

TOWN OF EAST GREENWICH
FINANCIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

June 14, 2016

A Financial Town Meeting was held within and for the Town of East Greenwich in the County of Kent and State of Rhode Island at the East Greenwich High School Auditorium on Tuesday, the fourteenth day of June, A.D. 2016 at 6:30 o'clock in the evening.

The following people served as checkers of the voting list:

Gloria DePaulo	Karen Kane
Cheryl Ernst	Virginia Stilphen
Suzanne Taylor	

Number of eligible voters and numbers voting:

Active:	10,440
Inactive:	819
Total:	11,259

Number of voters in attendance – 31

(Quorum needed for meeting – 250)

Town Clerk – Leigh A. Botello, CMC
Town Moderator – Arthur C. Barton, III
Stenographer – Carole Malaga, Merandi Court Reporting

The following persons represented the Town and School Departments and Resource Persons:

Board of Canvassers:

Frederick J. Holmquist, Chair
Norrene D. McGearry

Town Council:

Michael B. Isaacs, President
Suzanne M. Cienki, Vice President
Mark Schwager
William Stone
Sean Todd

School Committee:

Carolyn Mark, Chair
Mary Ellen Winters, Vice Chair
Stuart Peterson
Yan Sun
David Osborne
Matt Plain

Resource Persons (non-resident indicated with a [*]):

Town: Thomas E. Coyle, III, Town Manager*
Leigh A. Botello, CMC, Town Clerk*
Lisa Bourbonnais, Planning Director*
Joseph Duarte, Public Works Director*
Kristen Benoit, Finance Director*
Col. Stephen Brown, Chief of Police*
Capt. Stanley Cirella, Deputy Chief of Police*
Richard Denice, Town Sergeant
Wendy Schmidle, IT Director
Catherine Bradley, Parks and Recreation Director*
Erin McAndrew, Senior and Human Services Director*
Peter A. Clarkin, Town Solicitor*
Russell McGillivray, Fire Chief*
Michael Sullivan, Deputy Fire Chief*
Pamela Aveyard, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager*

School: Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent*
Gail Wilcox, Director of Administration*

The Town Moderator, Arthur C. Barton, III, called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. The East Greenwich Police Color Guard and the East Greenwich Fire Department Color Guard presented the colors together with the Kentish Guards Fife and Drum Corp who played an introductory march. The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited by the assembly and the National Anthem was played by the Kentish Guards Fife and Drum. The East Greenwich Police Color Guard and the East Greenwich Fire Department Color Guard posted the colors.

Mr. Barton gave some opening remarks and thanked all those in attendance. He waived the reading of the Warning for the 2016 Financial Town Meeting and the minutes from the 2015 Financial Town Meeting. He turned the floor over to Town Council President Michael B. Isaacs to present the Town's budget.

Michael B. Isaacs, Town Council President, asked for a moment silence for the victims in Orlando, FL. He thanked the Police and Fire Color Guards and the Kentish Guards for their participation. He introduced the members of the Town Council, Town Manager, Town Solicitor, Department Heads and Karen Taylor of the EG Free Library.

He began by noting the budget process, followed by a broad overview of the total budget which is \$62,190,871 for an increase of \$1,250,513 or 2.05%. The new tax rate is \$24.11 or a 1.81% increase. Expenditures by function or department were shown indicating an increase or decrease per line as were areas where there will be a significant loss of non-tax revenues. He spoke about the major increases in the budget including school appropriations, contractual obligations, State retirement contributions and Board of Canvassers. Also noted were the consistent contributions to OPEB (other post-employment benefits) and the creation of an OPEB trust with the Rhode Island Inter-local Trust. 54.7% of tax dollars goes towards Schools, 34.7% goes to the Town, 2.8% goes to Town debt and 7.8% goes to School debt. Revenues show a total increase of 2.05% which includes property taxes, general revenue and State Aid. Property taxes make up 90% of the revenue stream. East Greenwich receives 1/3 of 1% of state aid to municipalities. Details were provided on the items included in the Capital Improvements Program such as several new vehicles and pieces of equipment for the Department of Public Works, Town Hall maintenance, asphalt projects, police vehicles, Impact Fee study, Eldredge court repairs, field groomer and repairs at the high school tennis courts. Capital Outlay for the IT Department consists of new software for agenda

and minutes management called Novus Agenda, software for MUNIS billing, mobile dynamic webpage, firewall upgrades and new radios for public safety. Council's priorities for capital were identified as enhancing Main Street with sidewalk improvements, tree lights and more kiosks, rights of ways, a waterfront plan and tree improvements. The Fire Department is replacing a rescue vehicle using their capital fund which is a restricted account that does not affect the tax rate. The current tax rate is \$23.68 and the FY 2017 increase is \$.43 for a new tax rate of \$24.11. In closing, he identified some areas of continued efficiency efforts between the Town, Schools and the League of Cities and Towns.

Mr. Barton opened up the floor to questions, observations and/or comments about the Town's budget to which there were none.

Carolyn Mark, Chair of the School Committee, acknowledged members of the Town Council, Mr. Coyle, Dr. Mercurio, members of the School Committee and the administration and staff of both the Town and School. She thanked members of the community for their participation and thanked the district's budget owners. She reviewed the purpose and vision statements and highlighted the five priorities in the Strategic Plan for the FY 2017 budget. Additional details were provided on two major initiatives being All Day Kindergarten (priority one) and Start Times (priority four). Goals of the 2017 budget were noted as well as future initiatives to support the strategic plan. The Fiscal Accountability Practices were noted. The approved proposed budget is \$37,821,043 million which is a \$981,815 increase over FY 2016 or 2.67%. This represents a 2.26% or \$751,637 increase in municipal funding. Most increases are attributed to contractual personnel increases such as salaries and benefits but also included are technology costs, transportation costs and athletics. Staffing changes to support all day kindergarten, salary increases and the fiscal impact of a two tier bussing system were explained. 80% of expenditures are for salaries and benefits. Revenues come mainly from tax appropriations from the Town followed by State Aid which was reduced this year. It was noted that \$525,000 is being taken out of fund balance to keep tax rate increases as low as possible. The per-pupil cost for 2015-2016 was \$14,987 ranking East Greenwich 23 out of 36 school districts. Student achievements were noted including PARCC, S.A.T and Advanced Placement test results. Several other academic and athletic accomplishments were highlighted.

At approximately, 7:21pm, Mr. Barton reminded the assembly that if there is not a quorum of 250 within the next 9 minutes, all items on the warrant will be adopted. He opened up the floor to those in attendance to ask questions about the proposed budget.

Judy Stenberg asked if there are any statistics on students who are attending the University of Rhode Island or Rhode Island College. Ms. Mark replied affirmatively just that the list does not show them.

Elizabeth McNamara asked Councilors what is the biggest issue facing the Town in the next year. President Isaacs replied that road repairs, finding operational efficiencies, recovering from funding cuts from the State and unfunded State mandates are all challenges. Councilor Schwager added that funding capital projects will be difficult as there are no more funds in reserve. VP Cienki concurred and stated getting rid of state mandates and cooperating with other towns will help fund capital projects. Councilor Stone agreed that the road bond is a big issue and is not going to be enough. The Fire Department is depleting their capital reserves which means tax payer dollars will have to support the next big truck. He was excited to have funds being put aside for waterfront improvements and watching the issue of relocating the transfer station unfold.

At 7:30pm, Mr. Barton confirmed that with 31 attendees, there is no quorum and therefore, Warrant Articles 1 through 5 are all passed.

Judy Stenberg asked for consideration to increase the promotion of the meeting in the future.

The meeting was adjourned.

Leigh A. Botello, CMC
Town Clerk

APPROVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OCTOBER 13, 2016