

MAY 11, 2009  
TOWN OF EAST LYME  
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Moderator, Eugene Cushman, called the Annual Town Meeting to order at 7:00 PM at the East Lyme High School. The assembly recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Esther Williams, Town Clerk, read the call of the meeting, stating it had been posted on the signpost, published in The Day and filed in her office.

She then announced that there previously had been an item on the call to adopt the budget; however, since it is going to referendum, that item was removed. She also announced that absentee ballots will be available but must be applied for, in person, at the office of the Town Clerk.

Moderator spelled out the rules of the meeting citing CGS Statute 7-6, eligibility to vote at a town meeting, saying that registered voters or taxpayers appearing on the Grand List of October 1, 2008 and having a minimum assessment of \$1,000 are eligible. He also cited CGS 9-360 dealing with penalties for voting if not franchised. Should a count be necessary, the Registrars of Voters are in attendance.

**Item 1 of the call:** To receive and discuss the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2009 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

Paul Formica, First Selectman made comments and said we have an opportunity to express views on the proposed budget and to then adjourn this meeting to a referendum to be held on May 22, 2009 at the East Lyme Community Center from 6 AM to 8 PM.

Formica commended the Boards of Selectmen, Finance and Education, the Town Departments, the Finance Director, Anna Johnson, Carmen Ames, IT person who manages the town web page, the Public Works Department, Town Staff, Fire and Police Departments, a cooperative effort by all for their efforts, stating we managed to come in with a zero increase budget.

Steve Larcen, Board of Finance chairman, made a power point presentation similar to the one made at the Board of Finance Public Hearing in April. He also commended all departments indicating that though there was a small increase over last year, lowered revenues put the pressure on for the reduction of \$1.38 million from the proposed budget. He indicated that there were two positives, a small increase in the Grand List and an increase in the Special Education federal funding. Public works will show a savings with their single stream recycling program, the library had a reduction in wages and there were wage concessions by Department Heads.

Kevin Seery, Board of Education Chairman remarked on the Education budget stating that East Lyme Education's budget was the fifth lowest in Connecticut. He said there is an anticipated decrease of approximately 145 students in the coming year. We now have eight enrolled at St Bernards and a handful at other schools. He listed cuts that were made, one administrative position, seven teaching positions (enrolment-based or by attrition), a secretary and library aides. He continued that Don Meltabarger will become the facilities manager. He was instrumental in the installation of solar panels at the high school. He also contacted all of the vendors and because of that, a majority of them said they will hold prices for the coming year. Skylights were installed at Flanders School making for a much brighter and more pleasant environment.

Seery said he can assure the public of three things: there will be no elimination of kindergarten specialists, no elimination of elementary Spanish and no pay to play. He said we will give the best education with the resources provided.

Comments from the public:

Mike Schulz, Lovers Lane, thanked those who speak up at many meetings. He feels that next year will be a real challenge when it comes to the budget, said that raises are out of control.

Joe Mingo, Boston Post Road is concerned about the CNRE account and said you cannot take "money out of my bank and put it into yours". He feels the Town should bond or borrow if it needs a new truck.

Bob Gadbois, Boston Post Road thanked Paul Formica for what he accomplished with the budget but said it was on the backs of Town Employees. What about the Board of Education? He feels they need to tighten their belts.

Jim Fraser, Smith Avenue, said teachers are the most important part of the equation. They can make all the difference and should be compensated accordingly.

John Drabik, Drabik Road said that stimulus money comes out of our pockets and that we are spending too much. He also discussed the artificial turf for the high school field, saying he makes a living working with natural grass. Turf develops mold and fungus and requires a lot of maintenance. He said he is not in favor of this budget.

Bob Bulmer, Lovers Lane, commended Paul Formica for his part in coming in with a zero increase budget.

Mary Broderick, Webster Road and a member of the Board of Education, said there is some erroneous information coming out tonight that needs to be corrected. She discussed steps and how necessary they are. She continued that twenty-two positions had been eliminated.

Luis Delaforcade, 22 Rose Lane, said he moved here for the educational system. He said if you look at the short term, the system will no longer be special.

Jerry Fortier, 13 North Ledge Rock Road, discussed the turf. He stated that maintenance is less and less expensive and that this is long overdue. We should have it.

Bob Jones, Applewood Common said someone had criticism that the information was not out there. He said you just have to look at the spreadsheet from 2007 through 2010 that was presented and it is all there for anyone to see.

There being no further discussion, Moderator moved to **Item 2**. To adopt a five-year capital improvement plan.

Motion by Robert Kleinhans, Old Black Pt Road, second by Ron Stevens, Cherry Street.

See [Attachment A](#) for Long Range Capital Plan requests.

Paul Formica said this report was put together by Bob Jones, a member of the Board of Finance, Paul Smotas, Supt of Schools, Mike Giannattasio, Public Works Director, Anna Johnson, Finance Director, David Putnam, Parks & Rec Director and himself.

He said it is important to look into the future. We need to look at our future needs and at our buildings, schools, Town Hall, Police Station, etc. He showed a book he has which is a complete inventory of all town properties with details as to footage, type of heat, etc., and an invaluable resource.

He would like to establish a Vision Committee with a twenty-year plan and to have Town residents serve on this committee.

He discussed debt service and presented a chart showing an analysis of existing and proposed debt service covering the years 2007 through 2015. ([See Attachment B](#)).

Formica said he wanted to go into detail to mitigate any concerns you have as to what is best for the future of our Town.

Joe Mingo went into detail regarding maintenance of the track at the High School. He also discussed the bleachers and how the parents chipped in to help with maintaining them. He said we do not need the turf as it is costly to maintain.

Norm Higgins who owns a business at 132 Boston Post Road disagreed stating the Town should proceed with the turf project as it is badly needed.

Brent Jennings, 56 Spring Rock Road said that part of the reason people come here is there is an excellent youth sports program offered by the Town but there are not enough playing fields. He feels we should proceed with the project.

David Funke, Upper Pattagansett Road moved the question, second by Jim Fraser, Smith Ave. Moderator called for a voice vote. When the outcome could not be determined, he asked the Registrars to count a show of hands.

Item 2 was adopted by a majority of those present.

Motion to adjourn by Bob Kleinhans, second by Holly Cheeseman. The meeting adjourned at 9:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Esther B. Williams  
Town Clerk