

**Town of Essex
29 West Avenue
Essex, CT – Meeting Room A**

**Board of Finance
March 31, 2016**

MINUTES

In attendance: Keith Crehan, Chairman, Campbell Hudson, Vice Chairman, Mary-Louise Polo, Vincent Pacileo III, Don Mesite and Jeffrey Woods

Others in attendance: Norman Needleman, First Selectman
Kelly Sterner, Finance Director
Yvonne Roziak, Recording Secretary

Essex Elementary Board of Education & Regional School District 4 Board of Education:
Dr. Ruth Levy, Superintendent of Schools
Kristina Martineau, Assistant Superintendent
Chris Riley, Chairman, Region 4 BOE
Lon Seidman, Chairman, Essex Elementary BOE
Garth Sawyer, Business Manager
Scott Jeffrey, Principal, Essex Elementary

Meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Jeffrey Woods.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

***Motion made by Don Mesite to approve the agenda, seconded by Mary-Louise Polo. Passed.
Motion carried.***

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Campbell Hudson had the following changes to the minutes: Page 2 – Under Revenues – 1st paragraph - 5th sentence should read “With the end of the grace period as of February 3rd, collections will “slow” (*delete show*) but we are on track to meet our budgeted tax revenue.”

Page 2 – Under Expenditures – 1st paragraph – 8th line down should read “fiscal year at 74.45% expended, and (*delete And*) with what looks like “an” (*delete and*) early spring, this trend will continue.”

Page 2 – Under – SELECTMEN’S REPORT (BOARD OF SELECTMEN’S (*delete Selecten’s*) 2016-2017 BUDGET):

Also under SELECTMEN’S REPORT - 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence should be a new paragraph after Expenditures Summary by Budget. (As this refers more to the Essex Town Budget versus EES Budget).

Page 3 – 3rd Paragraph – Vin Pacileo inquired as to what OPEB meant in the Budget under Fringe

Benefits – it means “Other Post Employee Benefits”

Page 3 – 4th Paragraph – 1st sentence – should read “Legal Fees: Campbell discussed the legal fees for the “BOAA” for Board of Assessment Appeals” (*delete BOA*) and leaving it at \$10K.”

Page 3 – 9th Paragraph - 2nd sentence – should read “Kelly indicated that (*delete secret ingredient is*) it came from the debt service for the Bond Anticipation Note.”

Page 4 – 3rd Paragraph – 2nd sentence – should read “The BOF discussed that Region 4 (*added 4*), when presenting the school budgets, should be more transparent as the EES Budget and our BOF Budget are when presented to the public.”

Motion made by Don Mesite to accept the minutes (as amended) of the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 17, 2016, seconded by Vin Pacileo. Abstained: Jeffrey Woods. Passed. Motion carried.

SELECTMEN’S REPORT:

Norman discussed the Land Use move to the Town Hall Auditorium and renovating the current office space on the 2nd floor. Other renovations and projects are as follows:

- Town Hall Bathrooms (adding a shower to one and making them ADA compliant)
- Back Entrance – new ramp/additional parking spaces for handicap accessibility
- Back Staircases – will be renewed (paint and new stair treads)
- Walnut Street Bridge was approved. Construction will begin April – June 2017.
- EES School work in Library/Media Center – new floor, lighting and desks. Also parking areas will be repaved and restriped. Safe Routes to School also was approved and new sidewalks and crosswalks will be put in from Charles Street, Centerbrook to Essex Elementary.
- Two major projects with Housing Authority – The 25 unit building for Elderly and Affordable Housing (Essex Place) will begin construction soon. Renovations to the inside of the older units will also be going on as well as septic system work. Parking spaces will be made available to the current tenants to park next door during the construction
- Route 9 overpasses will be painted and the costs will not be taken on by the town – color will most likely be neutral
- Public Works Contract Negotiations are currently going on.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Presentation of 2016-17 Proposed Essex Board of Ed Budget

Lon Seidman, Chairman Essex Board of Education, handed out the Essex Board of Education Budget, specifically referring to Page 9 –Essex Major Budget Drivers that are the overall increases to the budget.

Operational & Contractual Increases:

Lon Seidman, Chairman, discussed the teacher’s contract that indicates annual step increases for the next three years. They are Year 1 - 1.25%, Year 2 - 1.25% and Year 3 – 3.00%. A new HSA Health plan is being offered will also reflect a lower increase to the total budget. Several other

increases to the budget are noted below:

- Para-educator coming over from the Supervision District
- Contractual Health & Payroll Benefits
- Electricity
- Repairs & Maintenance – Increase in sinking fund
- OOD Transportation and Tuition

Reductions:

- Reductions – 2 fulltime FTE (1) retirement (1) Reduction in force
- Reduction – 0.5 FTE PE Teacher
- Unemployment Compensation
- Reduction on Repair and Maintenance as one year projects are completed
- Heating fuel has been reduced due to new boiler
- Supervision District Decrease
- Reduced Equipment as one year projects are completed
- No new staffing requests

Additional Services:

- Repair Chimney
- Window Shades
- Music Room – Exterior Door
- Sidewalk Replacement
- 4 – Twelve Foot White Boards (replacing chalk boards)
- Laminator – Audio Visual
- Pro Team Backpack Vacuum

Elementary School Capital Requests total \$63,000 (see Appendix A).

The Essex Elementary Board of Education is requesting approval of a 2016-2017 budget of \$7,625,408, an increase of 0.29% plus an additional \$10,000 if the Board agrees to the suggestion of the First Selectman which would bring it to \$7,635,408.

b. Presentation of 2016-17 Proposed Region 4 Budget

Chris Riley, Chairman, Region 4 BOE, handed out the Region School District 4 Board of Education Budget specifically referring to Page 10 – Indicating the Major Budget Drivers. These are the overall increases to the budget. They are as follows:

Contractual & Operational Increases:

- Biggest drivers, are salaries, health insurance and contracts
- Magnet/VoAg Tuition
- Out of District Special Education Transportation
- Restoration of Instruct Supply/Textbook Accts
- An overall 2.75% increase

Reductions:

- Under Reductions – Various – totaling a reduction of 1.57%
- Reduction in 2 part-time Custodial Positions
- In District Special Education Services
- Electricity
- Out of District Special Education Tuition
- Heating Oil
- Debt Service
- Net Effect of minor increases and decreases to all other accounts

New Requests for the Region 4 Budget:

- NEASC Accreditation Site Visit
- PSAT Fees
- Repair & Repoint Brick
- Replace Field Irrigation System
- Art, Music and Science equipment.

Vin asked about the Pre-K program that is part of Region 4 and the fact that it is currently being funded through Essex Elementary School. Ruth Levy, Superintendent, confirmed that this is correct as Deep River carried this program in the past for 25 years. Keith said that perhaps down the road, we should think about addressing in the future.

Ruth also discussed ideas for increasing student enrollment. They may do some unique programming to bring students in as well as magnet schools. To get additional tuition students, they are currently looking at an exchange initiative with China students coming to the U.S. for two weeks this summer. They are also looking at recruiting other international students. Baccalaureate programs are also being looked at. As far as attracting more local students, they are aware that block schedules could be something that needs to be looked at.

Campbell Hudson moved to submit for review and discussion at the April 14th Public Hearing the 2016-2017 Board of Selectmen's Budget in the amount of \$7,651,640 and the Essex Board of Education 2016-2017 budget of \$7,635,408.

Don Mesite moved to approve and go to Town Meeting an appropriation from the Essex Elementary capital improvements sinking fund an amount not to exceed \$63,000 (full detail included as Appendix A) for the capital projects as recommended by the Essex Board of Education, seconded by Mary-Louise Polo. Passed. Motion carried.

Mary-Louise Polo moved to approve and recommend to Town Meeting an appropriation from the Essex Elementary capital improvements sinking fund an amount not to exceed \$40,000 for the media center renovation project as recommended by the Essex Board of Education, seconded by Jeffrey Woods. Passed. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATION AND CORRESPONDENCE: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion made by Keith Crehan to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m., seconded by Mary-Louise Polo. Passed. Motion carried.

Next Meeting will be held on April 14, 2016 (following the Budget Public Hearing).

Respectfully submitted,

Yvonne M. Roziak