



DOUGLAS B. HARDING
Chairman

STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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DANIEL KEUNE
Vice Chairmen

BOARD OF FINANCE

Board of Education

Budget Deliberations

April 10, 2025

MAURICE BLANCHETTE
LOGAN JOHNSON
ELIZABETH NORD
BARRY C. PINTO

Amended Minutes

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

Others Present: Tiffany Pignataro – Finance Officer, Lori Spielman – First Selectman, Alisha Carpino – Director of Finance & Operations, Jennifer Dzen – Board of Education Chair, Dr. Scott Nicol – Superintendent, Dave Stavens – BOS via zoom, John Rainaldi – Town Assesor, Matt Reed – Town Administrator, Dustin Huguenin– Rec Department, Rebecca Stack – Human Services, Molly Lukiwsky – Intern, Jack Turner – BOS, Sheila Grady – Senior Center, Kristen Harp – Youth Services, Pete Hany – EVAC, Tom Palshaw – Resident, Bob Smith – EVFD, Heather Smith – Resident, Tom Modzelewski – DPW Director, Susan Philips – Library, Donna Hosey – Tax Collector, Cole Prato – EVFD, Jamie Boucher – BOS, Mary Cardin – BOS, Timothy Seitz – CLFD, Peggy Busse – Resident, Walter Lee – Resident, Jim York – Fire Marshall via zoom, Bruce Hoffman – Resident via zoom.

Call to Order

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

All present.

Appointment of Auditing Services Contract

Only one company, our current auditor, submitted a bid. As a result, we will continue with the existing contract, awarding it to CLA.

MOVED (KEUNE) SECONDED (BLANCHETTE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO AWARD THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR AUDITING SERVICES TO CLA (CLIFTON LARSON ALLEN LLP) OF WEST HARTFORD, CT FOR THE PERIOD OF

JULY 1, 2025 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE FINANCE OFFICER/TREASURER. FURTHER, TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE THE CONTRACT EXTENSIONS.

Appropriation Request – LoCIP

The requested appropriation is for LOCIP (Local Capital Improvement Program) expenditures, which are part of the capital outlay budget. In February, we receive the finalized revenue figures for LOCIP. To ensure that expenditures align with actual revenues, we are making a bookkeeping adjustment. This motion ensures that the recorded appropriation matches both the anticipated expenditures and the confirmed revenue, aligning our budget to reflect actual figures.

MOVED (JOHNSON) SECONDED (KEUNE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO INCREASE THE BUDGETED EXPENDITURES IN ACCOUNT 1000.11.01102.70.60750 LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM BY \$3,632 TO BRING TOTAL ADJUSTED BUDGETED EXPENDITURES IN LINE WITH GRANT AWARD AS COMMUNICATED BY THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT. FURTHER, TO INCREASE IN THE GRANT REVENUE BUDGET APPROPRIATION FOR ACCOUNT 1000.01.00000.00.40154 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,632, THUS RESULTING IN A NET TOTAL APPROPRIATION FROM THE UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE FOR LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM ACTIVITY OF \$-0- FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025.

Budget Deliberations

Mrs. Pignataro shared a list of possible cuts (full list is attached). The budget originally had a 2.5 mill increase, but due to a change in how motor vehicle values are calculated, it was reduced to a 2.0 mill increase. After more adjustments, they were able to bring it down to a 1.6 mill increase, which is a 2.27% overall increase. Part of the budget includes money for three new ambulances, with the town's share being about 0.95%.

Mr. Johnson asked about bathroom upgrades for EVFD and whether more money might be needed later. Mr. Modzelewski explained that DPW will cover the labor, and the town will just pay for materials. Because of that, the capital funding for the bathrooms was reduced from \$48,000 to \$20,000.

Mr. Harding then asked the board members what kind of increase they thought the public would support. Mr. Johnson said he's been hearing concerns from seniors and suggested around 1.4%. Mr. Pinto thought anything below 1.5% would be okay. Mr. Keune said 1.5% and 1.6% are very close, but if 1.5% helps voters feel better about it, then it's worth it. Mrs. Nord said it's important to bring the lowest number possible to get the budget to pass. Mr. Blanchette liked the 1.6% number.

Mr. Harding said he's open to hearing more ideas on how to lower the mill rate. Mrs. Pignataro said we shouldn't use investment income to balance the budget. Mrs. Nord suggested looking at the unrestricted funds and possibly using some of that along with the unassigned funds.

Walter Lee pointed out that the difference between a 1.6 and 1.4 mill increase is only about \$36 for the average taxpayer, and said cutting too much could hurt the town in the future.

Mr. Pinto suggested a few cuts to capital projects: hold off on buying a plow truck and delay it to next year (saving \$90,000), cut Town Hall renovations to \$30,000, and put off Crystal Lake Schoolhouse repairs for a year (saving another \$20,000). Mr. Modzelewski responded by saying the plow truck is one of only two, and it's hard to find part to keep the truck running. He said the cost of a bigger truck next year will likely be higher. He's okay with cutting Town Hall renovations by \$35,000, but reminded everyone there's an ADA issue that needs to be addressed. As for the schoolhouse, it's just painting and scraping, so it could be delayed. He added that the trucks are used a lot in summer too, not just for snow.

Mary Blanchette from the Library Board said if they go in at 1.4 mills and the budget doesn't pass, there's no room left to make cuts. She thought 1.5 or 1.6 gives the town more options.

At 7:19 PM, the meeting took a break so Mrs. Pignataro could run new numbers. They resumed at 7:55 PM, and after the changes, the group agreed on a 1.5 mill increase.

A motion was made by Mr. Keune and seconded by Mr. Johnson to approve the budget. The 1.5 mill increase will now go to a public vote (referendum).

MOVED (KEUNE) SECONDED (JOHNSON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY THAT THE SUM OF MONEY RECOMMENDED FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 IS \$72,845,238 AS OUTLINED IN THE ATTACHED LIST OF ADDITIONS AND/OR REDUCTIONS TO PROPOSED REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES ACCOUNTS. ALL EDUCATION COST SHARING GRANTS (ECS) ARE DEEMED TO BE APPROPRIATED TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (ATTACHED).

There will be budget presentations on May 1st at the Senior Center and May 3rd at the Library. The April 15th meeting is canceled.

Adjournment

MOVED (BLANCHETTE) SECONDED (PINTO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE BOARD OF FINANCE BUDGET DELIBERATIONS MEETING AT 7:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Elizabeth Luginbuhl, Recording Secretary

MOVE TO REDUCE THE FOLLOWING BUDGET REVENUE ACCOUNTS

CURRENT YEAR LEVY \$745,028

BOARD OF EDUCATION REVENUE \$37,000

AMBULANCE FEE PROGRAM \$83,200;

MOVE TO INCREASE THE FOLLOWING BUDGET REVENUE ACCOUNTS

TRANSFER FROM CAPITAL RESERVE \$100,000

HALL MEMORIAL LIBRARY REIMBURSEMENT \$50,000

INVESTMENT EARNINGS \$150,000

APPROPRIATION-FUND BALANCE \$22,741;

MOVE TO REDUCE THE FOLLOWING BUDGET EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS

110-60250 BOARD OF SELECTMEN CONTRACTED SERVICES \$18,250

250-50103 PERM. BUILD. COMM. PART-TIME PAYROLL \$1,040

330-50122 POLICE RESIDENT STATE TROOPERS \$19,903

350-50101 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FULL-TIME PAYROLL \$98,571

370-50101 EVAC FULL-TIME PAYROLL \$15,600

420-60351 EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE DIESEL \$9,000

740-60250 HOCKANUM VALLEY COMM. COUNCIL \$2,000

835-60241 HALL MEMORIAL LIBRARY BUILDING ELECTRICITY \$34,917

845-60271 SENIOR CENTER BUILDING REPAIR AND MAINT. EQUIPMENT \$2,500

845-60272 SENIOR CENTER BUILDING REPAIR AND MAINT. BUILDING \$2,500

930-50149 SOCIAL SECURITY TAX \$9,434

950-50151 INSURANCE - ANTHEM BC/BS \$39,230

950-50156 INSURANCE DEFERRED COMPENSATION \$13,324

960-60250 SERVICE INSURANCE CONTRACTED SERVICES \$9,100

1065-50150 SALARY ADJUSTMENT \$10,106

1301-60501 BOE EXPENDITURES \$63,500

CAPITAL NON-RECURRING FUND EVAC - SERVICE VEHICLE SUV REPLACEMENT \$83,200

CAPITAL NON-RECURRING FUND EVFD - BATHROOM REMODEL \$28,000

CAPITAL NON-RECURRING FUND DPW - HIGH SCHOOL FENCE \$40,000

CAPITAL NON-RECURRING FUND BOE - LAWN TRACTOR \$6,782

CAPITAL NON-RECURRING FUND DPW - OLD CRYSTAL LAKE SCHOOLHOUSE REPAIRS \$20,000

CAPITAL NON-RECURRING FUND DPW - TOWN HALL RENOVATION/ADDITION \$30,000

CAPITAL NON-RECURRING FUND LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM - \$44

FURTHER MOVE TO INCREASE THE FOLLOWING BUDGET EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS

121-60250 AUDITORS CONTRACTED SERVICES \$3,510

410-50102 GENERAL TOWN ROADS OVERTIME \$958

950-50155 INSURANCE - CMERS DPW \$46

CAPITAL NON-RECURRING FUND DPW - CRYSTAL LAKE BEACH - \$10,000

FURTHER MOVED THAT THE SUM OF MONEY

RECOMMENDED FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 IS 72,845,238

ALL EDUCATION COST SHARING GRANTS (ECS)

ARE DEEMED TO BE APPROPRIATED TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

FURTHER MOVE TO RECOMMEND TO THE ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT	2,340,550
BOARDS, AGENCIES, COMMISSIONS	125,156
PUBLIC SAFETY	3,723,921
PUBLIC WORKS	5,622,911
CULTURAL ARTS & RECREATION	844,270
LIBRARY	792,619
HUMAN SERVICES	966,403
TOWN PROPERTIES	784,778
DEBT SERVICE	3,165,042
FIXED CHARGES	3,920,772
MISCELLANEOUS	812,301
GENERAL GOVERNMENT TOTAL	23,098,723
CAPITAL OUTLAY	1,744,642
BOE	48,001,873
BUDGET GRAND TOTAL	72,845,238

FURTHER TO RECOMMEND TO A TOWN MEETING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$ 1,744,642
 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 FOR THE CAPITAL NON-RECURRING FUND
 SAID APPROPRIATION TO FUND THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

1100 CAPITAL NON-RECURRING FUND

<u>Project Requests</u>	2025-26 BUDGET REQUEST	ADDITIONS (REDUCTIONS)	2025-26 BOF RECOMMEND
Road Overlay	\$ 650,000	\$ -	\$ 650,000
Local Capital Improvement Program	165,800	(44)	165,756
Unimproved Road Improvement	50,000	-	50,000
Sidewalks	20,000	-	20,000
Culvert Maintenance & Repair	20,000	-	20,000
Rd Construction-Large/Small Bridges	30,000	-	30,000
DPW - Town Hall Addition/Renovation	60,000	(30,000)	30,000
DPW - DPW Building Maintenance	25,000	-	25,000
DPW - Library Updates	50,000	-	50,000
DPW - Old Crystal Lake School House Repairs	20,000	(20,000)	-
EVFD - Bathroom Remodel	48,000	(28,000)	20,000
DPW - Parking Lot Renovations	30,000	-	30,000
DPW - Transfer Site Improvements	20,000	-	20,000
DPW - Tennis & Basketball Court Maintenance	25,000	-	25,000
DPW - High School Track	25,000	-	25,000
DPW - Guiderail Program	20,000	-	20,000
DPW - Crystal Lake Beach	50,000	10,000	60,000
DPW - High School Fence	40,000	(40,000)	-
Assessor - Revaluation	57,000	-	57,000
BOE - Modern Classroom Furniture	30,000	-	30,000
BOE - Lawn Tractor	17,668	(6,782)	10,886
BOE - AV Upgrades	25,000	-	25,000
DPW - Snow Plow Dump trucks Replacement	90,000	-	90,000
DPW - Loader	195,000	-	195,000
DPW - Parks Equipment	20,000	-	20,000
DPW - Equipment Trailer	20,000	-	20,000
DPW - Disc Style Seeder	26,000	-	26,000
EVAC - Service Vehicle SUV Replacement	83,200	(83,200)	-
BOE - Vehicle Replacement	30,000	-	30,000
DEPARTMENT TOTAL	\$ 1,942,668	\$ (198,026)	\$ 1,744,642
LESS-FEDERAL/STATE/TRUST FUNDS			
Municipal Grants in Aid	\$ 223,527	\$ -	\$ 223,527
Ambulance Fee Fund	83,200	(83,200)	-
State Grant-LOCIP	165,800	(44)	165,756
TOTAL	\$ 472,527	\$ (83,244)	\$ 389,283
NET COST TO TOWN CAP NON REC FUND	\$ 1,470,141	\$ (114,782)	\$ 1,355,359