

**EAST HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2015**

In accordance with Chapter III, Section 6 of the East Haven Town Charter, the East Haven Legislative Town Council conducted a Public Hearing meeting on Thursday, April 16, 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 7:00AM.

**Item #1**

Roll Call for Public Hearing #1 - 12 present – 3 absent (Badamo, Spaduzzi and Riolino). A quorum is present.

**Item #2**

To conduct Public Hearing #1 to discuss an “Ordinance adopting the Town and Board of Education Budgets and fixing the tax rate in mills for the 2015-2016 fiscal year of the Town of East Haven.” - Board of Education Side of the Budget.

Public comment:

- Town Attorney Joseph Zullo reads a public comment statement from Mayor Joseph Maturo Jr. (see attached). He explains that Director of Administration Sal Brancati wanted to be here to read it but was in a bad car accident yesterday.
- Michael Speer- 37 Elm Street, East Haven, CT- Mr. Speer says it is personally hard for him as a resident and future parent to support the Board of Education to encourage the Town Council to give the additional funds requested. How can you assure or convince us that the additional funds will be utilized for the students and classroom resources such as support staff, materials and technology and not for top heavy administration jobs. It would be different if he was confident the funds would be going into the classroom to benefit the children, to help keep the class sizes low and keep support for the staff which was mentioned last week by the Board of Ed as one of the first things to eliminate. If you ask him, these people are extremely important to the classroom, they help assist teachers in a remarkable way. Their job is to be hands on with the youngest students in our school systems that are at the most impressionable age of development. To even raise the thought that they should be cut raises more concern than he believes we all had in this room originally. If decisions like that are made, he sees us slipping from our current ranking of 24 out of 31 schools in the region rather than moving up. Continuing on with the following money, would this

include keeping sports and arts programs alive? He would support them but he feels that these top heavy jobs that do not directly influence our students prevent us from supporting the system. What type of review was done on the entire budget before the threat of closing a school prematurely, closing a school before we receive a proposal that we spent \$30,000 on for a professional's opinion about consolidation. He would like to know why the lower paying jobs that were portrayed as easily disposal by the Board of Ed last week, suggested a reduction in the high salary administration positions. He feels like they attack the little people because they are not getting their way and our students end up being the sacrificial lambs while the administrators remain the over fed lions. He asks to be convinced the best interest is with the students, and they will all stand by you.

- Lina Travers- 355 Laurel Street, East Haven, CT- Ms. Travers thanks the Mayor and the Town Council for helping and trying to come up with the budget increase that the Superintendent is asking for. But as a parent and taxpayer in East Haven she has many issues with what has been happening and the threats that have been made which would affect the education of her daughter as well as all of the children in East Haven. This happened 5 years ago, reconfiguration and moving the students around. Their children marched the Town Hall to save their school and their teachers/nurses. She asks if they have any idea what kind of impact it is having on their children, the Town's education and the test scores? Five years ago the reconfiguration of East Haven Schools was done to close schools, create a better learning environment and most of all to save money; none of the above happened. That reconfiguration five years ago disrupted education; they redistricted Carbone students throughout the district and brought the Academy to Carbone's spot. Where is the money saved by doing that? In the past 5 years the Board of Ed has been coming back to the Town year after year asking for more money, why? Now the Board of Ed. is asking for an additional increase of \$1.6 million dollars to keep what we have right now still running, does that make any sense. Our test scores are still low, students are struggling and teachers, para's and staff are losing a battle they have no control over. If this money is not given to the Board of Ed our students are threatened with closing of schools, moving 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the High School, moving 5<sup>th</sup> grade to the Middle School and sports cut for 8<sup>th</sup> and freshman year, para's being let go and removed from the schools. Moving 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the High School when they are not ready physically or emotionally will be moving 11-12 year old kids with 17-19 year old students. They say they have an entire wing in the basement for 8<sup>th</sup> graders and they will be separate, would you want your child in a basement for one year trying to get an education. It sounds like the same mistake that was made 5 years ago. Moving 5<sup>th</sup> grade to the Middle School, the only way this will work is if we have the whole campus making JMMS grades 5-8. Parents are trying to get their children into the Academy for stability, knowing that it is never touched, their child

will be safe from grades 3-8, this is why the test scores in the Academy are better than anyone else's. Those kids don't have to worry about where they will be next year; they don't have anxiety about where their friends are going or who their teacher is going to be. It takes our children time to adapt to their new environment, again lowering test scores. If you remove sports, there will be nothing to push them educationally, our students know if their grades are not where they should be then sports are not an option for them. Take away sports and their ambition to do well, let's see how our test scores will look then.

Removing para's- our classroom sizes are not the best and they are there to help struggling children in the classroom, help children who are having a bad day, help children who are going above and beyond and not be bored with something they already understand. Taking them away leaves a teacher to struggle to deal with three different scenarios while teaching 20 students. Who suffers again, bringing test scores down again. She is here to say do you think that the \$1.6 million dollars is going to bring up test scores, the answer is no.

- Michele Lucatino- 15 Mill Hill Circle, East Haven, CT- Ms. Lucatino says she has one child in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and one that graduated from East Haven in 2009. She can't believe the Superintendent of our schools would threaten our children. Her 13 year old son has been to four different schools already and now they want him to go to the High School. She says you want to throw the 8<sup>th</sup> graders, in their uniforms, in the basement where there are no windows instead of enjoying their last year in the middle school as the oldest kids. Let's not even bring up the age different between 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Don't say you are going to keep them separate; there are way too many common areas that all grades have to share. It was hard to send them to JMMS as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader, would you want your 5<sup>th</sup> grader in the Middle School. How about class sizes, if they don't improve what the Superintendent is asking, the class sizes are going to increase from 25-30 students. How many kids attend the Academy, why are they always excluded from these plans, she says I guess I should have sent my child there so he could stay in the same school until he is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and not be disrupted or bothered. These kids have no stability, every year it's something different and there is no way for them to prepare for these changes. The Board of Ed reacts too quickly, doesn't think it out, tries it, puts money into it and if it doesn't work no worries they can try again next year. She is tired of her child being the guinea pig. She was told a few years ago there was a five year plan in place and they would see positive changes, but her son has been in the school system for 8 years and she has yet to see a change. The only change she has seen besides redistricting is having her child go to the Middle School in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and the good old uniform policy. Another concern is the security of the buildings; the Board of Ed received a grant to update security in all buildings; we still have broken doors, unsafe windows and no security cameras at all entrances. Where does all that money

go, the only thing that was integrated was a high tech time clock at the High School where teachers enter by finger print. Her question is what exactly the Superintendent is going to do with those funds, because according to her statement if they approve the money, things are going to stay the same.

- Amanda Riggio- 42 John Street, East Haven, CT- Ms. Riggio says she is currently a senior at East Haven High School. The budget proposed to the district keeps the school at an as is state. Personally, as a student, she believes the classes and technology they currently have can help them, but it is not enough to prepare them for the careers and skills they will need to succeed. Instead of using that money to keep it at an as is state, they should use that money to add to the curriculum to help them learn the skills they will need. The current class size is around 20-25 students and moving the 8<sup>th</sup> graders into the school would increase the class size which will also increase the need for para's and aides to help the students who are struggling. If the Superintendent does not get the money she is going to move the 8<sup>th</sup> graders to the High School and 5<sup>th</sup> grade to the Middle School. Five years ago there was a reconfiguration of the schools moving the 6<sup>th</sup> graders to the Middle School, she was currently in 8<sup>th</sup> grade when that happened and she did not think it was a good idea then either. They closed down schools in order to save money but the only one that was closed down was the Old High School that was used for the Academy which didn't make sense because that building wasn't really being used anyway. Personally, this would be moving 8<sup>th</sup> graders to the High School that are not socially ready with a huge age difference, 12-13 year olds would be with 16-18 or above. She thinks it will increase sexual harassment charges and violations.
- Vincent Riccio- 345 Short Beach Rd, East Haven, CT- Mr. Riccio says he is here not only to talk about the \$700,000+ going to the Board of Education but the #1 priority he has is the schools. He does not see the Board of Education or the Superintendent taking it as serious as he would. The school system right now has budgeted \$150,000+ including grant money from the State as well, to install fingerprint readers. Right now it is going to the High School, but the budget is for all the schools. Essentially, it secures one door in each school; it is the most expensive time clock because it keeps the times of the teacher, which was specifically talked about in the minutes of the Board of Education. Securing one door with a fingerprint reader does not secure the entire school. Also, the recent proposal for going out to bid for cameras for the Middle School, camera again are a nice device but it doesn't secure the classrooms or our children in the schools. In the case with school shootings, a lot of the times the shooter is a student who is already in the school. It would require a lock down and require the teachers to either have their doors locked already and close them, or step out of the classroom to lock the door. He has been trying to get the Board of Education to change all of the locks to lock from the inside which is the number one

recommendation from Sandy Hook. Whoever is advising the Superintendent and the Board of Education needs to take a closer look at the way the schools are being secured; the fingerprint reader and the cameras come after the basics such as locking the doors and windows. As in the case of Sandy Hook, the shooter entered through the window, so the locks and windows should be the first concerns.

- Johna Pompano-37 Charter Oak Ave, East Haven, CT- Ms. Pompano says she is a mother of three children, she has an 11 year old who attends 6<sup>th</sup> grade at JMMS, her daughter is 10 and goes to Tuttle and her three year old attends school out of district at Jepson because East Haven does not have full time Pre-K. Her two older children attended school at Barnard Magnet School in New Haven up until 2 years ago when she pulled them out due to so many shootings and lock downs in New Haven. Since bringing them to East Haven she can honestly say that their education has gone down a little as far as what they are learning in the classroom, the level they are at and where the teachers are with the students. In New Haven they have a lot more people per classroom per student. Tuttle she is very happy with as far as where they are trying to go academically, but to be nice, JMMS is a mess. Her son looked forward to being in Middle School, at the beginning of the year he suffered an injury while being in a class with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student and nothing was done about it to date. You can't carry a backpack in school, you have to be in uniform at all times, and in and out of your locker by a certain time. That seems to be the worry over there, not where their test scores are going or who can help them academically before and after school. There are times teachers are pulling up as she is getting to the parking lot, what happened to teachers being there before the students are there and staying after school to help them. It seems that everyone is worried about the all mighty dollar, money makes the world go round but if they can't get the education in East Haven, the numbers of kids going out of district around going to go up. She says they better think really hard, please take their words because they care about their children.
- Patricia DePalma- 10 Seaview Ave, East Haven, CT- Mrs. DePalma says the concerns she is listening to are very valid and from parents who have been doing their best for many years, she recognizes the names and faces. The alliance grant that was received, it was a 2 year \$1.5 million. They got half last year, as far as she heard, they might be able to use the unused half next year. What if it's not and why wasn't it used? What is it air marked for? She is a teacher and thinks there are already so many things changing in education, why wasn't it used and what if it can't be rolled over? They are talking about \$750,000, is that part of this year's alliance grant that was already awarded? Or is it definitely different or new money? She would like to have some answers to that. Why is the State going to continue to give an alliance grant or any grant if it isn't going to

be used. They did make a lot of changes 5 years ago and there's a lot of talk about data; where are the results, what were the changes, good or bad over the last 5 years. \$30,000 spent to have a study done to determine what to do and where to move children; clearly we did it 5 years ago. If you don't look at the data and the growth or lack thereof, there is no reason to do it all over again. The State isn't giving money out right now, so don't make it so that we don't get any in the future. Please understand that you can't run an education system without an increase. You don't want the class sizes to get bigger. A good teacher will say they will accept everyone and do their best to help the children. What is going on in the classroom, she agrees there are too many administrators in the public school but not enough that are on hand working with the kids. Some of the top administrators got slid in there at the High School. They are paying more for that kind of salary, like the new position at the Finance Office. There has to be a way to cut some of those costs. When that position was advertised it was for \$95,000 and she believes it is a very high salary, so that is more money not going toward educating the children. That has to be thought about. Lastly, security and mental health issues, she says if money is not put into those two areas we are all short changing our children. She teaches Middle School and is a mother, a teacher, everything at all times a day because these children need someone to go to and talk to so they can be in the classroom and learn. It happens at a young age. That is the number one need and rumor has it that it is being cut at the State level, don't let it happen in our schools. She was in favor of all of those changes, but they need to show results of those changes. The only thing she would be against is making it long term, you don't want 8<sup>th</sup> graders going into a high school. If it's short term because you are building a new school, because the middle school is falling apart, okay. You have to pick the schools and make them better and inviting so you can educate the children long term and give the parents and students stability. Look at the data and she is going to ask the Board of Education to do the same; what were the results of the changes they made five years ago? The perception is awful; they have to give hard cold facts like she does with a rubric to show the parent why a student got the grade they did. The Town deserves to know and support the education system. They need to look at the grant money and alliance money and not just figure giving \$750,000 is going to do much, because it won't in a school system this large.

- Vicky Piscitelli- 10 River Road, East Haven, CT- Ms. Piscitelli says she has three boys in this district and she feels it is an annual thing where they have to come fight and beg to take care of their kids and get them to where they need to be. She remembers sitting here last year begging for safety in the schools and nothing has been done. Classrooms still get locked from the outside, so if there is an emergency those teachers have to go outside, lock the door and someone has to let them in. God forbid there was a real emergency, that teacher is not

going to get back into that classroom, assuming the kindergarten first or second graders let them back in at all. The fact that they want to take para's out of the classroom by not giving an increase in budget is insane. Thirty kids in a classroom, and what about if they put one special needs child in that classroom that needs extra help with only one teacher. In addition, there's not even enough room in the classroom to hide 30 children. She says they are putting the children at risk by basically not giving them anything. Status quo is not okay, and the fact that they are not asking for more is very unnerving for her. She has been looking at other schools outside because she is tired of this battle having to beg them to give stuff they work so hard for. She understands there is a budget freeze; they lost a literacy aide a few weeks ago so she called the Superintendent's office to see if they were going to be replaced because they took a second grade aide to help the first grade so now the second grade has nobody. She was told there was a budget freeze yet that same week they approved a \$100,000 job. Why does the budget freeze only cut things that directly affect the children? She feels like they come every year and get upset and then the Superintendent wants to close schools and shift the children around, it is disgusting to her. They aren't going to get anywhere if they continue to make cuts and not give anything. All they do is fight for their children and she feels it gets unheard year after year. Safety has never been a priority, she was at the Middle School this week and there is a large crack in one of the windows and the doors don't shut properly. Where is the money actually going that is being given? She is involved in two different schools, those teachers and those para's are working hard for the kids so why isn't anyone else. Why are we not funding them and allowing them to help our children. She says why would we want status quo, would you want to work for the same money every year, no, you would want a little more each year. All status quo is going to do is have us keep losing students to different districts and leaving the Town, because who wants to continue to fight for something when nobody ever hears them.

- Pam Cofrancesco- 54 Green Street, East Haven, CT- Ms. Cofrancesco says she is a parent who went out of district, and these parents are still here fighting for the same thing. Why is it that her 8<sup>th</sup> grader is in New Haven and learning the same thing that her 10<sup>th</sup> grader is who is still here in East Haven. The administrators have all this money that always goes right to them and not to the kids. If she could have gotten her oldest one out, she would. For the Superintendent to ask for \$1.6 million dollars and threaten the kids that they are going to lose out if she doesn't get it is unbelievable. She thinks it is a shame that the kids don't get the education they need here that they have been asking for 5 years for. The district change was so that State did not come in here. With all of the reconfiguration the State left us alone. She went to the Board of Education and asked that question and they told her no, but she knows that is

what it is. This time, for another reconfiguration, there is something going on that they don't want the State or other people to know and that's why they are doing this. She has no problem with an 8<sup>th</sup> grader going to the High School, her kid is in there from 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade and had no issues. That's not why the Board of Education is doing this; she thinks they need to find out where this money is going to go. She knows the Town has no control over where the money is being spent but somehow there has to be a way to see where it is going to go before the kids lose out more.

- Maribel Acosta- 119-D Hemingway Ave, East Haven, CT- Ms. Acosta says she has three students, one in Junior High who has been shifted around to three different schools, her middle child who is now in Momauguin has been to two schools and her youngest is at D.C Moore which is a mess. The reconfiguration blew her mind, she lives across the street from Tuttle but her kids are being shifted all around which in her eyes is more of an expense for the Town because they are paying for three separate busses to pick up these students when they can just be walked across the street to school. She would like to know what happened to our rights from the Federal Law where our students get an adequate health education system. It seems like our future leaders are being jeopardized, nobody is taking them into consideration they are just thinking about their own budgets and agendas. She has a child with special needs, and the fact that he cannot have a para frightens her because she knows first-hand because she herself was a special education student and still is while in college. She didn't have the right resources or help she needed so she didn't graduate High School, she would hate to see her son go through what she went through and have to go back to school after having three children like she did and going back to school to get her diploma and now go to college thanks to the help of her family. This is the same child whose motivation to go to school is because he can play football, if his sports are cut next year when he enters 9<sup>th</sup> grade as a teenager, it is going to be worse. She knows for a fact her child will be one of those kids outside of Dunkin Donuts smoking and cutting school, because they don't want to be in school because they don't have the support and they feel like they are being neglected. She wants her kids to succeed, and if they don't budget for sports he will throw his hands in, he will have no motivation to work so hard and it will jeopardize his future. She is involved in all three schools and sees a whole different side of things. She doesn't want any child to suffer because the Superintendent and Board of Education can't support them fully. She says it is our duty as a parent, leader, City or Town to stay united and fight for our kids and their future because if we don't do it nobody else will. If the higher ups are not caring, what message are they sending to the future leaders of this Town?



Council comment:

- Chairman Anania says that all of the comments and concerns are well appreciated and understood. He does feel a lot of those issues and concerns need to be stressed at Board of Education meetings. This Board, all they can do, is allocate the funds. Once they allocate the funding, it is out of their jurisdiction. By State law they can't tell the Board of Education how to spend their money. The concerns they have, he believes a lot of them should be brought to the Board of Education's attention if they haven't been already. Just so this Board gets an idea, since they have to set the funding, for a rough idea with a show of hands are the parents happy with the way the funding is now? Do you want to see if we can get more than the \$750,000 the Mayor allocated or do you want to keep it the same?
- Various parents from the audience say that they want to see the money go to the children.
- Chairman Anania says he understands that but like he previously said, they can't control that it is a State law. He asked the Superintendent the other night what the bottom line would be if there was no money available that's when she said there would be closing of schools and consolidation and lay-offs. That is not the case if funding is available. That was if there was no funding what so ever, but there is some funding available so what we want to know is if that is enough, or if there is more we can and should get. Taxes play a large part of this also and have to be taken into consideration.
- Ms. Travers address the Chairman saying she knows he is saying their concerns should be directed to the Board of Ed which is absolutely right, but when they go to the meetings they are only allotted three minutes. Three minutes is not a long time to speak and not enough time to answer those questions. If they were to go to the Board and ask where the money is going, the Board will look at them and not respond. They won't get a call, email, etc. to explain why. This is why they come to the Council because they don't get answers.
- Superintendent Dr. Portia Bonner states that she would like to address a few of the concerns and remarks that were made and she hopes the parents would allow her to speak and have an open mind as she addresses the concerns. She would also like to clear up some misperceptions that were mentioned here today. As Superintendent of Schools it is her responsibility to draft a budget and bring it to the Board of Education and work with the Town to do what is fiscally responsible. The request that was made this year was a sustaining budget that would maintain the programs we currently have in place. There was a memo that she had drafted in the beginning of March that stated with their budget request, if they were to receive zero %, what the impact may look like, it was a

proposed what could, not what was, going to happen. Unfortunately with our use of social media, one memo stirred the pot. She wants to point out that the allegations that she makes threats to children she takes offence to that because that was not the case. It was a memo that pretty much said this is what could be if we do not receive the allocation. The request brought before the Council and to the Mayor was a 3.42% increase which is roughly \$1.6 million increase which would sustain all of the salaries currently within the Board of Education and most of those salaries are allocated to teachers as well as our lower level non-certified staff. The comment that was made today that we are top heavy with administration, she would like to provide the list. She explains that we have 9 schools so that's 9 principals and 2 of our schools have assistant principals (the Middle School and the High School) and we also have a Dean of Students. They have instructional leaders who teach classes but also assist as far as content areas and updating curriculums in the Middle School and High School. Talking about the central office, she wants to again clear up misperceptions because they actually eliminated and merged positions with the central office staff. For instance, the business office used to have 4 Clerks, a Personnel Specialist, a Finance Manager and prior to her coming in they did have a Business Manager on top of that and they also had a Buildings and Grounds Director. The Buildings and Grounds Director and the Finance manager positions were merged together creating what they call their Business Manager where they saved approximately \$50,000 which is the first level step for a teacher. They did hire a Human Resource person, right now the operational budget with the Board of Education is not paying for that position that position is coming from the Alliance Grant. The Human Resource person is to help with human capital so that they can hire the appropriate staff that will be able to better education for the children, bring rigor into the classroom which is a major concern, to have higher expectations so our students can do better/more and to make sure that if we were to compare ourselves to other Towns we can be competitive so that their curriculum looks similar to ours. In the Middle School they are bringing the three AP programs in, they will be starting with their math program next year which is something they are going to do with additional funding or not. They pulled something out that was not working and are hoping to put something in that will. She wanted to clear up those areas of the budget and what was said to the staff as to what may happen if something occurred in terms of the percent increase. She wants to share some information about the consolidation and the purpose of the project, why it was funded and what is being done. There were concerns about the children moving and the lack of assurance that they will be in one school. With the current configuration that was done approximately 5 years ago, the children move about 4 times; they start with K-2, then 3-5, then 6-8 and then finally the High School. That is a lot of movement and most districts do not have that kind of

configuration or that movement. But that was created because our school buildings are small and can only accommodate a certain amount of enrollment for each building. Our buildings are 50+ years old with the exception of the High School which is now entering 18 years so that one is growing old as well. With this consolidation plan, why it is different than the one done five years ago is the fact that this plan will not only take a look at lessening the movement of the children in our district, but also renovate those buildings to accommodate 21<sup>st</sup> century learning with learning centers so we can compete with neighboring districts, specifically New Haven which takes about 400 of our students currently. By consolidating those buildings, talking on the top heaviness, we would have fewer principals but then we would better service our students in terms of paraprofessionals and classroom sizes. That study is more than what was done 5 years ago, and that original study did actually suggest that 8<sup>th</sup> grade should go to the High School. That is a suggestion; it is not a done deal. On April 21<sup>st</sup>, they will have that presentation and the Board will have options to choose from in terms of a long term plan, it is not something that will happen overnight but it gives the full map of what they want to do and see in the district. The plan outlines a timeline as far as the movement, if we need swing school space, which we may not because a lot of the renovations can be done while students are still in the space. They are suggesting what buildings they should close and what buildings they should keep and renovate and/or repurpose based upon the age and viability of the building, some of them have solar panels so they need to keep that in mind. The purpose of the study is looking at consolidation, better use of resources, updating buildings and it also includes the concept of safety and security. She adds that when you begin to renovate those buildings, you can do those great/expensive updates in terms of the windows as well as the outer perimeter which should also be addressed. There was a mention of Pre-K programs, they have tried to really advertise, they have preschool programs in the district and the original ones were through the school readiness program. They have just been awarded a grant and they will be opening two full time preschool classrooms at Momauguin Elementary School this year, they are already taking applications in and populating the classrooms. We have it and are trying to grow it to keep students in district. She would like to clear up a misperception about the alliance grant; it is a grant that is actually tacked onto ECS. Basically, when the Council gives an allocation to the Board, that grant is actually included in that allocation, it is not separate from that allocation. That grant is also air marked for very specific things that they have to do in district; it can't be randomly used or put in the operational budget. The question was that with the alliance grant, can you carry over; well it is a grant and most grants have that provision where you can carry over year to year. They set aside some funding from positions that they knew they didn't fill so they carried over the

money into next year when it will be utilized, they can do that but it must be spent down by the final year. It is a five year grant, not a 2 year grant, and it will be ending in the next year or so. The next concern she wanted to address was the security issue and how the money was used. There are a lot of misperceptions that they are not doing anything as far as security and they really have been working on it and trying to roll out a very detailed plan. A lot of people have their own perceptions as to what is best and what is not. First, she wants to clear up that someone used the term high tech time clock, which is incorrect. There was an entry system that was put at the High School, which there will soon be entry systems at the Middle School and Academy. There are four access points at the High School, yes it is a biometric system where you use a fingerprint so that eliminates keys so nobody can lose a key for anyone to then enter the building, and it also eliminates them punching in codes so you can't give out your code. When it comes to the entry system, it is not a time clock it, please keep that in mind, it only gives the information of who is in the building. It is a high tech system which most districts have adopted, Cheshire has had it for years in all of their buildings, and we are just catching up with that. They are also selecting what buildings to put them in based on the knowing that they will be kept. They also just finished the bid for a camera system to be put in, they are specific to fit a huge monitoring system which will be monitored at the High School and eventually connected to the Dispatch Center. They are also addressing the door issues; they have replaced some and are continuing with it. There are things they need to address, there are older buildings that need to be modernized and that is part of the renovation consolidation plan. Going back to the memo to the staff in terms of what could be, there was a laundry list of things they were looking at if they weren't given the 3.42% increase. Someone mentioned the word sports and she is not trying to eliminate sports. Freshman sports are an extra piece; we already have JV and Varsity; freshman can play with the JV team and our JV plays with our Varsity because we actually don't have enough members. With that, it gives them more opportunity to play. She hopes she has addressed some of the areas of concern, and the parents do have the right to speak at the Board of Education meetings and yes they do have a 3 minute protocol and the Board has often been flexible. In terms of addressing those things, sometimes they are addressed and sometimes they are not. She says some of the information they are receiving is erroneous they need to be sure they have all of the facts when making a decision for their child.

- Councilman Fred Parlato says Kenny and himself are the senior members of the Council; he is on his 20<sup>th</sup> year and Kenny is on his 18<sup>th</sup> so they have heard this many times over. He has lived in this town for 75 years, 7 of his children went to school here; 5 of them graduated from the High School, 2 went to private schools. He is aware of the fact that East Haven is changing geographically and

socially. Neighborhood schools, he loves them, but we are 13 miles long and .5 wide so it doesn't make any sense. We spend more money on bussing because that is geographically where we are at a disadvantage. We are asking our educators not only to educate our children we are asking them to make them safe, feed them, etc. which is many more things than we asked them for years ago. We have to change the physical location of the schools, it has to happen. We cannot afford to maintain the buildings we currently have, 50 years old is too old for a building especially an educational building that requires many more things than it ever did before. He has the utmost optimism for our students they are a lot smarter at the age they are now, they are more aware of the world they are living in through the social media and internet. They are more tolerant of people with special needs, he had a child with a special need she is 52 and doing great. Every child that goes to school reaches the group they are best suited for, so don't sell our students short. We have to give them what we can afford and right now with the reconfiguration of the schools, 55% of the budget is for salaries, 3.7% is for the maintenance of the buildings. Someone complained about a broken window in the school, the principal is in charge of that school, if there is a broken window that is the person you have to go see because it is a safety issue. When we sign off on the Board of Education budget, we are making the best decision we can considering the tax payers of East Haven have to pay it. We are an aging population, we see a reduction in State aid, the State/Country is in financial problems, and we are the last. It's not that nobody wants to do a good job; we are working with what we can. He says you are not going to agree with everyone, you have to use common sense, put emotions aside and work with the teachers, educators, sponsors, etc. and come together and realize this is what you have this is what needs to be done, let's work together. Politically, he has been on the Council 20 years, and every decision he has made has been for the residents of East Haven and the majority of the people have done the same; we are going to do what is best.

- Councilman Nicholas Palladino says he is a former Police Officer and has also done school security, we are not New Haven, let's face it. Our Board of Education budget is more than our Town budget and that's the way it is. He has some concerns with the security of our schools; little things like the teachers who have to walk outside the classroom to lock the doors, that is where the money should have went. Our lockdown drills, we don't really have a system and not all of the schools have the same system, his wife is a teacher and he has friends who work in the other schools. A poster could be on the wall that explains the procedure and it should be practiced. We need to do the basic things first; the Cadillac they got for the outside of the door is great, but before we get the Cadillac we need the Volkswagen inside. We need to be able to close the door without going outside because if a teacher does get locked out of the room

without their key; that is a problem. The security personnel has to be a little better than what some of them are, he has never met one who wasn't nice, however a person with no law enforcement or corrections experience is now asked to be a school security officer with no training, that is a very big problem. He knows there are a lot of retired people out there who will work part time jobs to secure the building. We have to think about school security a little more, he knows bullet proof glass is expensive and we don't have that kind of money. We need better security personnel and we need to have someone in the system that is in charge of the security in the entire system so that everyone is on the same page, something like that might cure these problems.

- Councilman Joseph Santino says he spoke with Councilman Sand; they are the public safety commission for the Town of East Haven, subcommittee for the Council. They are going to walk through the Schools to cover some of the things that were talked about; they have never done it before. As the Council they have the authority and will check some of the complaints and take care of it.
- Councilman Anthony Mansi asks about the alliance grant and how big it is.
- Dr. Bonner explains that there are different allocations for all of the years. The allocation was: \$500,000 in the first year, \$900,000 in the second year, \$1.2 million in the third year and \$1.2 million in the fourth year. We can't give a number for the last year because every year is different.
- Councilman Mansi says so this year you have to spend the \$1.2 million.
- Dr. Bonner says correct or they can also carry over some dollars for next year.
- Councilman Mansi asks what it is air marked for.
- Dr. Bonner says it is for improvements in the district such as things that fall under human capital which means doing something with our human resource, literacy which funds materials and coaches and then for technology as well as our management system for our evaluation of teachers. There is a list of different things and special categories for each one and all of that has to be approved by the State. The State does come in meet with us and gives us the specifics they want us to do.
- Councilman Mansi asks about salaries, are they not reflected in there at all?
- Dr. Bonner says the current budget salaries are all pertaining to the operational budget.
- Councilman Mansi says ok, so you have a budget but this is additional money that is going to pay for the line items.
- Dr. Bonner says everyone thinks that it is extra money, but it is not. It is actually part of the allocation they are going to be giving them. It is not money on top of it. If the Town gives them \$45,000,000, part of that will be the alliance calculation, it is a part of the allocation, it comes from the Town. It is similar to the Adult Ed grant that comes through the Town and is forwarded back to the Board.

- Councilman Mansi says so this is included in money they are already getting, Dr. Bonner says exactly, it is not money on top.
- Chairman Anania asks Finance Director Paul Rizza for a clarification on this.
- Mr. Rizza explains that what has happened in the past for the first two years, the alliance grant was unidentified in the ECS total so the Town rolled the whole amount which currently is \$20,000,000. The reality of that situation is, of the \$20,000,000, \$1.2 does not come to the Town; that is the alliance money. The Board submits a grant proposal which is accepted by the State. As they spend that alliance money it goes directly to the Board of Education, not through the Town as our regular ECS does. It is technically included in the \$45,000,000 current year budget, but next year there is an increase because we left the budget flat as it currently is and then added \$750,000 to that number for the upcoming 2015/2016. But on the revenue side of the budget there is only \$18,800,000 in the ECS line. So yes, it is in there on the appropriation side, but not on the revenue.
- The audience was unable to hear, so Paul explains again. The current year we are in has a budget of \$46.2 million total. In the overall budget, the Town budget, we have a number of \$20,000,000 listed under ECS. Reality is, we will not get \$20,000,000 from the state, we will get \$18.8 million; what they are subtracting out is the \$1.2 million that, by plan, gets reimbursed directly to the Board of Education. What's happening in the 2015/2016 budget that we are talking about tonight is that we started with the same \$46,000,000 and we added \$750,000 to it so that alliance money will not reduce out, even though we never got it this year, so that number comes up to roughly \$47,000,000 or so. Here is where the change comes in; on the revenue side of the budget which is both the Town and the Board, the ECS money, \$20,000,000 again, we put \$18.8 million because we would be overestimating revenue. It is in on the appropriation/expense side but we take care of the revenue as a separate item because education doesn't worry about where the money comes from, just where it goes.
- Councilman Mani says we don't know exactly where it is going, but it does affect salaries and go towards that. With an increase in wages/benefits for the upcoming contracts, is that what this is going to be used for.
- Dr. Bonner says yes, it is. That is exactly why she has asked the Council for the 3.24% because it is mainly for the salary/payroll increase and it also covers the increase in utilities. That's why she calls this a sustaining budget because it carries us over to the next year while we maintain what is in existence now.
- Councilman Henry Butler III says with the \$750,000 and the extra coming from the Alliance grant, does that put us at the \$47,900,000?
- Mr. Rizza says as a total we are talking about \$47,100,000. The request was for almost \$48,000,000.

- Vice Chairman Robert Parente asks what the total number is in terms of grants received on a yearly basis?
- Mr. Rizza says he believes it is about \$4.4 million, but those grants are written specifically for a certain action to take place, whether it be for certain groups of students, levels of students, etc.
- Mr. Parente says so there is no money in the Board of Education budget that comes out of the \$47,000,000 for anything associated with the \$4.4 million?
- Mr. Rizza says no there is no integration. The general fund money, which is the \$47,000,000, is used for the general operation of all of our school buildings and related expenses. The grants are very specific purpose only. Through the audit process every year, those grants are audited and if some how something is spent inappropriately or not to do with that specific grant, it will be pointed out when the report is filed with the State. The State would come back and ask the Town to reimburse.
- Mr. Parente says he sat on the Board of Education for 14 years in East Haven and it can be very confusing to try and dissect and understand the grants and where the money gets funded. Listening to all of the parents tonight, he hears some saying do more with less while other parents say they need more money. He heard several different messages, some people are saying you have X amount of dollars, they are too top heavy and want the money to trickle down to the others. He asks what exactly are they looking for on a parent level? They said flat budget at some points, increase, do more with less; it is really all over the board.
- Ms. Pompano says her own personal opinion is that she is looking at the numbers and thinking they are asking for the increase and the Council is addressing it. Of the money being discussed as far as increase in wages and benefits, is that increase at the top level or is it trickling down? If the para's are not feeling the love they are not going to give the students the attention they need because the people on top are getting the increase while they work hard in the classroom to help the students. What's fair is fair; if you are going to give an increase it should be equal across the board not just an increase at the top.
- Chairman Anania says unfortunately the budget they approve just allocates the money; they can't specify where it goes. That's why he thinks Councilman Parente was trying to get an idea as to whether the parents want to see them give more than the \$750,000 in the budget for the Board, less, or keep it at that?
- Ms. Pompano says if there is money left over, every dollar should be sent on the students in the schools, her children for the first few months didn't even have books.
- Dr. Bonner says when she shared that the increase as for salaries, she explains that the teachers are going to receive a 3.25% increase with a step increase, which is the largest increase out of all of the unions. Administrators will only be



receiving a 1.25% increase in salary which is contractual they do contracts every 3-5 years so they have to adhere to them. Middle management-paraprofessionals they are in the process of negotiation with they don't know the increases but there is something put in the budget expecting there to be some increase there. Nurses just finished their contract and it will be coming before the Board and there are wage increases there. Secretaries have not finished their contract but there will be wage increases there. They just finished custodians along with security guards who joined in with them, they are just waiting for ratification and there will be wage increases there. The salary increase is so important to them because when it comes to custodians and secretaries who are not at the top level, they have not negotiated their contract for a couple years so they may need to address the years where they did not receive the increases. She knows everyone is focused on the administrators and saying they are getting the biggest piece of the pie but they really do look to the teachers to make sure they continue on with their contractual obligations as well as the non-certified staff. Again, it is a matter of looking and it is in their budget packet, once they sign off on all of the contracts they will be posted for the public to see the wage increases for each of them.

- Ms. Piscitelli says there is no denying that they need more money, the biggest gripe is that the Council can't help with that once they get the money. There is no denying they need money, the ipads in the schools are broken down, and there are no replacement para's or math and literacy aides. Financially they are destitute but there needs to be a way to voice their rights at the Board of Education meetings and be given more than three minutes because it takes longer than that and they need reactions. They need funding and need to be able to go to the Board of Ed and get answers as to how it is going to be spent.
- Chairman Anania says he understands and agrees, he has been to the Board with his three children in the school system and it is hard in three minutes but if you don't get satisfaction at the meeting, email the Chairman or one of the members, call them, etc. Ask them to look into it; they aren't going to deny you.
- Louis Pacelli, Board of Education member addresses the parent who said that the Board doesn't answer emails or calls. He has personally answered every email and complaint he has received including hers. He has answered every email and request given to him.
- Councilman Santino asks about the line item under buildings and grounds, it has been the same amount for the past 20 years. The Town side took over the grass cutting, the maintenance of the fields; last year we had to bond for two lawn mowers. Where does that money go? He found out today that Public Works was doing work on the schools.
- Dr. Bonner states that they order the supplies and do have a good relationship with Public Works. Everyone expects the numbers to decrease, but we have

50+year-old buildings that still have to be maintained. There should have been an increase there because they are still switching out vehicles and doing projects within the buildings themselves that require day-to-day maintenance. They have custodians that have to be paid for. Then there are in-kind donations they provide to the Town as far as using the facilities where the Board provides the custodial care. There is a lot done in that line item you see in terms of buildings and grounds. It's not going to decrease, if anything it should be increasing but they are holding it steady.

- Councilman Santino says they took out the Director's position but the \$85,000 salary is still a line item in there for it.
- Lisa Geraci-Anastasio speaks as Chair of buildings and grounds saying that she can't speak in regards to the salary line item but can say they have invoices that fly in on a regular basis.
- Dr. Bonner explains that this budget was also done prior to the merging of those two positions.
- Councilman Santino says there is a lot of slush but Dr. Bonner says there really is not much slush at all.
- Councilman Santino asks if the Board of Ed does the transfers for the buildings/grounds account. Mr. Rizza says yes.
- Councilman Santino asks how much money is transferred out to be used somewhere else.
- Mr. Rizza says usually money goes into that account prior to the end of the year.
- Councilwoman Beverly Gravino asks about the solar panels and if they are maintained inside, outside or not at all.
- Mr. Rizza says they are maintained inside, they continue to check that they are operational, and as of now they are all working.
- Councilman Santino asks if we get any revenue out of them in the summer months.
- Mr. Rizza says it offsets expenses. When they were first proposed here and the State came in with money, the numbers that were used to project what we would be saving were numbers that didn't last very long. The rate of electricity that was bid on in 2010 was a much higher number and the UI distribution charges have gone up about 3X's since 2010. That savings never appeared because all of the rates went up. You are not getting a kick back as quick as we thought.
- Councilman Santino asks if we have a boys swim team.
- Dr. Bonner says she can't tell them that, because last she heard there were 6 people interested in the swim team. They are looking at co-ops and merging a lot of the teams. There is consideration of doing that with our marching band. In terms of the interest, things are starting to fall off.

- Councilman Santino says they were told there was no boys swim team yet someone is getting paid for coaching a boy's swim team and there is already a girl's team coach being paid.
- Dr. Bonner says the position is not filled, so thank you for helping us find the dollars. Those positions are kept there because they have been there.
- Councilwoman Gravino asks if the insurance co-pays increased which Dr. Bonner says they did. As they are bargaining, they are trying to do that with all of their contracts.
- Councilman Mansi thanks Councilman Santino since he was Captain of the 1971 swim team, that year they petitioned to get the pool and they got it the year after he graduated.
- Vice Chairman Parente says every year that he has been on the Council it has been the same horse and pony show; we listen and then complain during the course of the year that because of the word autonomy we have no control over where the funds go and we get upset. We say we are going to make changes at budget time. Last time there were 2 or 3 Council members who said they are going to give them a year to do something, and here we are a year later he wants to know if these Council members are satisfied. Because they said they were going to lower the funding if not satisfied. They can't even get a report on a monthly or quarterly basis to see if what we approved as the governing body of the Town is being followed through with. By State statute we just don't have that control, but we have requested that many times.
- Mr. Rizza says he will take blame on that, he gets a report every month on the Board of Education, which is very similar to what he gets on the Town side. He was not aware the Council was interested in it; he will begin forwarding it to the Council every month.
- Mr. Parente says Councilman Parlato was one of the people who gave the Board a year to prove themselves; he asks if the Council members are satisfied with what has been done in the past year. We have to make a decision tonight; we hear the parents and their concerns.
- Councilman Ken McKay says a lot of things happened and a lot of changes were made five years ago when this administration was not in office, it was not under their watch. The Town Council gets blamed for things they cannot control. Once they allocate the money, it's out of their hands. People mentioned that they are restricted to three minutes of speaking, but the Council never gave anyone a time limit tonight. The issues they have are with the Board, not the Town Council. The Council does what they can do but they cannot control the issues with the Board of Ed. that has to be handled by the Chairman. They do their best to try and give enough money. He has grandchildren in the school now, his grandson has been moved from Deer Run to Ferrara now who knows where he will go since that is one of the targeted schools. He has three children who graduated

out of the system, one went to Providence College, one went to Eastern and one went to UConn. Those are good schools and they got a great education here, he spent the time with his children, he started reading with his grandchildren when they were a year old. He says we have to spend time with our children; it's a difficult thing now with two working parents. There are children who need help, which is why there are aides in the classrooms. He refers to Councilman Parente's question, do the parent's want to flat line the budget, keep the \$750,000? He thinks that is a hefty increase that the Mayor has allotted the Board of Ed this year. Before they were back in office, he didn't see any increases for all of those years because he was still on the Council.

- Vice Chairman Parente says that \$750,000 is now \$850,000 because they just found \$100,000 for line items that are no longer in effect.
- Councilman Parlato says it is very seldom they get this much of a crowd, he asks where they will all be for the next meeting. They are only talking about half of the budget, what about the other half? Nobody shows up. They are worried about the Board of Education, but we have an \$89,000,000 budget. How many will be here next meeting? Everyone should be concerned about the entire budget, the entire Town because they go together. If we are frugal on the Town side, we should be frugal on the Board of Ed side. Our grand list generates just so much revenue, and they are the people to tell them where to spend that money, but if they only show up for half of the meetings, the Council has to wing it and do what they think is best. In 20 years, he has not gotten a dozen calls personally to ask him to do something on the Council and it is a shame.
- Councilman Palladino says the Chairman asked a very good question, if they are happy because he was one of the people who said we have a year let's see what happens. In 4 minutes or less they found \$100,000 excess in their budget. He was also on the Board of Education for a term and his second year in, he finished the year with an extra \$100,000 they hadn't spent because there is money in there but you can spend the rest of your life looking over that budget and you will never figure it out. It's a lot of money and he couldn't figure out where the money was going. Now we have another accountant working up there, between the two of them they should be able to account for every penny in this current budget. They should be able to figure out what they don't need, what is wrong. He doesn't think they need as much money as they are asking for. If they need the \$750,000 to run this system he is all in favor of that. However, if you can find \$100,000 sitting in here already he has a problem with that.
- Vice Chairman Parente says they need accountability.
- Mr. Rizza says they are currently in the process now over the last month of reviewing exact who and exactly how much each individual makes and where they fit into this book. What Councilman Santino found were two open positions, his guess would be that money in reality has been transferred out into short fall

accounts for things such as Special Education which you can't budget how many kids you will get or how much it will cost in tuition and transportation. So the comments for the most part were valid but he is telling them what is being done currently. When our Finance person comes on board in May, they have talked and he is ready to hit the ground running. Two important things he will be doing is making sure that the current budget funds are being spent correctly/appropriately and in budget, as well as taking whatever funds the Council appropriates to the Board of Education and create a list of people who are working for them with the correct wages and benefits to ensure an accurate number appears. The book they have was a first or second cut submission, the Board at the time when they passed it around February 1<sup>st</sup> said once they get the appropriation from the Council next Thursday, they will take the starting point document and work into the number they have coming. The new Finance person will have the job of reviewing what is being put in and put the best numbers into that budget.

- Vice Chairman Parente asks if they over fund do they get that money back.
- Mr. Rizza says it depends how they vote if they want to make that caveat to it but he doesn't think it is realistic or legal. Once you give the money you cant take it back.
- Town Attorney Joseph Zullo says there is also the caveat that you can't give conditional money to the Board of Education, it has to be a concrete number.
- Councilman Santino asks what the cost is to the Town for the Board of Education meetings where they put out coffee and food for free.
- Lisa Geraci-Anastasio says they are the only Board that does not get a stipend.
- Councilwoman Gravino says it looks rude and in poor taste to see people eating and drinking while there is a meeting going on. She asks about page B5 of the actual budget for the special education program budget requests. She says they appear to be pretty high. Are they losing kids? Are programs cheaper?
- Mr. Rizza says those are estimated, in the current year we have accurate numbers as to how many and how much. It is always a mystery.
- Ms. Pompano addresses Councilman Parlato and says she does care about the entire Town not just the educational portion of it. Her concern is they come to the Council because they were told to do so since they are going to be their voice to the Board of Education and they decide if the Board is going to get the money or not. But it sounds like they write out the check and then that's it. Who controls how the Board of Education spends the money? If they don't have the accountability how do they know do they know how it is going to be spent? She doesn't think they need more than the \$750,000. If anything they should have revamped the old High School that they are spending money on.
- Chairman Anania says they don't have the control, the Board of Education does.

- Vice chairman Parente says as far as the Town side of the budget if someone had a shortfall in a particular Department they come to the Board of Finance and the Town Council for a transfer. If there were a shortfall in the Board of Education, would they ever come back to the Town side for that funding?
- Mr. Rizza says could they, yes.
- Mr. Parente says they have no control over the Board of Education so he was asking if they gave them "X" amount of dollars and tell them to do more with less but if they cant do that by next May they would have to prove to the Council that they are short and ask for additional monies.
- Mrs. Depalma says isn't it illegal to give them less money than you gave them before.
- Mr. Parente says he never said that, he didn't say anything about giving them less.
- Chairman Anania says in other words, if it is flat funded as to giving them what they had last year and then they need more, they would come to the Council in a few months and ask for more. But where would the Council get the money, the mill rate is set already.
- Mr. Rizza says that is why you maintain a 5% fund balance, the fund balance would be hit and there would have to be a modified budget voted on by the Council and then the money would be moved. But you would have to know exactly how much you are moving.
- Chairman Anania says so that would be taken from the fund balance but what if the Town needs the money, the fund balance won't be there because it was given to the Board of Education.
- Mr. Rizza says you would end up with a deficit in that fiscal year or a revenue shortfall.
- Councilman Butler III asks if the Council doesn't give the Board of Education enough money, are they under any obligation to come back to the Council and request the money? Or can they just make the hard cuts that they talked about on their own.
- Mr. Rizza says that is a Board of Education decision.
- Mr. Butler III says so then they may not come back to the Council and may just make the cuts.
- Mr. Rizza says the Council would know probably no longer than 9 months into the year, the accounts would all be coming up short.
- Chairman Anania asks if the bond rating would be affected at all if the Board of Education overspent the money.
- Mr. Rizza says he can't comment on that, it would be hypothetical. The State would probably call us in, which is not a good thing.

- Councilman Palladino says the Mayor proposed a mill rate that is  $\frac{1}{2}$  mill less than what we are currently charging, what is the actual dollar amount for the Town.
- Mr. Rizza says the  $\frac{1}{2}$  mill is worth \$930,000 in revenue.
- Mr. Palladino says if they maintain the same rate they have now and they then have that \$930,000, if they gave the Board a little less they would have that money in reserve and the excess would go in the funds if they needed it.
- Mr. Rizza says they would be overtaxing. You have to identify the money, you can't just stash it away in a box somewhere. There has to be an appropriation that is labeled with numbers on the Town side.
- Mr. Palladino explains that he was saying if we gave them \$500,000 extra increase from last year instead of \$750,000. As our taxes come in, we would be building up our fund, which we try to do anyway and he believes we have an Ordinance that says a certain % has to go to us.
- Mr. Rizza says the first thing is we do not have an Ordinance on that. Second, he is mixing up fund balance with an ongoing fiscal year operation. Fund balance comes about once a year when the audit is issued and say they started with "X" dollars and added "Y" dollars and now the new fund balance for the end of that fiscal year is "Z". It has nothing to do with the operational budget.
- Mr. Palladino says so the Council did not pass an Ordinance?
- Mr. Rizza says that is correct, it was talked about but it is nowhere in any official records. Town Clerk Stacy Gravino says it is not as well.
- Attorney Zullo says after significant research between himself, the Finance Director and the Town Clerk they were unable to find an Ordinance that was passed. It was presented to the bonding company and there may have been a draft Ordinance presented to the rating agencies but nothing was ever brought to the Council or noticed in the paper or passed by the Council.
- Mrs. Depalma says they have a system of Government; they have a Board of Education who never receives a stipend. They work very hard and diligently and we should recognize the ones that came because they represent their work on the Board. She hears the Council saying what if they give less but they may need more so then they can come back. She understands where they are coming from but she thinks this is a unified Board of people there supporting the Superintendent, when she was on the Board of Education they went over every single item and it is hard and confusing but you just don't know. Of course they need the money. She's looking for their trust in the Board of Education for the people that worked hard and have answered many questions. Dr. Bonner has worked hard in putting forth that budget but yes their needs to be better communication between the Board and public. Isn't this the budget process that you appropriate the money you ask all the questions but it seems like the Council is saying maybe they should give the money maybe not. She doesn't know what

the Council's process was; do they go over this with every Department that walks in?

- Many Council members say yes they do go over it with all the Departments.
- Vice Chairman Parente says yes, if they can't live within their budget they come back and give specific reasons for it.
- Mrs. Depalma says is that what they do for everyone, put away money and then if they need it they have to come back for it because that is what it sounds like.
- Chairman Anania says no, but they do allocate a certain amount to the fund balance each year, which is what is used to take money out. As to the Board of Education, they can't give less than they gave the year before.
- Mrs. Depalma asks what was given last year?
- Mr. Rizza says \$46,210,000, which was an increase from the previous year. Dr. Bonner says last year was a 2.64% increase and the previous year was a .92% increase.
- Maryann Pellegrino, Board of Education member says many of the parents are union people or families and understand the bargaining portion; they have contractual obligations. The teachers, secretaries, nurses, para's etc. all get their contracts bargained and they have to be paid; that is the law. Also, as a teacher, East Haven pays less than surrounding Towns; their contracts are lower. Special Education is the law of the State and it cannot be anticipated, students have language problems, etc. and we must pay and staff for them. Those are budget items that are going to be there. If they line item them, they will not have enough money. Everything went up and everything is going to go up. Parents are asking them not to hurt the children, not to cut the arts or sports, etc. well those have to go first because there are bills they have to pay.

### **Item #3**

Adjournment of Public Hearing #1.

Councilman Mckay makes a motion.

Councilman Palladino seconds the motion.

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

### **Item #4**

Roll Call for Hearing Committee - 11 present – 4 absent (Parlato, Badamo, Spaduzzi and Riolino).



**Item #5**

Hearing Committee report to the full Town Council to recommend action on Public Hearing #1.

Councilman Parente makes a motion.

Councilman Santino seconds the motion.

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

**Item #6**

Adjournment of Hearing Committee.

Councilman Santino makes a motion.

Councilman Palladino seconds the motion.

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

Meeting is adjourned at 9:15PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danelle Feeley, Clerk, East Haven Legislative Town Council