

TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBER
EAST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

MARCH 4, 2015

PUBLIC HEARING/BUDGET

PRESENT Chair Richard F. Kehoe, Vice Chair William P. Horan, Jr., Majority Leader
Barbara-Ann Rossi, Minority Leader Esther B. Clarke, Councillors Marc I.
Weinberg, Linda A. Russo, Patricia Harmon and Anita D. Morrison

ABSENT Councillor Ram Aberasturia

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kehoe called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. He announced the exit locations in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §29-381 after which the Council joined him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chair gave a brief overview of the Mayor's recommended 2015-2016 budget totaling approximately \$178M which represents a 2.4% increase in taxes. The budget provides for an increase in spending of 1.9% and a mill rate of 46.5 mills with the average homeowner seeing a \$107 increase in taxes annually.

That portion of the Mayor's recommended budget which is allocated to the Board of Education is approximately \$88,000,000 – an increase of \$1M, not the \$3M requested by the Board. The Chair noted that the state's contribution to the town has increased this year which would give the Council the ability to reduce the Mayor's proposed tax increase, if they so desire.

The following citizens came forth to speak:

John Bezzini, 92 Copper Beech Way, is concerned about the consistent increases in taxes for the aging population in East Hartford. Mr. Bezzini also believes that the property tax system needs to be revised – through the state legislature – in order to lift the financial burden from the working class resident.

Todney Harris, 34 Passaro Drive, a member of the Library Commission, urged the Council to maintain the Mayor's recommended budget for the Raymond Library.

Janice Allison, 97 Copper Beech Way, had questions on how property assessments are determined.

Paul Sousa, 56 Columbus Street, spoke in favor of the high quality level of town services including the Public Works Department and the East Hartford Police Department and recognized their involvement with the community during inclement weather.

Annie Irvine, Vice President of the East Hartford Education Association, a teacher at Langford School, asked that the Council fully fund the Board of Education's budget request.

Susan Kniep, Olde Roberts Street, (1) stated that escalating taxes could result in increased tax lien sales and residents losing their homes; (2) believes that binding arbitration should be revised; and (3) believes that all union contracts should be re-negotiated to help relieve and reduce the tax burden on the citizens of East Hartford.

Debbie Gemme, 62 Farnham Drive, is concerned about her property decreasing in value over the last four years. Ms. Gemme is hopeful that the community and the Council can work together to address property values and bring businesses to East Hartford.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION By Esther Clarke
 seconded Bill Horan
 to **adjourn** (8:10 p.m.).
 Motion carried 8/0.

Attest _____
 Angela Attenello
 Town Council Clerk