

Minutes of a Public Hearing held by the Town Board of the Town of Riverhead, held in the Riverhead Town Hall on Tuesday, October 26, 1993, at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Joseph F. Janoski,	Supervisor
Victor Prusinowski,	Councilman
James Stark,	Councilman
Frank Creighton,	Councilman
Harriet Gilliam,	Councilwoman

Also Present:

Patricia Moore,	Town Attorney
Barbara Grattan,	Town Clerk

Supervisor Janoski called the Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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P U B L I C H E A R I N G O P E N E D: 7:06 p.m.

Supervisor Janoski: "Let the record show that the hour of 7:06 p.m. has arrived and the Town Clerk will please read the Notice of Public Hearing."

Barbara Grattan: "I have affidavits of publishing and posting of a Public Hearing to be held at Riverhead Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 26, 1993, to hear all interested persons who wish to be heard regarding the adoption of the 1994 annual budget for the Town of Riverhead."

Supervisor Janoski: "Thank you. The purpose of this Hearing as has been explained is to receive input from people in the Town concerning the proposed budget for 1994; additions, deletions, any ideas that you might have concerning that proposal. Who wishes to be the first speaker? Bill."

Bill Talmage: "Bill Talmage from Riverhead. I just would like to speak out in support of the East End Arts Council's budget item."

I think I'm not a big one for more spending and more taxes, you know, but I think in this case it could be a good investment. A couple things; one is it's an asset to have the East End Arts Council on Main Street when we try to promote downtown. Also, if we can succeed in doing something with the Suffolk Theater and turn it from a liability into an asset, that will help us to promote and increase business downtown.

And, also, I think one of the best things we have on the horizon is the possibility of creating an artist's colony downtown to utilize some of the upstairs space that's vacant or underutilized downtown. I think the East End Arts Council will be very important in that regard in that they can identify and somehow help us decide who are legitimate artists. Because I think to police that program is going to be very important. And I think that they will have a very important role to play in that. And I think if we can establish something of that sort down there, that will be a very big step in solving some of the problems down there. That's all. Thanks."

Supervisor Janoski: "Thank you, Bill. Is there anyone else who wishes to address the Board? Yes, in the back there, Pat Frankenbach."

Pat Frankenbach: "Hello, my name is Pat Frankenbach. I'm here as Vice-President of the Business Improvement District. We would like to support any money that you deem fit to give the East End Arts Council. They have been working very hard towards the revitalization of downtown with their focus on downtown as an arts and recreational center. I think with the placement of alternative shopping centers to downtown such as the outlet project and other projects that are coming our way, this focus is very important and I believe they are a key player. They are working very hard with the Business Council and also with the Business Improvement District, and any money that you can see fit to give them, I think would be rightly deserved. With lack of funding from other sources, I think this funding is very important. Thank you."

Jack Hanley: "My name is Jack Hanley and not to be redundant, but I'm here to request an elevation of the budget on the East End Arts Council of \$25,000. I'm a member of the Business Council which was formed in January of this year and I know it's taking a lot of the East End Arts Council's time as-- in addition to the people on the Board.

Also, we got quite a few applications for grants and so forth that they've been spending a lot of time on, and I'm just very impressed with the enthusiasm not only of the Arts Council but the people that they touch in the community."

Supervisor Janoski: "Thank you."

Linda Fleming: "Linda Fleming, Executive Director of Alternatives Counseling. I'm here to ask you to please, once again, return us to your budget. You've been so kind to include us in the past and to remind you that some of the things you've enabled us to do a few years ago, your money enabled us to pilot the Metamorphosis Project in the Aquebogue School, which is our self-esteem program for third graders, all third graders in that school, which was then extended to other schools in Riverhead and is still on-going and starting its fourth year now.

Last year, your funding helped us work-- do special projects with women substance abusers, which is very important. This year we presented you with a pilot project that we would really hope you would support which would address the violence that is increasing in the schools. And we feel that we are uniquely qualified to be able to offer a program and Gwen will talk more about that. But, basically, we have worked with and can work with the kind of youth that get in to trouble and are involved in violence and with their families. And we would really appreciate funding that would enable us to get that project started.

As I say in the past, your funding has enabled us to start new initiatives. And I'd be happy to answer questions."

Councilman Prusinowski: "How much are you seeking?"

Linda Fleming: "\$15,000."

Supervisor Janoski: "Any other questions? Thank you. Gwen."

Gwen Branch: "First of all, I apologize to Mr. Stark. If you received our memo, your name is incorrect there. I'm very sorry for that. The monies that we're asking for this year is a new initiative as Linda has said, to start our Alternative program for adolescents. We've worked very successfully with mandated clients from-- that have

been referred through the Court and Probation Department. It's been very successful and we wanted to model a program such as that for adolescents. As we know, there are rising numbers of adolescents that are involved in varying crimes and a lot of that involvement includes substance abuse or substance abuse dealing. And we feel with this program that we can begin a new opportunity for young people to have a chance to work on some of their problems.

The components of the program will include individual and group counseling as well as parenting skills for their parents and re-parenting skills for those parents. We're hoping to have our referrals come through the Probation Department and through the local courts and we feel that we can work through those agencies and also the schools.

We are asking for \$15,000 and we are hoping also that with the implementation of this grant, that we'd be able to use this as a demonstration for grants that are available through the federal governments which we have become aware of. And those grants require that-- are looked on most favorably when we do those as co-sponsorships with other programs. And we feel that if we were able to do this, we would be able to use the Juvenile Aid Bureau, the Riverhead Police Department and other agencies within in the town so we might share in that opportunity.

I don't know if you have any other questions about this particular program. I'd more than willing to answer those."

Councilwoman Gilliam: "Have you approached the School Board regarding this project?"

Gwen Branch: "We haven't done that at this point, but we plan to do that also. Can I continue on another--?"

Supervisor Janoski: "You go right ahead. Get a two-fer."

Gwen Branch: "As a member of the Arts Council Board, I'd also like to emphasize everything that everyone said before. I can't speak highly enough of the Arts Council and it's become most important to the town of Riverhead. I think the Arts District project which the Arts Council is spearheading has created more excitement in Riverhead than I've seen in a very long time. I think your money would be well spent, and \$25,000 is a very small amount to give the Arts Council in

their endeavors to achieve such a wonderful plan. And I think that over the years, the Arts Council has brought many wonderful results from the funding that you have given them and I hope you continue doing so. Thank you."

Supervisor Janoski: "Thank you. Is there anyone else present? Yes, sir."

Rolph Kestling: "My name is Rolph Kestling. I'm from Wading River. As long as we don't have many people in the audience and I don't want the time to go too fast, if you will permit me to diverge from what I originally intended to talk about.

It concerns the East Arts Council. When a major builder puts up a large building or a shopping center, he usually has the courtesy to name the building or shopping center after the tenant. Now, it is my understanding, the town of Riverhead gives a vast amount of money to the East End Arts Council. And when they advertise in the paper, they say the East End Arts Council. Now, for our buck, (inaudible) a little bang out of it, why don't they call it the Riverhead Art Council? Then I'd feel a lot better about this because East End Arts Council, when I lived in the city, I thought of East Hampton, Southampton. Great. Fine. Nice. Never a word about poor old Riverhead. And we're a major contributor. I suggest you speak to them, maybe they'll show us the courtesy."

Supervisor Janoski: "Well, I think they've heard you."

Rolph Kestling: "Okay. Now, what I really came up here about. About a year ago, in fact I think it is a year ago, you presented a budget. I stood up here and I said, good, fine, nice and tight, you know, an old Dutchman like me, we like tight budgets. Good. This year I understand you have another tight budget. Fine. Wonderful. But, you forgot to say one thing last year and you forgot to mention another thing, well, you haven't really spoken about it, but you probably will not mention-- same thing. You forgot to mention the shift man. You know, you pass a town budget, you sign it, the ink isn't even dry, you sit in the office and you call Mr. Shift Man, come on over. He looks at the budget. Well, you got too much in this end, Department, let's shift it over to another Department. Or another part that doesn't belong to the town.

Now, to make this conversation short, are we going to have a shifty budget this year or a shiftless budget? Thank you."

Supervisor Janoski: "Joe."

Joe Fischer: "My name is Joe Fischer. I'm here representing the Riverhead Merchants Association, myself, as a business owner, and as a citizen of Riverhead. And I would like to address a few brief comments regarding the East End Arts Council. The East End Arts Council, like its sister organization the Eastern Suffolk School of Music, operate from the East Main Street location here in Riverhead. Although of the conditions of the building from which they operate is shameful in our opinion, blame resting where it belongs, the spirit and enormous good emanating from same are quite the contrary.

The cultural void quenched and mollified by the exuded activities of the East End Arts Council is not easily measured, but often silently appreciated and taken for granted. Whether it be a cultural recital, a jazz fest, an art exhibition, or simple awareness such as the need to save and restore the current Art Deco Theater, the East End Arts Council seems to always be there and deeply embedded in the network of activity it takes to pull such events off.

The East End Arts Council permeates an important role for Riverhead not only through the obvious cultural dividends, but through the positive visibility and perceptions it propogates for Riverhead town.

As difficult financial times often result in restricted and/or eliminated supplements, one must weight the positives opposed to the potential monetary savings before such supplements becomes askewed to reality.

As it is felt the East End Arts Council provides a strong support and promotion for Riverhead in multiple ways, I and we, the RMA, would like to urge the Town Board to continue to provide supplemental support towards this worthwhile organization. Knowing the Board has repeatedly done the right thing by Riverhead, we trust the attitude and approach will again prevail. I thank you in advance for any consideration shown towards the East End Arts Council. Thank you."

Supervisor Janoski: "Joe, let me just comment on one point that you raised and that is the buildings themselves. As you are probably

aware, the town of Riverhead pays the taxes on those buildings and has a responsibility to maintain those buildings under the provisions of a lease. We don't have a lease anymore. That least has ended and, I, speaking for me, cannot right now support the idea of spending a great deal of money on those buildings because some things are happening downtown. And what's happening downtown is making property more valuable. And I think that will escalate.

And I think that there's a possibility that the owners of that building which happens to be Northville Industries, may wake up one morning and say: We've got a very valuable piece of property here and we are not going to let that current use continue. We're not going to let that current use continue. We're going to sell the property. As a matter of fact, Joe, I think you and I both know that that is actually happening.

I have, through whatever channels I could use, sent word to Northville Industries that the town of Riverhead-- I would support, the expenditure of a good amount of money to bring those buildings back to shape if, in fact, the town had a long term lease, and some expectation of the continuity of East End Arts and Eastern Suffolk School of Music remaining there. And I think that's a reasonable position for the town to take. Spending taxpayer money when in a couple of months it might be sold to some entrepreneur in the town is not a good idea. So anything that you can do representing the Merchants Association or anybody else in convincing Northville that a long term lease is necessary, as it used to be a 10 year lease, that would be helpful to refurbishing those buildings. Because I think they're quite lovely and they should be upgraded and taken care of. But it would be like taking care of somebody else's property at this point in time."

Joe Fischer: "We understand that and, you know, in fairness to it I don't blame the town for not wanting to put a lot of money into buildings that they really have no secured commitment on. But by the same token, when I made mention about the when, why, where it does, I'm not necessarily pointing out the Board or Riverhead. The current owners are also currently to blame for letting this-- it's now in their court and they're still not doing anything about it either."

Supervisor Janoski: "Let me say that the town is going out to bid or has gone out to bid to do amount of work-- a minimal amount of work, which I think amounts to some \$15,000. So that's going forward."

Joe Fischer: "We understand that to be cosmetic and we're in favor of that if nothing else because right now in its current condition, there's a number of people that would consider it an eyesore. And, you know, we're just looking for the betterment of the town all the way around. Even if the private people that own it don't want to do it, then we have to do something. Because we're here for the long term."

Supervisor Janoski: "Absolutely. And as Main Street improves in its appearance and buildings are upgraded and refurbished, I hope that we will be able to come to some agreement about those two buildings."

Joe Fischer: "Okay, thank you."

Supervisor Janoski: "Reverend Coverdale."

Reverend Coverdale: "Good evening to each and every one of you. I've come down this evening to say something on behalf of the East End Arts Council as you begin to look at doing your budgeting work and reinstitute a part of the things that are required in our community."

Let me say first of all that I should identify that I am on the Business Advisory Board of the East End Arts Council, but that's not particularly my major strength for coming here tonight. I'm really coming more as a community participant looking at the fact that over the years the East End Arts Council has gone out of their way to incorporate and to deal with a lot of plays and shows and things that incorporated the whole understanding of multi-culturism in this community. It has been one of the few organizations that tries to incorporate the various cultures of our community in a very artistic way that helps our community to grow and to develop.

And, I come particularly at this time because not only have they done a terrific job over the past with the Harvest Concert and with even a play that we put on in conjunction with them, but it seems crucial at this time that their budget be fully restored, mainly because of all the work that's going on in the downtown area and the fact that we're looking at that theater down there, that certainly is an eyesore and a wreck, and all the possibility it can have in a community such as this. I certainly read most of the articles in the

papers where most of us certainly spoke in favor of it. But I just want to emphasize (inaudible) maximizing our dollar application right now to that project. And it's one that is really being considered by the (inaudible). It also has a great ripple effect economically if we can restore that theater to some sort of beauty, some sort of attraction downtown, open up extended hours down there. It can bring a lot of finances back to the town, the town merchants, to our people.

And so it is critical, I would say in terms of a pivotal point if the Town Board would really look at it as an issue that's really pertinent at this time and has a really, I think, positive thrust. And so I hope that you all would look at that, consider it, and do all you can in your power to execute their budget of \$25,000 so that we might be the beneficiaries of it not only culturally but also financially for this town."

Supervisor Janoski: "Thank you, Reverend Coverdale. Warren."

Warren McKnight: "Warren McKnight, Wading River. I come here, believe it or not, as a citizen tonight to ask some questions, to get some input from the town on the question of funding of the East End Arts Council and other non-profit groups, something like Alternatives and (inaudible) Mack's Riverhead-Southampton Center.

I just want to ask a couple of questions of you and maybe you could educate me on certain things. Community chest - does our town have a community chest (inaudible)? The feasibility of a community chest in conjunction with the Town Board, with a citizen community on that Board would alleviate the pressure from the Town Board, because everytime the Town Board-- not everytime, but as you say it-- when you do right, nobody notices, but when you do wrong, everybody jumps on you-- I don't have to tell you. You tried, you went to bat for the East End Arts Council a couple of times, sometimes certain things were questionable, you really tried. Now, nobody's going to beat you over the head, in fact, you should be commended for trying. But why couldn't we have a community chest, get the rest of the community in, even the young people. And, that community chest-- and have some of the young people on the Board, can say let's get some money for the Arts Council. Let's get some money for Alternatives. Let's get some money for the Riverhead-Southampton Community Center. Not just for (inaudible). People like the (inaudible) and everybody

else would cooperate, it would really get everybody going; it would take the pressure off the Town Board. It would make the business community-- Northville and everybody else-- make them aware of it.

Also, this is something we could speak to the state about, is reference to-- let's face it, gambling, like alcohol and drugs, are a very serious problem in our society. And the state is controlling that in taking money. We have OTB in Riverhead. Why could, (inaudible) as you've been saying lately and you've always said over the years now and then, and all of you are saying, Riverhead is the poorest town. There's a tremendous amount of money that OTB takes in. Why couldn't a little bit of that and, seriously, you can comment on that to other people and the press and everything else-- why couldn't a little bit of that money come back to our town and people could make excuses that can't, but this town, you know, we have problems that we're trying to solve, all of us, together. But the Arts Council does give people help. Alternatives does give people help. Bernice Mack's place, and other people. So these things, I ask you to, with your input, after Tuesday, come what may, whatever cards may fall, to come forth and maybe bring something like this together in our town, close together, and we could solve-- actually it should be a nominal (inaudible) of \$25,000, with a community chest, with our strong service organizations, and the strong spirit of people, like the Polish Civic Association, and everybody else, I got a hunch money might start just flying all over the place to-- the things that we respect here. You know, and the hard work we've seen over the years with these people.

So, I ask you to consider that and throw aside our political charades after next Tuesday. Thank you."

Supervisor Janoski: "Okay, thank you. Is there anyone else present wishing to address the Town Board on the matter of the preliminary budget? Mr. Wallace."

Bob Wallace: "My name is Bob Wallace. I just want to let you know that in the past, I've had great faith in the Town Board making a good budget, so I haven't followed it too closely. But one of the things that I looked at in here, I see it listed it at least eight times, maybe 10, and that's transfer to other funds or transfer of other funds. Would you please tell me what that means?"

Jack Hansen: "Jack Hansen, Financial Administrator, Town of Riverhead. Transfer of funds are things where we transfer funds out of operating funds, such as General Fund, Highway, Street Lighting, and for the most part, put them into debt services, as an example and pay Debt Services. That's one big area of transfers. I think that's what you see in the majority of this document that you're looking at. So it's taking money out of certain funds that are taxing entities, and putting them into funds for administrative purposes that are required by the state of New York."

Bob Wallace: "Might I ask why-- what I would like to ask, why that is not detailed as to from what fund it is going from to which fund it's going to?"

Jack Hansen: "It is and what you're looking at is the summary budget. The document over there in the black binder is the detail budget and in there you will see the various lines that it's going to and from."

Supervisor Janoski: "Thank you, Jack. Thank you, Bob. Is there any other comment on the budget proposal for 1994?"

This document is the proposed budget for the coming year, and as you can see in its thickness, it is a document of great detail. And what this Town Board, or any Town Board, tries to do is to guess what it's going to cost for the various undertakings in the coming year. And that's basically all we can do, is anticipate and plan.

Now, this budget is done in such great detail that we have to very publicly and by resolution, if it becomes necessary, shift money, as you put it. And the reason that the budget is done in such great detail and quite frankly it was done this way after I became Supervisor, is to make it more difficult to shift money. So that we have to do it in a Town Board Meeting, by resolution. We can't just move money around because of a great big heading, such as Highway Department. We do it in very great detail. And sometimes our guesses are a little off. Maybe sometimes we need more money in equipment than we do in repairs. So that's when you see a movement of money to that budget line.

And it also means that there's a control because that Department cannot spend that money without getting the Town Board approval for

that purpose. So it is, in fact, a control, and quite honestly, it is a control that works very well. But I just wanted to get that out there on the record as far as the shifting of money. When you consider that this is a \$25,000,000 document, the amount of money that we move around means that we're pretty accurate in our guesses for a year ahead of time.

Is there anyone else that wishes to add anything to this Budget Hearing? Then, that being the case, and there being no further speakers-- I'm sorry, Warren."

Warren McKnight: "Another question and this is, you know, for me to learn and everything else and for people to actually, to wonder and to talk about and maybe act upon, too, is, again, being we're the poorest town and, we are."

Supervisor Janoski: "I don't quite put it that way but, you can use the word poor if you want."

Warren McKnight: "Okay, the lowest income, median income, to be exact, as the newspapers call it. But, so in reference to our lighting of the streets and you probably have a good answer, but maybe we could help you-- maybe you could help us-- I notice Greenport because, technically it has their own utility company, is able to buy power from upstate, and give it to the actual town of Greenport, but let's forget about the town. Is there any way we could get the same rates for the street lighting; taxpayers money from New York State so we wouldn't have to pay the high Lilco rates?"

Supervisor Janoski: "I'm not aware of any way that we could take advantage of that."

Warren McKnight: "Okay. Perhaps that would, you know, if somebody has the time or maybe that's something to look into. Because maybe we could save all of us some money and that's just meant as a contribution as far as that goes. So I just wanted to, you know, mention that, and a little late in the game but maybe the next time around."

Councilman Prusinowski: (inaudible)

Warren McKnight: "Yes, Greenport has always had their own

power but we all know that-- but why couldn't we? And it's a technical-- they turn it on once or twice a year."

Councilman Prusinowski: "Well, we have the landfill and we (inaudible) plant, it's our intent to (inaudible) the power down from municipal services such as the Sewer District, the Highway barn, the Ambulance barn, possible Town Hall, and use the electricity generated from the co-generation plant in this way instead of buying the power from Lilco at lower rates because the state legislature changed the formula through the PSC, Public Service Commission, in the future the town will be able to have tremendous savings on electrical usage."

Warren McKnight: "That's good, that's good. But, you know, the other thing is perhaps, you know, we could say Greenport has it and we're a small town, we're a town with a low income, you know, so why couldn't we have it? Thank you."

Supervisor Janoski: "Warren, Councilwoman Harriet Gilliam has a question?"

Warren McKnight: "Yes?"

Councilwoman Gilliam: "Are you referring to the New York State Power Authority's program where they provide alternate source of power to Lilco?"

Warren McKnight: "Right."

Councilwoman Gilliam: "Is that what you are talking about?"

Warren McKnight: "In other words, the townspeople of Greenport have a much lower rate than we do in Riverhead, but I'm not saying the people should, like a homeowner or renter should have the same rate as the people of Greenport, but why couldn't our town, the lighting of our-- especially for the streetlights which is important and it's enormous, why couldn't get New York State Power Authority rates? And, you know, it would help us in tax relief because basically our town's median population needs it. And we do pay taxes. And we do, you know-- "

Supervisor Janoski: "Everything you say is true, Warren."

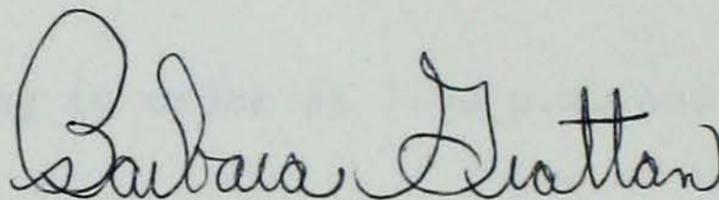
Warren McKnight: "Exactly. So I was wondering, you know, if we could work on it."

Supervisor Janoski: "Thank you. Is there anyone else who wishes to address the Board on the matter of the budget? There being no one else wishing to speak, and without objection, I declare this Hearing to be closed.

Thank you all for very much for attending this evening."

P U B L I C H E A R I N G C L O S E D: 7:06 p.m.

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TOWN CLERK