

**EAST HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 21, 2014**

In accordance with Chapter III, Section 6 of the East Haven Town Charter, the East Haven Legislative Town Council held a Public Hearing meeting on Monday, April 21, 2014, at 7:00PM at the East Haven Senior Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, CT.

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

Item #1

Roll Call for Public Hearing #1 - 14 present – 1 absent (Palladino).

Councilman Fred Parlato arrived at 7:15PM.

A quorum is present.

Item #2

To conduct Public Hearing #1 to discuss the 2014-2015 Budget Ordinance – Town Side

Councilman Joseph Santino makes a motion.

Councilman Mckay seconds the motion.

Chairman Anania explains that public comment will be limited to about 3 minutes per person. The Council will not be deciding anything or answering questions. The public is welcome to make any comments for the Council to consider. All comments will come through the Chair.

Public comment:

- Dinah Virgulto- 38 Cortina Road, East Haven, CT- Ms. Virgulto states that she has been a resident of East Haven for 45 years. She is there to speak about the Hagaman Memorial Library. She was a librarian specialist in the elementary schools for 25 years and she has served on the Board of Trustees at the library in the past and is a devoted user of the library. She feels that the best yard stick for any Town is its library; it serves all of its citizens from newborn to the elderly. It provides programs, activities and resources. There are pre-literacy programs for newborns, story time, teen advisory board, job search preparation workshops, world war II discussion groups, financial help for seniors, friends of the library, tax preparation assistance, special needs planning workshops, American citizenship classes for immigrants, ask a lawyer and literacy tutors. She feels the library is a cultural and artistic oasis in our community. The library walls are often decorated with the art of local artists. They hold film nights and writing workshops. Some

people overlook the library due to the influx of computer technology and internet. The library itself provides access to computers; e-books can be downloaded for free. Many residents don't have access to computers or e-books because of financial reasons. She volunteers at read to grow which provides free books and literacy packets to newborns; it is devoted to early literacy. She states that the school system has deemphasized and underfunded the elementary school libraries, so the students go to this Library when they need more resources. If the Council wishes to serve the residents of this Town, they must provide generously for the Library.

- Barbara Esposito-41 Gordon Street, East Haven, CT- Ms. Esposito states that she has been a resident of East Haven for over 70 years. At the present time she is a volunteer and treasurer at the Historical Society, she is a past president of Friends of the Hagaman Memorial Library. The library and our town's history are life-long partners in the East Haven Community. Citizens must recognize the important role the library has in reserving and presenting free historical programs to the community. They have begun a local history night which has been well attended and well received by the community. The first set in the series of in depth programs was about the Quinnipiac Indians in the area which had archeologist speakers such as Dan Rankin and Gary Knowles as well as an author who wrote a story about the myth surrounding Sleeping Giant. The second in the series was presented by James Campbell of the East Haven Historical Society in conjunction with the Library; it was about Main Street before the reconstruction took place. The most recent program was about Issac Hagaman's special coin collection with speaker Kenny Cox and coin experts Nathan Miller and Dan Hemperly. They discussed ancient coins in the Hagaman collection and the important historical value. Without the cooperation and resources of the Library along with members of the Historical Society and local history committee, the opportunities to enjoy and experience our past history would be lost. Two future programs will include the streets of East Haven, and a presentation about the East Haven Green and the planting of the oak tree donated by Teddy Roosevelt in 1903. She states that we must appreciate the importance of the Hagaman Memorial Library to our community as well as the positive benefits received such as education and enjoyment available to everyone. The Library is a seat of higher learning and one of the most beloved institutions in East Haven and we must support it.
- Arlene Goldstein- 12 Morgan Terrace, East Haven, CT- Ms. Goldstein states that she began volunteering at the Library when she lost her husband. It completely turned her life around, it is now a home away from home. There is always an activity going on there, the people are down to earth, the librarians can't help you enough, they are wonderful people. She is lucky to be hostess for the history program Barbara talked about. The children's librarian is terrific, there are

programs all the time and the librarian is very innovative. There are bigger and richer libraries, but she doesn't think there is a better library than we have in this Town.

- Linda Esposito- 5 Mansfield Grove Rd #153, East Haven, CT- Ms. Esposito states that she is a frequent user of the library and she is very impressed by all of the programs she has witnessed for the young kids to the teen groups, there are great responses from the parents and the children. There are great programs for seniors. The programs have been presented with great skill and she is impressed with the committed staff. She asks for the Council's consideration so that they can maintain the programs and help to expand them.
- Kevin Mckernon- 109 Foxon Road, East Haven, CT- Mr. Mckernon states that he is the co-facilitator of the East Haven Hagaman Memorial Library's WWII Veterans discussion group that has been in existence since 2007. There is no other veterans group like this in the area. He became a part of it by going to speak about his father's ship. They bring in quality speakers, conduct veterans interviews and provide ETV with videos of the interviews. They also send the videos to the Library of Congress Veterans History project. They present WWII student interaction at the Annual Veterans Awareness Day where some of the veteran members answer questions from local students. They put out a monthly newsletter for members and anyone in the community who is interested. They provide a yearly Christmas party for the group with entertainment. He states that they interviewed Mayor Maturo's father who is a WWII veteran and provided him with an audio tape of it. The interviews were presented in the past on a large screen on the beach. The veterans engage in lively discussions following each of the programs with speakers. Their members get a great deal of satisfaction to hear speakers; they also have people from the VA Hospital to discuss veteran's benefits. They meet the last Wednesday of each month at 2pm in the Hagaman Library Community Room. He invites anyone who is interested to join them and become a part of their discussions.
- Dan McCann- 137 Mansfield Grove Road, East Haven, CT- Mr. McCann thanks the individuals who came in to speak on behalf of the Library, he believes in what they do for the community. He states that anything the Council does to help out the library will be a great asset to the Town. He wants to speak about the amount of spending being done in this Town. When he was on the Town Council back in 2000, the budget was about \$65,000,000 and now it is close to \$90,000,000. He knows costs go up, healthcare goes up and everything goes up. He hopes the Council will look at the spending and the future of the Town. There is going to be a big bill to pay for all of the things that happened with the Police Department. The problem he sees is that there will be fewer and fewer people who will be able to pay the tax increases; we are going up 2 mills. At one time the mill rate was up to 37 mills then the Council dropped down to 27 or 29

which was a great accomplishment. But the dollars are going to surpass what people can afford. We need to start looking at spending and deciding if certain things need to be done or not, because people can't afford it. Another thing he doesn't appreciate as a taxpayer is they always seem to do tax increases in off election years. Because the Mayor and the Town Council aren't up for election, taxes are going up. Next year there will be a flat budget and nothing gets raised. He says it needs to stop, we have to be honest, the increases need to be spread out and be done equally and fairly.

- Ray Marsico- 30 Batt Lane, East Haven, CT- Mr. Marsico states that he is there representing East Haven Youth Hockey. He was before the Council back in October regarding the stipend and was told to attend the hearings; they are looking for an increase in the stipend to justify their means. They are probably one of the only youth organizations who pay for use of the facility. Last year they paid \$135,000 to the town for usage of the ice. The \$6,000 they are looking for is for programs they are looking to start for the younger kids. It would include getting skates and equipment for them and they would return them; it would be like a rental program like other towns do. The other programs are private entities, so they are charging more for their ice. East Haven is a non-profit, they don't make any money. They charge out of town people \$500 more per player which offsets the cost of keeping it cheaper for in town kids. There are not a lot of in town kids anymore; there is probably 50/60 in town kids out of the 200. At the younger level, they are getting scared away because of the cost of skates and equipment; an average equipment cost for a 10 year old could be upwards of \$1,000 and it doesn't include a stick or helmet. They are looking to start a "learn to skate" and "learn to play hockey" program, and it is going to take some money. Currently they receive a \$9,000 stipend. The money would come back to the town anyway because they put it into the ice bill or the cost of the rink. The cost of the referees for them is \$22,000 a year or better. They are looking to see if there is a way to get extra money in their stipend this year to implement the new programs. They didn't go up on their costs this year; they actually went down on some rates from last year. For example, in one division they are charging \$1,500, their cost to supply that team is \$1,425 just to put 15 players on the team and they may have less. Last year they gave a breakdown of costs and expenditures. He states that Lou Crisci has a break down with him; they have an open book policy anyone can look at it. Nobody gets paid in their organization. They are one of the Town's largest tenants. They have to rent ice in New Haven to supplement the ice here. They are willing to pay the price to the Town, above and beyond what they use. Lou Crisci adds that they can't have the younger kids out playing late at night, so they can't use the 10:00/11:00pm slot available in East Haven, so they go to New Haven where they can get in at 6:00pm instead.

- Donna Richo- 67 Charnes Drive, East Haven, CT- Ms. Richo asks the Council to consider the fact that we can't spend money forever. Like it or not, they have to start cutting budgets. She hopes the Council looks into what she went over at the last meeting. She is also concerned about the fact that between the Town and Board of Education, we have almost \$1,000,000 in psychologists/counselors. It seems to be duplication and we need to consider not funding these items to the extent that they are being funded. Social services are nice, but we can't afford them, we need to start budgeting the same way it is done at home when something can't be afforded.
- Andrew Giannelli- 114 Laura Lane, East Haven, CT- Mr. Giannelli states that at one point, he was on the Council for 10 years. He is a veteran of World War II. He has lived in his house for 50 years; he is retired now at 85 years old and he can't go back to work as a meat cutter. It is time some of the veterans who spent their time in the war get to live tax free. He says that he is paying \$4,000 in taxes a year for his house which is worth about \$125,000. It is getting to the point where the towns, the State and the Government don't give any tax breaks. He asks why this town can't say that for anyone living in a house for 50 years, they only have to pay \$1,000 in taxes. He asks why the town is saving the \$300,000 overage; give the taxpayers a tax decrease instead.

Item #3

Adjournment of Public Hearing #1-

Councilman Santino makes a motion.

Councilman Vincent Spaduzzi seconds the motion.

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

Item #4

Roll Call for Hearing Committee - 14 present – 1 absent (Palladino).

Item #5

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

Vice Chairman Robert Parente makes a motion.

Councilman Mckay 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 Joseph Badamo seconds the motion.

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

Meeting is adjourned at 7:41PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danelle Feeley, Clerk, East Haven Legislative Town Council