



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND  
INCORPORATED 1786

# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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## BOARD OF FINANCE

JOHN P. RACHEK  
Chairman

PEGGY BUSSE  
DOUGLAS B. HARDING  
DAVID J. OLENDER  
BARRY C. PINTO  
MICHAEL D. VARNEY

## BUDGET HEARING FY 2019-20 APRIL 9, 2018 ELLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

### MINUTES

**Members Present:** John Rachek-Chairman, Peggy Busse, Douglas Harding, Barry Pinto, and Michael Varney

**Members Absent:** David Olender

**Others Present:** Felicia LaPlante-Acting Finance Officer, Lori Spielman-First Selectman, Dr. Nicol-Superintendent of Schools, Members of the Board of Selectman and Board of Education, Town Department Heads and School Officials, Emergency Services Officials, Concerned Citizens, JI Reporter.

Chairman Rachek opened the hearing at 8:00 PM. He introduced the other members of the Board of Finance and Felicia LaPlante as acting finance officer. He stated that the budgets as they are presented tonight are the not final budgets. It is a compilation of the requests from Town Government and Board of Education. Budget Deliberations will occur on Thursday at which time the budgets will be reviewed and adjusted wither up or down.

He stated that the Governor's proposed budget is still not completely determined at this time. He reviewed the budget process beginning in December with the Capital Improvement budgets and February for the operating budgets.

The Capital Improvements Budget is a net decrease from the prior year due to grants, revenues and other funding sources. The Revaluation which has been in the capital improvement budget in the past will be moved to the operating budget. The Town Hall Renovation of \$500,000 will be funded through the STEAP grant received. The Ambulance will be purchased from their charging fund and there is a LOCIP Grant of \$195,000 that goes towards some of the road work.

On March 19 the Board of Education presented their budget to the Board of Finance with an increase of 3.39% consisting mostly of salaries, benefits and transportation. The latest

information received is that the State will not be requiring the towns to pay a portion of the teacher's pensions in this coming budget. The ECS Grant of \$9,826,000 will be received to offset the Education budget.

The General Government increase is 3.34%. The increase consists of two new positions, a Town Administrator and a Public Safety Director. The Board of Finance is not planning to fund these two positions and they will be eliminated on Thursday. There is also a new software program that the Finance Office has requested that will probably not be funded as well.

The Landfill fee increased by \$51,000 and is not negotiable, it is a contract amount that has to be paid. Health insurance shows a \$301,000 increase. The fund balance this year is lower than it has been in recent years. This is used to offset budget increases.

On a positive note, the Grand List has grown 2.1% or \$29,000,000. The crumbling foundations which impacts 49 homes in Ellington has decreased property values by \$3,000,000 or \$94,000. The total gross budget requests are \$61,486,000. Revenues and fund balance reduced from this figure leaves a balance of \$46,803,000 to be collected through taxes.

**Mr. Rachek then opened the meeting up for questions:**

Rudy Luginbuhl, 29 Middle Butcher Rd, stated that he is pleased that the Town has volunteers however, he would like them to distinguish between the needs and wants. He agrees that the software and the two new positions are wants and not needs. He also brought out the fact that the Town has to fund a portion of the upcoming Vernon Treatment Plant upgrade.

Mr. Rachek stated that the Town is growing and that most of the pressure is on the school system. Tim Webb, DPW Director, stated that funding of the Vernon Treatment Plant Upgrade will be addressed through the user fees. It will be 2 years before a payment is required.

Matthew Mullin, 14 Maplewood Drive, stated that he was shocked to see a 1.5 mill increase in this budget and asked the Board to eliminate the "nice to haves" for the fixed income residents.

Jonathan Allen, 33 Dogwood Lane, stated that WiFi is an important item in today's society and the school system. He also pointed out that Social Security as well as pensions have a cost of living increase built into them. He feels a 1 mill increase is needed for the Town to move forward.

Joseph Burns, 228 Windsorville Rd, stated that his pension has not gone up and asked the Board to do its best. He requested that a 15% reduction be made across the entire budget.

In closing, Mr Rachek stated that the Town Meeting will take place on May 14, 2019 and at that time it will be determined as to whether a referendum is needed.

The hearing was closed at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted:



Lori Smith, Recording Secretary