



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

DOUGLAS B. HARDING
Chairman

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DANIEL KEUNE
Vice Chairmen

BOARD OF FINANCE

BARRY C. PINTO
LOGAN JOHNSON
ELIZABETH NORD
MAURICE BLANCHETTE

BOS/BOARDS & COMMISSIONS BUDGET HEARING

THURSDAY, March 14, 2024

6:00PM

NICHOLAS J. DICORLETO, JR. MEETING HALL

MINUTES

Members Present: Douglas Harding - Chair, Daniel Keune, Barry Pinto, Maurice Blanchette, Logan Johnson, Liz Nord.

Others Present: Lori Spielman – First Selectman, Tiffany Pignataro-Finance Officer/Treasurer, Tom – Modzelewski Department of DPW, Jim York – Deputy Fire Marshal, John Rainaldi – Town Assessor, Kristen Harp – Youth Services, Mary Blanchette – Library Board of Trustees Chairman, Michael D'Averso – Deputy Chief, Pete Hany – EVAC President, Rebecca Stack – Human Services, Rob, Sheila Grady – Senior Center Director, Susan Phillips – Hall Memorial Director, Ashley Dabbondanza, Jack Rich - Chief, Timothy Seitz – Crystal Lake Fire Dustin Huguenin – Park and Rec Director, Kevin Barrett – Parks and Rec, Lisa Houlihan – Planning Department, John Turner – BOS, Donna Hosey – Town Clerk, Ann Marie Conti – Tax Collector, Walter Lee – Emergency Risk Management, Mary Cardin – BOS, Elisa Bartlett – Probate Judge, Jennier Dzen – BOE, Jed Lavitt – resident, Mary Cone – via zoom, Tracey Rich – via zoom, David Stavens – Deputy First Selectman – via zoom.

Call to order

Chairman Douglas Harding called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Citizens Forum

None came forward.

Presentation

Budget Hearing – FY2024-2025

Mrs. Pignataro presented the General Government budget for Fiscal year 2024-2025. An overview of the budget consists of continuation of funding for the essential local government

services that our residents rely upon. Proposed expansions of current services, increased efforts of bill rate stabilization, minimum wage increases, and increased costs of goods and services. With the towns improved credit rating of Aa2 the budget puts an emphasis on continuing these forward strides maintaining fiscal health, and building of operational reserves. FY2024-25 Budget highlights include a proposed increase of 2.9 to Mill Rate FY2024-24..

Diving into total revenue they are proposing a 6.34% increase. Property taxes are proposed to have a net increase of \$3,669,755, state and federal grants \$451,190 net increase, investment earnings \$50,000 net increase, other income \$91,076 combined net increase due to ambulance fee program contributions that increased \$175,000 due to proposed purchase of ambulance.

On the expenditures side they are proposing a 6.36% increase the majority of the increase is contributed to fixed charges, following increases in other departments.

General government saw a 1.61% net increase. Board of Selectmen saw a 40.70% net increase due to reclassifying costs related to IT services and reduction in salary related to First Selectman being part time for a full year. On the Finance Officer side a 24.71% net decrease due to IT services and increase in contracted services for arbitrage calculation, bidding and contact portal subscription, and bank feeds. Town counsel saw a 6.90% net decrease due to anticipation of lower costs associated with upcoming union negotiations.

Boards & Agencies saw a 4.24% increase due to an increase in the projected turnout with the November 2024 Presidential election.

Public Safety saw a 4.50% increase: Center Fire had a 4.76% net increase due to uniform requests year over year. Police had a 4.53% increase due to uniforms and MPTC training time for Police Accountability requirements. EVAC 27.97% increase due to increase of \$100,000 for part-time labor to eliminate usage of contracted temporary labor. ESIP had a net decrease of 8.75% based on historical usage/earnings under ESIP program.

Recreation had a net increase of 5.27%. Parks & Rec Administration saw a 7.20% increase due to conversion of part-time program assistant to full time. Summer playgrounds had an 8.34% increase due to minimum wage increases and the expansion of Pre-k camp. Waterfront saw a 6.82% increase due to minimum wage increases and the addition of one extra beach week.

Library had a 1.12% increase – books had a 13.33% net increase.

Human Services saw a 0.79% increase. The Senior Center had a net increase of 4.96% due to the addition of the Senior Center breakfast program and the proposed air conditioning project for the Senior Center kitchen.

Debt services had an 18.90% net increase due to principal and interest fluctuations. The budget proposal includes \$725,000 in stabilization efforts. Mill rate stabilization fund is a way to save for the future rising debt costs that will result from Windermere School Project, Comprehensive Lighting Project and the School HVAC project that have passed at referendum.

Mr. Modzelewski presented the proposed Public Works budget for fiscal year 2024-2025. A few budget highlights include payroll accounts which increased by \$2,428, main 400 accounts have decreased by 3.59%, 450 accounts increased by 11.6%, 321/470/480 accounts increased by 6%, 800 (building maintenance accounts) have increased by 10.8%.

410 Account – General Town Maintenance has decreased by 3.47%. 415 Account – New Equipment 150% increase. 420 Account – Equipment Maintenance increase of 4.95%. 425 Account – Town Garage Maintenance increase of 0.21%. 430 Account – Street Signage net neutral budget from the previous fiscal year. 435 Account - Ground Maintenance BOE and Town Park 13.64% increase. 439 Account - Town Aid – Winter .61% increase. 440 Account - Town Road Aid-Materials net neutral budget from the previous fiscal year. 450 Account – Sanitary Landfill increase of 2.65%. 451 Account – Municipal Solid/Bulky Waste Curbside Collection 7.66% increase. 455 Account – Sanitary Recycling 26.09% net increase. 456 Account – Household Hazardous Waste 7.86% decrease. 470 Account – Street Lighting 3.66% increase. 480 Account – Engineering & Inspections increase of 33.33%. 321 Account – Fire Protection Hydrants net natural budget proposed. 800 Accounts – Town Buildings 10.8% increase.

Mr. Reed recognized Mrs. Pignataro and Mr. Modzelewski for working on building the budget from the ground up. He touched based on the un-funded account balance and explained it will help the town prepare for unanticipated expenditures and future projects.

Mr. Harding asked what the UConn internship program is in the BOE budget. Mr. Reed stated they are looking for someone to assist in management projects around the town. He stated it's an opportunity to look at proposal from UConn to provide the town with a yearlong intern. This would be a master's level candidate and take on any projects assignment by the town.

Mr. Harding asked what the Library DPW \$20,000 increase would cover. Mr. Modzelewski stated it will cover new doors and windows and if necessary fire suppression system. The pipes are beginning to rot out, and they'd like to have a fund in place for any necessary repairs.

Adjournment

MOVED (BLANCHETTE) SECONDED (NORD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO
ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Elizabeth Phelps, Recording Secretary