TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
Board of Finance – Regular Meeting
December 8, 2025
Municipal Office Building – Room 1 & 2
Via Zoom and YouTube Live

Participating: Joseph Corbett
Debra Denette
Maureen Goff
Scott W. Jezek
Eric Kolasinski
Harvey Thomas

Others: Todd Gelston, First Selectman
And other members of the public

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Goff called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the attendees said the pledge of allegiance.

GUESTS & AUDIENCE COMMENTS

There were no guest or audience comments considered at the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Goff advised that an email dated September 8, 2025 from Adrienne Davis had inadvertently landed in the junk mail box. She read Ms. Davis email to the Board which contained several questions related to the proposal for the Town to purchase the Black Birch Golf Course.

Motion made by Ms. Denette to amend the agenda to address New Business item a) East Haddam Ambulance Association discussion next. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jezek and it was approved by a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

a. East Haddam Ambulance Association discussion

Ms. Goff recognized Stephanie Pare. Ms. Pare stated she is a member of the EHAA Board of Directors and read a letter from the Board which asked if the BOF would like the EHAA to continue to make quarterly financial reports to them. The letter also requested input from the BOF concerning any changes they would like regarding the format and/or content of those reports. Ms. Pare stated the EHAA would like to make a presentation at the next BOF meeting.

In response to a question about EHAA's deficit, Ms. Belles advised that the BOF set aside $100k in the FY2025-2026's contingency line to cover the deficit. Ms. Belles stated she would forward EHAA's last quarterly financial report to the new members of the BOF.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. November 10, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Ms. Goff called the Board's attention to the minutes of their November 10, 2025 regular meeting in their meeting packets and asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. There being no corrections noted, she stated they would stand approved as distributed.

b. November 19, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes

Ms. Goff called the Board's attention to the minutes of their November 19, 2025 special meeting in their meeting packets and asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. There being no corrections noted, she stated they would stand approved as distributed.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. Liaison Assignments

Ms. Goff called the Board's attention to the Liaison Assignments sheet in their meeting packets. The Board reviewed the list of assignments and no changes were made.

b. Board Subcommittee Reports

- Financial Policies

  - Review Draft Capital Improvement Program Policy – Mr. Thomas provided a brief history of the Long Range Capital Improvements review program. He noted that the program had initially worked reasonably well; however, in recent years he did not feel the meetings were productive.

    Mr. Thomas reviewed a presentation of proposed changes to the policy for evaluating capital requests for the annual budgets. There was a general discussion about the revisions and the Board recommended changes to several questions that are asked when a department head submits a capital request to ClearGov. They also provided input on the numerical ranking of responses to the questions.

    Mr. Corbett stated he sits on the LRCIC and confirmed that the process has been problematic for the past several years. He supported the changes to the program presented by Mr. Thomas and encouraged the Board to accept the revisions.

    Motion made by Mr. Corbett to adopt the Capital Improvements Program Policy as amended. Mr. Jezek seconded the motion and it was approved by a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Ms. Goff requested the Board members submit their requests for Ms. Belles' time/effort to her before reaching out directly to the Finance Director. She stated that, by doing so, she hopes to make the best use of Ms. Belles' time by avoiding any duplication of work.

SELECTMEN'S REPORT

First Selectmen Gelston reported on the following:

- Smith, Alger, and Daniels Roads have been repaved; however, Public Works still needs to complete the aprons and striping work. He stated the estimated cost for the work is $1.7M.
- Public Works Director Velez submitted her resignation, effective December 3, 2025. The position has been posted and, until it is filled, Facilities Director Angersola will provide primary coverage for Public Works and Mr. Gelston will provide backup coverage.
- The Town has been interviewing applicants for the Public Works' Driver-Laborer position.
- The vacant Road Crew Foreman position will also be posted on the Town's website.
- Former Public Works Director Michele Velez had been the Town's Tree Warden prior to resigning her position and Shawn Daigle, who is a CT Licensed Arborist, has expressed interest in becoming involved in the Tree Warden duties for the Town. Mr. Gelston reviewed Mr. Daigle's qualifications and noted that he has completed the necessary training as part of his education to be a CT Licensed Arborist. He stated that the agreed upon stipend for the rest of the year for this position is $2,500.00
- He had reviewed the proposed contract for a cell tower at Fire Company #1 with the leasing company. The Town will receive an $18k lease fee for the first year and the contract contains a 2% escalation clause for subsequent years. Mr. Gelston noted that the Town's emergency communications equipment will be installed at the top of the tower.
- Installation of the proposed ATESDs (speed cameras) has been put on pause due to public opposition to the plan and concerns about the potential for data transfer. He noted that he would like to see if the state is going to update its legislation to address data transfer concerns before making any decision on installing ATESDs and he discussed alternative solutions for controlling speeding in Town.
- A workshop with the EHAA and the EHFD is scheduled for 12/9. The goal of the workshop is to identify problems, determine root causes, and develop corrective actions. He emphasized the need for more volunteers on the EHAA.
- The BOS is putting together a volunteer study committee to research and make recommendations on the proposal that the Town purchase and manage the Black Birch Golf Course as a municipal course.

Mr. Gelston responded to questions from the Board. Mr. Kolasinski suggested the EHAA begin using ClearGov for their budget. Regarding EHFD assisting the EHAA with ambulance calls, he noted that there is a state statute prohibiting the use of municipal-funded positions to benefit 501(3)(c) organizations.

Ms. Goff expressed her hope that EDC is also seeking private buyers for Black Birch Golf Course.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. YTD Financials – Ms. Belles called the Board's attention to the year-to-date financials in their meeting packets. She noted that expenses are currently under budget and revenues are slightly over budget. In response to a request from Ms. Goff, Ms. Belles agreed to ask the BOE for a similar monthly financial report for the BOF meetings.

b. Audit Update –Ms. Belles reported that, due the departure of the BOE Business Manager, an extension of the 2025 financials audit was filed with the state. She noted that the auditors have pushed back their site visit to the end of January and she expects that a second extension will be

filed that month. There was a general discussion regarding the impact of the extensions on the Town's borrowing abilities.

c. Budget Calendar – Ms. Belles called the Board's attention to the FY2025-2026 budget calendar in their meeting packets. She reviewed the BOF's workshop schedule which begins March 9th .

Ms. Belles stated she would share last year's Citizen's Guide to the Budget with the members of the Communications sub-committee so they can update it and submit it to the East Haddam News for publication. Mr. Thomas suggested adding language to the Citizen's Guide advising that it is the BOF's intention to entertain no increases in the FY2025-2026 budgets.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed at the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS (Continued)

a. East Haddam Ambulance Association discussion – This item was discussed earlier in the meeting and is reported on in the above minutes.

b. Open Space discussion – Sprecker Property Exchange Proposal – Shanagham Road – Ms. Goff called the Board's attention to materials in their meeting packets concerning an exchange of Town owned land for an equivalent parcel of the Sprecker Property. She noted that it is just for informational purposes at this time. Mr. Jezek recused himself from any discussion on the Sprecker Property.

c. Open Space discussion – Dale King Property – South Sheepskin Hollow Road - Ms. Goff called the Board's attention to materials in their meeting packets concerning the potential purchase of the Dale King property for open space. She advised that the purchase price for the property is $15k and noted that the Open Space Committee has those funds in its budget.

In response to a question from Mr. Jezek, Mr. Thomas confirmed that there is a pond on the Dale King property; however, he advised that the dam is not located on the parcel being considered by the Open Space Committee and will not, therefore, be the Town's responsibility.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Jezek, Mr. Thomas advised that the Financial Policies sub-committee has begun work on a policy for a long-range strategic financial sustainability plan for the Town but the work is just in the beginning stages. Mr. Jezek volunteered to work on that policy with the Financial Policies sub-committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mr. Kolasinski to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Ms. Denette seconded the motion and it was approved by a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/
Debra Denette
Secretary