

**EAST HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2015**

In accordance with Chapter III, Section 6 of the East Haven Town Charter, the East Haven Town Council Hearing Committee held a public hearing meeting Tuesday, May 5, 2015, at 7:00PM at the East Haven Senior Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512.

Chairman Richard Anania calls the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

Item #1

Roll Call for Hearing Committee - 11 present – 4 absent (Gravino, Sand, Badamo and Riolino). Councilman Parente and Thompson Jr. arrive at 7:09PM.
A quorum is present.

Item #2

To conduct Public Hearing #1 regarding an "Ordinance approving a transfer of \$125,000.00 for the Public Safety Center (911)" as follows:

Public Safety Center (911)

To:

01-336-0190	Public Safety O/T	\$125,000.00
TOTAL		\$125,000.00

From:

01-885-0689	Contingency	\$125,000.00
TOTAL		\$125,000.00

Reason: Funds needed to cover overtime for remainder of year.

No public comment.

Council comment:

- Councilman Nicholas Palladino says his understanding was when they went through this dispatch center, aside from needing the updates they were going to be saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in overtime. Now with the \$125,000 for overtime it seems like we are just paying it to other employees as opposed to paying Police Officers and we have added 6 employees to the payroll with

benefits and everything. He doesn't see the Town saving a penny; he thinks the whole thing has turned into a money pit as opposed to a savings.

- Finance Director Paul Rizza says when this budget was put together for the Public Safety Dispatch Center it was prior to the union contract being done. They went from just four people and added 6 new people. After the budget last April, they settled the contract in June which the Board did vote on. Initially there was \$15,000 in overtime, but there wasn't even a salary structure when this was put together. One of the things that changed dramatically was they were initially looking at 8 hour shifts and they ended up negotiating 12 hour shifts. The overtime did go from \$15,000 to \$140,000. With the bonding package they added all new state of the art equipment which is probably the best in the State. The people they hired, of the 10 there are two lead people who have been with the Fire Department for a number of years who act as lead individuals on shifts. We are looking at roughly \$600,000 overall over the course of the year. A lot of the overtime that was spent last year came from the uniformed officers dispatching. Right now they have 10 civilians, which a little over \$300,000 is coming from the Fire Department. When they did the budget they are currently operating under, they drew money from Police and Fire overtime as well as Fire Department salaries. It's not a bargain but they now have one state of the art facility with 10 civilians working instead of 4 as well as Police Officers on overtime shifts.
- Councilman Palladino says so basically what Mr. Rizza is telling them is yes it is working, it wasn't a bargain and when it was originally presented to the Town Council they didn't have all the facts for them.
- Mr. Rizza says they didn't have contract in place, they were in negotiation.
- Councilman Palladino says so they are really not going to see the big savings they were pretty much promised originally because now he is saying it is going to cost \$600,000 per year.
- Mr. Rizza asks if anyone estimated what it is going to cost last year, he never mentioned it so he doesn't know who Councilman Palladino is referring to. It is a savings over time because they are civilians who don't get the Police/Fire rates on pensions. In the long run, he thinks it will be a savings and we also have brand new equipment. Taking everything as a whole, it is a great thing for the Town of East Haven; we have our own dispatch center. The team that worked on it worked very diligently to get it up and running as well as the people who negotiated the contract.
- Town Attorney Joseph Zullo says he anticipated that might be a question. Through June of last year, the Police Department had expended about \$5.4 million, the budget this year is \$5,000,000. So if you add the budget of \$5,000,000 to the \$600,000 for the dispatch center you end up with \$5.6 million.

So \$5.4 million was expended last year just through June, the Council did approve a few transfers for overtime in excess of that. He would estimate just in the wash there is probably about \$5.6million between two years. The tipping point, in addition to the added services is they did draw money out of the Fire budget. Jim Kelley would have to run the numbers but he would be willing to bet there is a savings; there definitely is a savings in the Police Department. The question would be how much the overage is in the Fire Department, but there is probably a savings there too.

- Councilman Palladino says his question is how much is the overall savings for the taxpayers whether it is in the Fire Department, Police Department or Public Works. They were sold this, as he remembers, as a large tax savings and it doesn't seem that it is working. He's not saying the system isn't good because it is and he thinks it is great to have civilian dispatchers. When you add 6 people to the payroll with benefits, vacation etc. as opposed to paying people regular overtime it is not going to work out. In his opinion, he is not seeing the big tax savings they were sold on.
- Attorney Zullo says they should have Jim Keeley run the numbers because if its \$100,000-\$200,000 that is substantial, and if you are adding more services and saving \$50,000 you still have a generated tax savings. The Chairman is welcome to have Jim or Paul run the numbers.
- Mr. Rizza says one other point he'd like to make is on the police side of the dispatchers, all of the officers were on overtime. Currently, the rates are the same as last year which is roughly \$43/hr. salary alone. They are not paying the dispatcher \$43/hr., not even close to it. That is an additional savings. He and his assistant will run numbers and bring it back. They are providing a better service in one location with civilian dispatchers using top of the line equipment. If they save \$1 it is well worth it. He will get the numbers out to the Council in a week or so.

Item #3

Adjournment of Public Hearing #1.

Councilman Santino makes a motion.

Councilman Vincent Spaduzzi seconds the motion.

Voice vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

Item #4

To conduct Public Hearing #2 regarding an "Ordinance approving a transfer of \$100,000.00 for the Police Department" as follows:

Police Department**To:**

01-332-0190	Overtime Wages	\$100,000.00
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TOTAL		\$100,000.00
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From:

01-332-0110	Unused Salaries	\$100,000.00
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TOTAL		\$100,000.00
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Reason: Funds needed for overtime.

No public comment.

No Council comment.

Item #5

Adjournment of Public Hearing #2.

Councilman Santino makes a motion.

Councilman Spaduzzi seconds the motion.

Voice vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

Item #6

To conduct Public Hearing #3 regarding an "Ordinance approving a transfer of \$94,000.00 for Public Service" as follows:

Public Service**To:**

01-224-0192	Seasonal Overtime	\$19,000.00
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01-224-0561	Vehicle Supplies & Parts	\$20,000.00
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01-224-0580	Road Maint. & Materials	\$40,000.00
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01-224-0658	Equip. Maint.	\$15,000.00
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Services		
TOTAL		\$94,000.00
From:		
01-224-0110	Regular Salaries	\$94,000.00
TOTAL		\$94,000.00

Reason: Funds needed to complete fiscal year/cover snow expenses.

No public comment.

Council comment:

- Councilman Santino asks where the \$25,000 went that was supposed to be used to fix the backhoe that was never done.
- Mr. Rizza says it is still in capital.
- Councilman Santino says they bonded for that right.
- Mr. Rizza says no, they didn't sell the bonds.
- Councilman Santino says wasn't that the same money that went for the side cutter. There was money for that, the lawn mower and the side cutter repair.
- Mr. Rizza says there were two lawn mowers.
- Councilman Santino says there were two mowers, the backhoe and another \$25,000 that he thought was for the side cutter repair.
- Mr. Rizza says that is still in capital.

Item #7

Adjournment of Public Hearing #3.

Councilman Santino makes a motion.

Councilman Henry Butler III seconds the motion.

Voice vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

Item #8

Hearing Committee report to the full Town Council and recommendation of action on Public Hearings #1, #2, and #3.

Councilman Santino makes a motion.

Councilman Palladino seconds the motion.

Roll call vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

Item #9

Adjournment of Hearing Committee.

Councilman Spaduzzi makes a motion.

Councilman Palladino seconds the motion.

Voice vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:19PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danelle Feeley, Clerk, East Haven Legislative Town Council