

MINUTES
Town Council
Town of East Greenwich
Regular Session/Joint with School Committee
April 11, 2016 @ 7:00pm

Swift Community Center, 121 Peirce Street, East Greenwich, RI 02818

7:00pm ~ Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag

Town Council Present: M. Isaacs, S. Cienki, M. Schwager, W. Stone, S. Todd

Town Staff Present: T. Coyle, III, K. Benoit, L. Botello, P. Clarkin, S. Brown, S. Cirella, W. Schmidle, P. Aveyard, E. McAndrew, C. Bradley, J. Duarte, R. McGillivray, M. Sullivan,

School Committee Present: C. Mark, M. Winters, D. Osborne, M. Plain, M. Fain, S. Peterson, Y. Sun

Others: Dr. Mercurio, G. Wilcox, C. Malaga

At 7:10pm, President Isaacs called the meeting to order and School Committee Chair Mark called the School Committee to order. The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited by the assembly.

President Isaacs gave some brief comments on the budget process.

Moved to Item 3a

Acknowledgments

- 2016 EGHS Wall of Honor Inductees
- Davis Fitch for service on the Affordable Housing Commission

The Wall on Honor Inductees will receive their commendations at a ceremony at the East Greenwich High School on Wednesday, April 13th. They are: Jane Solomon Kondon, Scott Viera, James M. Halsband, Anthony Faber, Bruce R. Mastracchio and Douglas E. Green.

Mr. Fitch was unable to attend and will receive his commendation through the mail.

Councilor Stone moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Todd. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

1) Town Council Minutes

- a) March 28, 2016 (Regular and Executive Sessions)

VP Cienki moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Stone. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

2) Reports and Communications

- a) Public Comment (15-minute time limit for items NOT on the agenda)

None

Moved to 3b

3) Public Hearing

- a) Operating Budget for FY 2017 – JOINT SESSION WITH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Mr. Coyle gave a presentation on the proposed budget for FY 2017 in the amount of \$62,134,821 which is an increase of \$1.1 million or 1.96% over FY 2016. The line item for Education reflects the proposed tax allocation to the Schools from the Town in the amount of \$33,932,906. The projected tax rate is \$24.18 or an increase of 2.11% before Council makes any changes. The proposed operating budget on the expenditures side was shown by function or purpose and Mr. Coyle briefly explained each line item and the reasons for any variance. All department staff will be receiving a 2% salary increase due to contractual obligations. Major increases come from school appropriations, contractual contributions, police education reimbursement, auto parts and supplies, sanitation, building maintenance and Board of Canvassers. 54.6% of the budget is dedicated to the schools, 34.8% is for the municipality, 7.8% is school debt service and 2.8% is Town debt service. Revenues are anticipated to increase by 1.96% and property taxes make up approximately 90% of the Town's revenue source. General revenue and state aid make up the other 10%. East Greenwich receives 1/3 of 1% of State Aid to municipalities. The Capital Improvements (Outlay) Program was presented in detail which is supported by tax dollars and includes purchases that support Public Works, Police, Parks and Recreation, Information Technology, building and road maintenance, Impact Fee Study and the beautification of Main Street. The Fire Department's Capital Outlay Program is not tax-supported and is funded by a special restricted reserve account. The total request equals \$235,000 for a new rescue. In summary, the proposed tax rate is \$24.18 or a 2.11% increase (\$.50 cents on the dollar).

Dr. Victor Mercurio presented the School Department's proposed budget for FY 2017 on behalf of the School Committee. He gave an overview of their budget process, vision and purpose. Several strategic plans that are being implemented in the budget were noted including full-day kindergarten for all students by fall of 2016, aligning school start times at the elementary level, implementing later start times for middle and high school students and assess current curricular and extracurricular offerings to ensure they are cost-effective and meet student's needs. Enrollment statistics at all levels were provided. The FY 2017 proposed total budget increase is \$981,815 (2.64%) or \$37,821,043, which reflects a total revenue increase from taxes of 2.64%. Details were provided on proposed staffing changes to support all-day kindergarten and the fiscal impact of moving from a three-tier to a two-tier busing program. Salary increases were explained including contractual, non-contractual and staffing changes due to full-day kindergarten. Revenues were shown by category with a total increase of 2.67%. State aid to education is projected to decrease by \$131,091. Ms. Wilcox gave a lengthy report on the Town's appropriations over the last five years and an analysis of their fund balance. Dr. Mercurio further explained what areas of the budget have either an increase or decrease with the majority coming

from increases in salaries, purchased services and property. Assumptions made during the budget process included hiring teachers at advanced steps, healthcare costs for new hires, retirees and kindergarten population. He provided some statistics on assessment results and a list of post-secondary institutions accepting EGHS graduates. In summary, he noted that the FY 2017 budget enables the district to maintain a valuable and talented work force, remain fiscally prudent, provide competitive salaries and benefits, maximize resources and continue to graduate students who are nationally and globally competitive.

Discussion followed on many pieces of both the Town and School budgets including the loss of commercial revenue, police education fund, IT budget (citizen self-service), dredging, student population trends, assumptions by the School Committee, allocation of revenues from the school's fund balance, new initiatives to implement full-day kindergarten, financial impact of adjusting school start times, hiring process for new teachers, proposed staffing positions at schools, purchasing new Town vehicles, categories and the accessibility of fund balance for schools, health insurance premiums, distribution of the school's fund balance, decrease in Medicaid funding, reduction of state aid based on tax assessments and the consolidation of IT functions between the School and Town.

The meeting was open for public comment.

Heather Tibbitts, 29 Hickory Drive, asked about cost savings associated with the self-service software. She suggested asking local businesses to sponsor maintenance efforts for the Town's right of ways. She was concerned with the potential increase in kindergarten enrollment as many families will be moving from private schools.

Jeff Dronzek, 77 Wanton Shippee Road, asked Council to look at their reserves as well. President Isaacs noted that the Town's fund balance is necessary for cash flow so the Town does not have to issue tax anticipation notes to fund operations before the next cycle of tax receipts, thereby saving the Town the expense of this additional debt service. The fund balance must also be maintained in accordance with the guidelines of the bond rating agencies in order to maintain the Town's high bond rating.

Gene Dumas, 50 Montrose Street, asked about a \$150K discrepancy between what the School Committee presented and the Town Manager's tax allocation to them. He gave some projections on budget increases over a number of years. The discrepancy is the difference between what the School Committee included in their budget and the amount recommended in the Town Manager's budget.

Colleen Mollicone, 5 Chestnut Drive, spoke in favor of the revised start times at the schools.

At 9:07pm, the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Osborne moved for the School Committee to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Plain. Voted 7-0 all in favor, motion carried.

Council took a brief recess and reconvened at 9:20pm.

- b) An ORDINANCE in amendment of the Code of the Town of East Greenwich, Chapter 248, "Vehicles and Traffic", Article II "Operation", Section 248-16 "Throughways designated" to amend as noted and Section 248-19 "Multiway stop intersections" to add new subsection related to Second Street and Fourth Avenue (SECOND READING).

There were no public comments.

Councilor Stone moved to approve on Second Reading and move to Third Reading, seconded by Councilor Todd. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

4) Consent Calendar

- a) Approval of Class F-1 Alcoholic Beverage License for House of Hope CDC for a Fundraiser at the Varnum Armory on May 15, 2016.
- b) Approval of RENEWAL of Private Detective License for Jeffrey A. Enos.

VP Cienki moved to approve the Consent Calendar, seconded by Councilor Stone. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

5) Unfinished Business

- a) An ordinance in amendment of the Code of the Town of East Greenwich, Chapter 34, "Boards, Committees and Commissions" by deleting and repealing Article I, "Building Code Board of Appeals" (THIRD READING).

VP Cienki moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Schwager. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

- b) An ordinance in amendment of the Code of the Town of East Greenwich, Chapter 248, "Vehicles and Traffic", Article II "Operation", Section 248-16 "Throughways designated" to amend as noted and Section 248-19 "Multiway stop intersections" to add new subsections related to Liberty Street, Union Street and Somerset Street (THIRD READING).

VP Cienki moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Schwager. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

- c) 4th of July fireworks

Steve Mendes reported that the Lewis Family has generously agreed to pay for the additional costs as presented by the Town of approximately \$11,000. Several safety concerns were discussed such as falling debris and the barge's location. Total cost for the event is around \$25,000. Atlas, the company hired to shoot the fireworks, has received approval from the Fire Marshal and is now seeking Council's approval. The Coast Guard has been notified and approves. Council requested a contract to review prior to taking a vote. It will be publicized.

6) New Business

- a) Approval of performance bond reduction for Spencer's Corner Estates II Subdivision from \$90,244 to \$66,550 for the plat public improvements.

VP Cienki moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Stone. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

- b) Resolution supporting the Green Economy Bond

VP Cienki moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Stone. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

7) Town Manager's Report

Mr. Coyle discussed scheduling budget work sessions with Council.

8) Council Comments

None

9) Public Comment (15-minute time limit)

None

10) Executive Session per RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) Collective Bargaining/Litigation and (5) related to the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes.

Councilor Stone moved to go into Executive Session per RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) Collective Bargaining/Litigation and (5) related to the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, seconded by VP Cienki. Roll call vote 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

- a) Union negotiations
- b) Update on any pending or previously settled litigation cases
- c) Harris Marina
- d) 333 Main Street

Following the Executive Session, Councilor Todd moved to return to Open Session, seconded by VP Cienki. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

Councilor Stone moved to seal the Executive Session minutes, seconded by Councilor Todd. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

VP Cienki moved to adjourn at 10:05pm, seconded by Councilor Stone. Voted 5-0 all in favor, motion carried.

Leigh A. Botello, CMC
Town Clerk

APPROVED BY TOWN COUNCIL APRIL 25, 2016