TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
Board of Finance
November 10, 2025
Municipal Office Building – Room 1 & 2
Via Zoom and YouTube Live

Participating: William Barney
Joseph Corbett
Todd Gelston
Maureen Goff
Eric Kolasinski
Harvey Thomas

Others: Irene Haines, First Selectwoman
And other members of the public

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Gelston called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and the attendees said the pledge of allegiance. He reviewed the meeting's agenda.

GUESTS & AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Mr. Callahan congratulated the members of the Board of Finance on their successful campaigns. He wished Mr. Gelston well in his new role as First Selectmen. Mr. Callahan also noted that affordability was one of the voters' top discussion items during the campaign and he encouraged everyone to give that due consideration.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. October 20, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to the minutes of their October meeting in their meeting packets.

Motion made by Mr. Barney to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2025 Regular Meeting as written. Ms. Goff seconded the motion and it was approved by a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. Board Subcommittee Reports

- Communications – Mr. Gelston reported that there was no new update on this agenda item. He noted that there will be two vacancies on this committee going forward and he encouraged the Board to fill them as soon as possible. He recommended drafting an article

about the BOF's proposed Budgetary Guidance police for the East Haddam News and offered his assistance to do so.

- Long-Range Capital Improvements Committee – Mr. Thomas reported that he and Finance Director Belles are finalizing the draft revisions to the LRCPC's project ranking policy and they will present the draft to the Board as soon as it is finalized.

- Financial Policies – There was no new update on this agenda item.

b. Budget Guidance Discussion

Mr. Thomas recapped the Board's previous discussion concerning Budgetary Guidance and the decisions made at their October meeting.

- Grand List Status

Mr. Thomas reviewed information about a recently compiled status of the Grand List but noted that he is not certain that the information in the handouts he provided is completely accurate. He reiterated that, to keep the Town fiscally sound, the consensus of Board was that they must provide annual guidance to the BOS and BOE tying the rate of growth of actual expenses to the year's growth in the Grand List.

Based on the preliminary Grand List information provided by Mr. Thomas, Mr. Barney encouraged the BOF to provide guidance to the BOS and BOE that there should be little to no increase in their FY2026-2027 budgets. He stated that such guidance should be delivered soon, before the BOE begins drafting its new budget. He also encouraged the Board to ask for more detailed information about how the Town and BOE are spending the funds allocated to them. Mr. Thomas confirmed, that based on the preliminary information, he estimates that the Grand List has increased by less than 1% and, therefore, he would not be comfortable providing guidance allowing for any more than a 1% increase in the Town's and BOE's budgets.

Mr. Barney also pointed out that the Town has relied on supplementing recent budgets by using monies from its Fund Balance. He noted that BOF's policy is to maintain 8%-15% of the general fund operating budget in that account and he recommended the Board set a goal of maintaining no less than the mid-point of that range on an on-going basis. Ms. Goff recommended also setting a goal of only using Unfunded Fund Balance not to exceed the annual amount allocated to Capital expenditures.

Mr. Gelson noted that union contracts are regularly re-negotiated with increases in wages and, when necessary, those budgetary increases must be off-set by reductions in other expense line items to keep to the BOF's target goal of tying the budgets to any changes in the Grand List. The Board agreed with the stated target goal.

There was a general discussion about when and who should communicate the BOF's FY2026-2027 target goal to the BOS and BOE and it was agreed that the newly elected BOF should be the communicator. The Board agreed to schedule a special meeting at 5:00 p.m. on November 19th to appoint new leadership and draft their Budgetary Guidance

Memorandum. The Memorandum will be delivered to the BOE at their meeting the same evening and to the BOS and will include an invitation to both Boards to attend the December 8th BOF meeting where the Board will present its justification for the FY2026-2027 acceptable rate of budgetary increase.

SELECTMEN'S REPORT

First Selectwoman Haines provided the following report:

- The Town is applying for a state grant for engineering services to create a plan to mitigate flooding in the Village.
- Moodus Reservoir and Bashan Lake have received approval of the ordinance banning wake boats submitted to CT DEEP. DEEP is conducting its own study on the environmental impact of wake boats.
- The Siting Counsil approved a cell tower on East Haddam-Colchester Tpke and the Town is also moving forward on constructing a cell tower at Company 1 Firehouse. She noted that the cell tower at the Firehouse does not require the Siting Counsil's approval because it is on Town property.

Ms. Haines presented Chairman Gelston with a proclamation which expressed the Town's deep appreciation of his service and pursuit of excellence on behalf of the citizens of East Haddam.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. YTD Financials – Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to the year-to-date financials in their meeting packets. He advised if Board members have any questions about the financials, they should follow-up with Finance Director Belles when she is back in the office.

b. Audit Update – Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business discussed at the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Goff thanked Mr. Barney for his service on the Board of Finance. She also thanked Mr. Gelston for eight years of service on the Board of Finance. She wished him all the best when he stepped into his new role as First Selectman of the Town.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mr. Barney to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. Mr. Kolasinski seconded the motion and it was approved by a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/
William Barney

Secretary