$30,941 with benefits. Erin Graziani looked into using the transportation secretary for this position but there is a confidentiality problem at the front desk with people milling around. All positions were left in the budget at this time.

The electricity account for the Senior Center will be reduced by another \$3,500. The unknown is the cost for the air conditioning in the summer.

Mr. Joyse asked about the increase in the part time waterfront account. Mr. Tedford stated that it is the increase in hours for keeping the beach open more. Three lifeguards are required when it is open and he has also increased on the revenue side for increased gate receipts. Lori Spielman told the Board that Emergency Management does not need a recording secretary so \$500 can be taken from that account.

Mr. Joyse asked about the repairs to the Old Schoolhouse. Mr. Webb stated that the building needs work. He was asked if \$5,000 could be cut from the sidewalk fund. Mr. Webb stated that he would work within the budget they set.

The following reductions were made:

BOE	\$200,000	
CLFD	\$ 7,500	year one lease payment reduction
SCBA	\$ 6,250	year one lease payment reduction
Sr Ctr	\$ 3,500	electricity
Emerg Mgt	\$ 500	recording secretary
Townwide Sidewalks	\$ 5,000	
Pool Car	\$ 5,000	

Revenues:	\$ 20,000	police special duty
	\$ 77,842	grant for sidewalk extension

The discussion of the Rescue Post ensued. Nancy Stillman stated that volunteers should not be paid, this program should be treated like an internship. There is a crew that is paid during the day at the Ambulance Corps. The cadets are provided with training and uniforms.

The Fire Dept. has cadets that get incentive pay when they are moved up. She supports the program itself but not the pay. No action was taken by the Board of Finance.

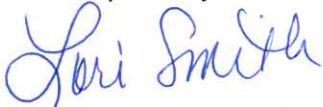
It was discussed and agreed upon to put \$500,000 into the contingency fund in case the Governor comes back and implements costs the town needs to pay. The total reductions and revenues as well as the addition to the contingency fund will require a 1.1 mill increase.

Mr. Joyse suggested that the Senior Center hire the explorers part time with the funds. There were several suggestions discussed and it was decided that Erin Graziani would look into it and work out the details.

At this time it was decided that at Tuesday night's deliberations, the final motions would be made to send it to Town Meeting on May 8, 2017.

**MOVED (HARDING) SECONDED (JOYSE) AND PASSED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 10:00 PM.**

Respectfully submitted:



Lori Smith, Recording Secretary