

MINUTES
Town Council
Town of East Greenwich
Special Meeting
May 6, 2019 at 7:00 PM
Town Hall, 125 Main Street, East Greenwich, RI 02818

(1) Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag

Town Council (5/5): Mark Schwager, President; Michael Donegan, Vice President; Caryn Corenthal, Renu Englehart and Michael Zarrella

Town Staff: Joseph Duarte, Acting Town Manager/Director of Public Works; Leigh Carney, Town Clerk; Patricia Sunderland, Finance Director; Wendy Schmidle, Director of Information Technology; Anthony Davey, Tax Assessor; Catherine Bradley, Director of Community Services and Parks; Col. Stephen Brown, Chief of Police; Capt. Stanley Cirella, Deputy Chief of Police; Capt. Thomas Mears, Acting Fire Chief; Lisa Bourbonnais, Director of Planning

Others: Michael D'Amico, Financial Consultant; Karen Taylor, Library Director

President Schwager called the meeting to order. Following introductions, Ms. Sunderland was welcomed to her first meeting.

(2) Council President Announcements

President Schwager provided a brief overview of the budget process followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

(3) Public Comments (15 minute time limit for items NOT on the agenda)

None

(4) New Business (Discussion/Action)

(a) Introduction of FY20 Operating Budget

Mr. Duarte provided an overview of his proposed budget. Challenges and goals faced during the development of the budget were outlined. The outcome resulted in a decrease of \$663K and a proposed tax levy of 1.42%.

(b) Requests for Grants and Contributions from Summers End, Main Street Association and East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce.

Steve Lombardi, Ross DiSegna and Michael Mancuso with the East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce spoke in support of their request for a \$25,000 grant from the Town to support their initiatives such as Restaurant Week, Welcome to East Greenwich Guide and many events on Main Street. Mr. Lombardi supported the

proposed tiered tax rates and asked to be involved in further discussions. Discussion ensued on membership, operating budget, demographics and economic development.

Steve Nelson, former President of the Main Street Association, spoke in support of their request for a \$5,500 grant from the Town to support their initiatives such as the Spring Egg Hunt, Outdoor Movies, Chalk the Block and the Hill and Harbor Turkey Trot 5K. Discussion ensued on fundraising, operating budget and community participation.

Jessica Granatiero and Jane Isaac with the Summer Arts and Festival Organization spoke in support of their request for a \$15,000 grant from the Town to support their annual event which has been going on for twenty-five years. Discussion ensued on fundraising/sponsorships, support from New England Tech and local support for permitting.

Karen Taylor, Library Director, spoke in support of their budget request for \$536,232. Amounts in the proposed budget were addressed. Discussion ensued on the Town's decision in the previous year to cease payroll services. She addressed the reduction in State aid of \$7,500 and an increase from their endowment. Discussion ensued on programming, State mandates for local funding, resuming payroll services and a café model.

(c) Presentation of Budget Detail Report for Revenues and Expenditures

Michael D'Amico gave a detailed line by line review of the operating budget for both revenues and expenditures. He addressed motor vehicle phase out, health insurance rates, OPEB, liability insurance, contingency fund, revisions to Board of Canvassers, Police staffing, Fire overtime, hydrant rentals, debt service/bonds, revenues increase by \$1 million, expenses decrease by \$663K, difference will go into surplus. Council discussion ensued on several specific line items; including municipal court, video-streaming and the school budgeting process.

Director Bourbonnais addressed concerns about a parking study and waterfront enhancements. Director Bradley addressed costs for programming which are mostly self-funded.

Council reviewed and discussed requests for the applications received for Grants and Contributions.

(d) Capital Improvements Bond FY 2020 – 2022

Mr. Duarte presented the requests by Department and project which totaled \$2.7 million dollars. Lengthy discussion ensued on individual projects.

Karen Taylor, Library Director, presented a copy of the adopted fiscal year 2019 budget which highlighted the Library's budget at \$525,000 (recorded as Exhibit 1).

(e) An ORDINANCE to amend the Code of the Town of East Greenwich, Chapter 227 thereof, entitled "TAXATION", adding Article XVI "TIERED

TAX CLASSIFICATION PLAN" and Article XVII "Small Business Tangible Property Tax Exemption" (INTRODUCTION/FIRST READING).

President Schwager introduced the ordinance and noted that the budget as presented is dependent on the adoption of this ordinance. VP Donegan explained how the ordinance gives the Town the authority and flexibility to realign tax rates. Mr. Davey addressed the impact on commercial properties. Discussion followed on amending the ordinance to remove the reference to "small" businesses and replace with "local" businesses for tangible personal property exemptions.

Motion to approve an ORDINANCE to amend the Code of the Town of East Greenwich, Chapter 227 thereof, entitled "TAXATION", adding Article XVI "TIERED TAX CLASSIFICATION PLAN" and Article XVII "Small Business Tangible Property Tax Exemption" and move to second reading made by Renu Englehart, seconded by Michael Donegan

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion carried 5 – 0

(5) Public Comments (30 minute time limit)

None

(6) Council Comments

None

(7) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Michael Zarrella, seconded by Michael Donegan

Ayes: Corenthal, Donegan, Englehart, Schwager, Zarrella

Motion carried 5 – 0

Submitted By:
Leigh A. Carney, CMC
Town Clerk

Approved By Town Council:
(PENDING)