



**TOWN COUNCIL  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
APRIL 6, 2020  
Regular Town Council Meeting**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**1) CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Trinks called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Donald Trinks, Deputy Mayor Joe McAuliffe, Councilor Nuchette Black-Burke, Councilor Lisa Rampulla Bress, Councilor James Dobler, Councilor James Govoni, Councilor Donald Jepsen, and Councilor Kenneth Wilkos

Absent: Councilor Michael Tustin

**2) PRAYER**

Councilor Govoni stated that he wanted to forgo the prayer to give the floor back to the Mayor so he could let the citizens know how we are managing with the COVID-19 situation in Windsor.

Mayor Trinks stated that we are going through times that none of us have ever endured before. Let's use this as a time to reach out to our friends and neighbors with all this new technology. Teach your mother, father, or grandparent how to use Skype. Most importantly we need to stay strong and positive.

**3) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilor Govoni led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4) PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS**

- a) Proclamation designating April 2020 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Councilor Black Burke read the proclamation.

- b) Proclamation recognizing April 2020 as Fair Housing Awareness Month

Deputy Mayor McAuliffe read the proclamation.

**5) PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS**

No comments.

## 6) REPORT OF APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSION

- a) Board of Education
- b) Public Building Commission
- c) Commission on Aging & Persons with Disabilities
- d) Conservation Commission
- e) Metropolitan District Commission

Mayor Trinks stated that the Board of Education, Public Building Commission, Commission on Aging & Persons with Disabilities and the Conservation Commission all submitted written reports to the Council, which each Councilor received a copy of, and which will be included with tonight's minutes. The Metropolitan District Commission did not submit a report because they have not met yet.

Councilor Black-Burke stated she wanted to thank all the individuals who submitted the reports and those who work on the commissions. Thank you for their time and dedication. She wanted to say publicly to the Board of Education, Dr. Cooke and his cabinet, a tremendous thanks for all the work that has gone into distant learning. They had to do this very quickly and they have managed to accomplish this daunting task without too many hiccups. She also wanted to thank all the teachers and principals for everything that they are doing to ensure that our children will continue learning.

Councilor Bress said she would like to echo the sentiments of Councilor Black-Burke. She'd like to commend the Windsor Board of Education on their decision to have the meals to go sights expanded from Windsor High School to include Clover Street and also Ellsworth School. She truly appreciates the effort to make sure the children in our community are able to receive two meals each a day and wants to make sure the public is aware that all children up to the age of 18 who live in Windsor can receive a meal regardless if they attend Windsor Public Schools or not. Their efforts are truly appreciated. She would also like to thank the Commissions for their reports. It continues to amaze her every week the amount of effort, talent and dedication we have in Windsor.

## 7) TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

### **Street Sweeping**

The street sweeping program has begun. It is expected that the sweeping will be complete in early June, weather permitting.

This year, the sweeping began in the Walden Meadow and Poquonock, Farmstead, Village Lane neighborhoods. The order of the neighborhoods to be swept changes each year so that one neighborhood is not always swept first or swept last. Please see the town's website for the order at <https://townofwindsorct.com/public-works/2020-street-sweeping-schedule/>.

### **Island Road reconstruction & Batchelder Road repaving**

The town is advancing the schedule for paving Island and Batchelder Roads due to Loomis Chaffee being closed. Both Island & Batchelder Road work is scheduled to begin April 16 and will last until April 24.

Island Road, during the week of April 20, will have temporary road closures but will be open to emergency vehicles and residents living on or off of Island Road. Final pavement of both roads is tentatively scheduled for the week of May 4.

### **Repaving of town hall parking lot and 240 Broad Street**

Repaving of the town hall parking lot is scheduled to occur starting April 17 in the evening and will be included on Saturday the 18 during the day.

Also, the town-owned parking lot at the corner of Maple Avenue and Broad Street will be repaved on Saturday the 18.

### **Summary of Governor's Executive Order 7S**

The Governor has issued an Executive Order which allows towns to defer tax payments for eligible taxpayers and / or reduce the interest rate for delinquent taxes.

#### **Deferment Plan**

The deferment plan offers eligible taxpayers a 90 day (versus the usual 30 days) deferment to pay taxes (from the time the bill became due and payable) during the period March 10 to July 1, 2020. Interest is waived during the 90 day period.

#### **Low Interest Rate on delinquent taxes**

The delinquent portion of any taxes shall be subject to interest at the rate of 3% per year (0.25% per month) from the due date for a period of 90 days for any tax due and payable from March 10 through and including July 1, 2020.

Please note that if FY 21 tax bills **are delayed past July 1<sup>st</sup>** it appears that neither of these options would be applicable per the Governor's Executive Order.

Based on the preliminary review of the Executive Order, the Town Council would need to make a decision on approving one or both of the options by no later than April 24<sup>th</sup>.

Staff is reviewing the specifics of each option and I anticipate having a report and recommendation for Town Council consideration at the next scheduled meeting in April.

### **Update on COVID – 19 Response**

I'd like to thank our residents and business owners for following the Governor's Stay Home, Stay Safe order.

While this has changed our normal routines, it is in the best interest of the community's health to contribute in our own individual way.

- Please limit your public face to face interactions to the least extent possible

- Call your elderly or homebound neighbors to see how they are doing
- Practice social distancing and good hygiene

What you can count on from the town:

- Town of Windsor staff continues to provide core services to the highest levels possible.
- Our Police, Fire and Ambulance first responders are dedicated to providing you with the best care possible.
- Our departments are staffed (some remotely) and ready to continue to serve and support you.
- Our food bank continues to operate with a drive-through service.
- There are food assistance programs for families with school students and or elderly.
- Our park areas are open for your enjoyment. Please remember to spread out and don't congregate.

I strongly encourage you to stay updated by visiting our website at [townofwindsorct.com](http://townofwindsorct.com).

You can also check out some great library and recreation offerings through our on-line programs.

If you have time sensitive essential service needs, please contact the specific department.

Thank you all for doing your part to curtail the spread of the virus as well as to our town employees for their continued dedication & commitment.

Please keep positive, stay safe and healthy.

## **8) COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Councilor Dobler said he would just like to briefly state that there has been talk that we may be hitting the apex in certain cities in the country. We need to keep up the social distancing. If we do not, we can fall back into a worse place than we are now. So please let's keep up the social distancing and we can get through this soon.

Councilor Tustin - Absent

Councilor Black-Burke said she would like to say a simple thank you to the Town Manager, his staff, all our first responders, the food bank, and the nursing home staff here in town. You see a lot of faces in town that a few weeks ago would not be considered essential staff, but they are. They are making sure we all have what we need. Take time to reach out and talk to your neighbor. We will get through this together.

Councilor Govoni said he is proud of our town. Everyone, staff and citizens of Windsor, are pulling together and doing a great job. Please call your neighbor that you have not spoken to that might have issues with this and make sure they are safe. As we start to

see more masks and gloves out in public, and they are encouraging us to wear them, please be respectful in disposing of them properly.

Councilor Rampulla Bress said she would like to echo the sentiments of everyone else and a huge thank you to our Town Manager, town employees, first responders, nurses, our groceries workers, mail carriers, everyone still working under these very difficult circumstances. I would also like to echo Mr. Govoni's sentiments. If you have things that help keep other people safe, that is just as important as keeping yourself safe. So please wear your masks out in public. Lastly, I would like to share a good news story with the community. I am part of a Facebook group called 'The Buy Nothing' group and it is very heartening to see how many people in the Town of Windsor have taken up sharing materials and their sewing expertise to make hundreds of masks to send them to Yale, New York and places in our community. I just want everyone to know that we have phenomenal people in Windsor.

Councilor Wilkos said he would like to thank a few people out here in the audience tonight. I had a conversation with the head of our health department, Mike Pepe. I wanted to ask him some questions on how he felt things were going. He has been running seven days a week getting us the information we the Council, Peter and the community needs. I have a genuine appreciation for what he and his department are doing here in the Town of Windsor. I also wanted to point out that our website is updated daily. We are now at 54 people that are infected, but it's important to point out of those 54 (some go back 3 or 4 weeks) some are now healthy and back in the community. By simple numbers, we are about at less than .02 percent. That is pretty good considering the size of our population. Let's keep doing what we're doing as a community and hopefully we can get our lives back to normal soon.

Councilor Jepsen said the fire danger is very high right now so be very careful if you are having a backyard fire while you're home bound.

Deputy Mayor McAuliffe said he would like to thank his fellow Councilors for recognizing all those groups that are very important to our town. He would like to add there are a lot of people out of work right now. He is sure all of us know someone or several people out of work. So, think of them and help them out if you can. I know there is state and federal assistance coming, but it does not always help and is sometimes not very timely. Also, let's think about the 7 people who have died in town and keep them in our prayers.

Mayor Trinks said he would close echoing what the other Councilors said. It is all sincere and appropriate and he appreciates and thanks all the Councilors for pointing them out.

## **9) REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

Town Improvements Committee – Councilor Dobler had nothing to report.

Special Projects Committee – None

Health & Safety Committee – Councilor Black-Burke had nothing to report.

Personnel Committee – Councilor Rampulla Bress had nothing to report.

Finance Committee – Deputy Mayor McAuliffe had nothing to report.

Councilor Jepsen said we have an item coming up on the agenda tonight regarding the Council Rules of Order and in your packets are the comments made by the town attorney.

**10) ORDINANCES - None**

**11) UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a) Approve a bond ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$690,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH INTERIOR RENOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$690,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION.”

RESOLVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe that the reading into the minutes of the text of the ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$690,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH INTERIOR RENOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$690,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION” is hereby waived, the full text of the ordinance having been distributed to each member of the Council and copies made available to those persons attending this meeting; and the full text of the ordinance be recorded with the minutes of this meeting.

Motion Passed 8-0-0 (Councilor Tustin absent)

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to approve a bond ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$690,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH INTERIOR RENOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$690,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION.”

Motion Passed 8-0-0 (Councilor Tustin absent)

- b) Approve a bond ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$870,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS COURTS RESTORATION PROJECT; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$870,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION.”

RESOLVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe that the reading into the minutes of the text of the ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$870,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS COURTS RESTORATION PROJECT; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$870,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION” is hereby waived,

the full text of the ordinance having been distributed to each member of the Council and copies made available to those persons attending this meeting; and the full text of the ordinance be recorded with the minutes of this meeting.

Motion Passed 8-0-0 (Councilor Tustin absent)

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to approve a bond ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$870,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS COURTS RESTORATION PROJECT; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$870,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION."

Motion Passed 8-0-0 (Councilor Tustin absent)

- c) Approve a bond ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$295,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH RENOVATIONS OF NORTHWEST PARK FACILITIES; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$295,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION."

RESOLVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, that the reading into the minutes of the text of the ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$295,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH RENOVATIONS OF NORTHWEST PARK FACILITIES; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$295,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION" is hereby waived, the full text of the ordinance having been distributed to each member of the Council and copies made available to those persons attending this meeting; and the full text of the ordinance be recorded with the minutes of this meeting."

Motion Passed 8-0-0 (Councilor Tustin absent)

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, to approve a bond ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$295,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH RENOVATIONS OF NORTHWEST PARK FACILITIES; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$295,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION."

Motion Passed 8-0-0 (Councilor Tustin absent)

- d) Approve an appropriation of \$55,000 to the Caring Connection from the Unassigned General Fund Balance

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, to approve the transfer of \$55,000 from the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance to cover the anticipated FY 20 additional operating loss.

Town Manager, Peter Souza, stated that the FY 20 adopted budget included \$114,770 in General Services funding for the Caring Connection. Based on current projections for FY

20 and taking into consideration additional March losses as a result of COVID-19, we estimate the loss to be \$169,770. Further impact of COVID-19 past March 31, 2020, is not known. Therefore, we are requesting an additional appropriation of \$55,000 at this time.

Councilor Jepsen stated he thought the motion should state where the funds are going to.

Town Manager Souza stated that we should insert after the word Fund Balance, "to the Caring Connection."

Councilor Wilkos moved to add to the verbiage where the dollars are being appropriated to the Caring Connection to cover anticipated needs for the remainder of fiscal year 2020.

Seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe.

Councilor Jepsen stated he does think coming up in our budget hearing it will be an appropriate time to re-examine the continuing operations of the Caring Connection.

Motion Passed 8-0-0 (Councilor Tustin absent)

e) Approve amendments to Council Rules of Order

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to approve the amendments to the Council Rules of Order as presented.

Councilor Jepsen stated the Council Rules of Order Review Committee was assigned the duty of reviewing the Council Rules of Order for consistency and ensuring they are up to date with today's standards. The committee finished their review and attached are their proposed amendments. The Town Attorney has also reviewed the document and has given his comments, which are outlined in the attached document.

Councilor Bress said she just wanted to support what Councilor Jepsen just mentioned. She is in support of all the changes and it was a pleasure to work with each the other two Councilors on this project.

Councilor Jepsen added we are accepting all of the changes outlined by the Town Attorney and changing the word 'Councilors' in item (b) to 'Council members' and changing the word 'vetted' in item (d) 'to 'reviewed and recommended.'

Motion Passed 8-0-0 (Councilor Tustin absent)

## 12) NEW BUSINESS

a) Presentation of FY 20-21 budget as proposed by the Town Manager



Deputy Mayor McAuliffe noticed \$900,000 in cash is coming from open reserves. He asked the Town Manager to remind him how much we usually put away each year. Is there a typical amount? Town Manager Souza responded there is not a typical amount. It varies each year depending on the revenue stream. There is not a set dollar amount.

Councilor Dobler stated that the Town Manager had spoken about refinancing debt to achieve lower interest rates. Has that all been completed, or do we have some other debt we can possibly save some more money on and refinance as well. Town Manager Souza stated there is not any outstanding debt that we can refinance. His recollection is that we cannot refinance for 5 years from the time that we borrow. Even though interest rates have dropped, we don't have any opportunities at this point to refinance.

Councilor Govoni asked about the bond ordinances that we approved tonight. When we originally developed them, we kept that current interest rate in mind when we did it on our expenditures. Has the interest rate dropped and that would become a revenue savings for us? Town Manager Souza stated based on the conversation the Finance Director and he had with the town's financial advisor, the municipal bond market has not seen a decrease in interest rates. The way the bond market is today the first 5 or 6 years are at a higher interest rate in the vicinity of 4.5-5%, then in years 6 – 12 that's when the interest rates drop to about 2.5-3% in today's current market.

Councilor Wilkos asked about power purchase agreements. How we are doing with energy costs that are down by 40%. I am hoping it will make its way to our final budget. Town Manager Souza said we have some contracts that are locked in until 2022. We will have to look to see if there are any possibilities with our multi-year contracts. We locked in about 18 months ago when rates were favorable and clearly things have changed since that time.

#### b) Consideration of Adjustments to FY 2021 Budget Calendar

MOVED by Councilor Wilkos, seconded by Councilor Jepsen to approve the amended budget review calendar as presented.

Mayor Trinks stated that in December the Town Council approved a budget calendar that outlined the process for submittal, review and adoption of the proposed FY 21 annual operating budget. As the current environment is being shaped by public health concerns, social distancing guidance and the creation of emergency Executive Orders, this lends itself to revisiting the Town Council's adopted FY 21 budget calendar. The calendar presently calls for five Council budget review sessions with final deliberations and the budget adoption by the Council on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

To reduce the amount of meetings, it is being recommended that a number of the departments not make formal presentations but that they be available to respond to questions from Councilors. Attached is a draft calendar which outlines four budget meetings with Council action occurring on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Jepsen stated the April 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting is a Wednesday not a Monday as stated on the document. On the final night we should remain open to the idea to maybe pushing that back since we are not going to have a referendum. Town Manager Souza answered the Governor's Executive Order does eliminate the ability to have referendum in-person voting.

Councilor Jepsen stated if you look at the full calendar, we only need to have a budget in time to set the mill rate in order to get tax bills out. So we could wait until the June 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting if we wanted to accomplish that.

Councilor Rampulla Bress asked with all that the town employees are doing with the crisis at the moment and the fact that there have been some employees that may be out or those needing to be away from the office, would it be more helpful for the Town Manager and the staff if the calendar was pushed out a bit.

Town Manager Souza responded that he appreciated Councilor Rampulla Bress' consideration of town staff's availability. However, after talking with department directors, they are able to meet the dates on the modified calendar.

Councilor Govoni stated this will be a new adventure with the public remotely voicing their opinions. There is a possibility, due to the crisis, that there will be a lot more people voicing their opinion. The only concern he has is whether we would have the capacity to take their calls and have the meeting.

Motion Passed 8-0-0 (Councilor Tustin absent)

**13) RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS – None**

**14) MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS**

a) Minutes of the March 16, 2020 Regular Town Council Meeting

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to approve the unapproved minutes of the March 16, 2020 Regular Town Council meeting as presented.

Councilor Jepsen asked if we should note who was physically at the meeting and who joined in remotely on the meeting minutes.

Councilor Black-Burke said she thinks this brings us back to the Council's Rules of Order and she doesn't believe it is spelled out in there to do that.

Councilor Rampulla Bress stated that she agrees with Councilor Black Burke—being present is present regardless if you are in Council Chambers or remotely calling in. I am not sure that it would have to be denoted that a person is sitting in a room or remotely attending the meeting.

Councilor Jepsen stated he did not disagree with the Councilors.

Deputy Mayor McAuliffe stated he agreed with Councilor Rampulla Bress and Councilor Black-Burke. He doesn't see a point in denoting whether you are in the room or not, especially in this day and age.

Motion Passed 8-0-0 (Councilor Tustin absent)

**15) PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS – None**

**16) EXECUTIVE SESSION – None**

**17) ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by Councilor Rampulla Bress, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 p.m.

Motion Passed 8-0-0 (Councilor Tustin absent)

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Penetra  
Recording Secretary