



JOHN P. RACHEK
Chairman

STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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DOUGLAS B. HARDING
Vice Chairman

BOARD OF FINANCE

PEGGY BUSSE
DAVID J. OLENDER
BARRY C. PINTO
JOSEPH E. WEHR

REGULAR MEETING APRIL 14, 2020 MINUTES

Members Present: John Rachek-Chairman, Peggy Busse, Douglas Harding, David Olender, Barry Pinto, Joseph Wehr

Others Present: Lori Spielman-First Selectman, Dr. Scott Nicol-Supt of Schools, Brian Greenleaf-Dir of Finance & Opers, Kevin Kenzenkovic-Temp. Finance Officer, Tiffany Pignataro-Finance Officer, Felicia LaPlante-Asst. Finance Officer, Miriam Underwood, Michael Purcaro-BOE Members, Mary Blanchette, Erika Purdy-JI Reporter, Betsi Feldman, Chief Jack Rich II and Dep. Chief Robert Smith-EVFD, Susan Phillips-HML Director, Lisa Houlihan-Town Planner, LouAnn Cannella-HR Coordinator/Exec. Asst, Lori Smith-Recording Secretary

Call to Order

Chairman John Rachek called the meeting to order at 8:02 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Finance Officer Presents 2020-21 Budget

In opening comments, Mr. Rachek thanked all town emergency services for the diligence they have shown over the last several weeks and acknowledged those residents in Ellington that work in the medical field.

Kevin Kenzenkovic told the Board that tonight's meeting starts the formal budget approve process. He was charged with two tasks, one was working with the Town Attorney to get the budget meetings set up based on the Governor's directive and other was to bring in a budget with a zero mill rate increase; this budget does that. The budget is now being officially turned over to the Board of Finance who have the authority to approve it without a town meeting or a referendum. Felicia LaPlante agreed with Kevin K. and stated that they worked hard to keep the budget at a low or no mill increase.

Peg Busse asked what was driving the zero or slight bottom line increase. John Rachek stated that the Governor's directive permits the Town to provide a budget for 20-21 where Board of Selectmen authorizes the Board of Finance the authority to come up with a budget and pass it. The reasoning behind why Finance was asked to come up with zero increase or minimal increase is that the people of the town will not be able to vote on the budget, so to pass a budget that provides a major increase without having a say felt wrong. Many people have been laid off or their hours cut and are not making as much money; also businesses are not making the income they once were. We felt that increasing the budget at this time would be wrong. The 2020-21 budget was pared down by the department heads who came up with a budget that is acceptable. To stay at the existing mill rate would require \$1.5 million from the Capital Reserve Fund. The fund must maintain a balance of 5% of budget; it is now at 10%. Therefore, there is the ability to take funds out. It will create a problem with next year's budget because the Town will need to repay the Capital Reserve. Next year's budget process will be a real challenge.

John Rachek stated his appreciation to the department heads for cutting back as far as they had to. The plan is to review the budget on a quarterly basis to see where it stands.

On April 28 the Board of Finance will host the Board of Selectmen to go line by line in the budget to explain the department budgets with Department Heads in attendance to answer questions. Erika Purdy, JI Reporter, asked if the funds from the reserve are being used to keep the budget at a zero increase. John Rachek stated that there have been reductions in most department's budgets as well as the funds from the Capital Reserve Fund. Kevin K. stated that the reductions alone would result in a mill rate increase of .8 mills. The \$1.5 million would be used to reduce it to zero increase. These funds can only be used to reduce the capital improvements projects and Kevin K. will be looking into the restrictions on how the funds can be used and what is required to access them.

Peg Busse stated that department heads need to understand where the reductions are coming from in their budgets. First Selectman, Lori Spielman stated that she spoke to the dept. heads today and that they all agreed that the cuts need to be made and were the ones in most instances that made the reductions. Felicia LaPlante confirmed that departments will not be able to move funds from line to line and that there is a process to do that.

Kevin K. stated that the Board of Education gave back \$502,000 in savings this year to carry over and made additional cuts also. John Rachek thanked the Board of Education and acknowledged Public Works, EVAC and all department that made reductions. Dr. Nicol stated how valuable cooperation is this particular year, he stated that the total \$500,000 returning this year, \$130,000 from capital improvements for this fiscal year that their employees can handle and \$50,000 in new retirements announced for next year. He acknowledged the Board of Education members that were on this call.

Robert Smith of EVFD asked how people will know what is in the budget. Felicia LaPlante stated that the budget is posted on the website for review. She has the detailed spreadsheets with the reductions to be posted this week. John Rachek thanked the Fire Dept for their contribution to the budget reductions.

Lori Spielman stated that back in 1919 the annual report of the Town of Ellington talked about a heavy toll with the influenza that was occurring at that time. She pointed out that this is the second time for the Town to be in this situation.

Adjournment

Chairman John Rachek closed the meeting at 8:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lori Smith, Recording Secretary