



**TOWN COUNCIL
VIRTUAL MEETING
JANUARY 19, 2021
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 Joseph McAuliffe, Councilor Nuchette Black-Burke, Councilor Lisa Rampulla Bress, Councilor James Dobler, Councilor James Govoni, Councilor Donald Jepsen, Councilor Lenworth Walker, and Councilor Kenneth Wilkos

2) PRAYER OR REFLECTION

Councilor Jepsen led the group in prayer/reflection.

3) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Jepsen led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4) PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS

5) PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

Donna Grossman, 781 Kennedy Road, stated that if the town cannot afford the \$15,000 to move the John Mason statue, she would be happy to start a 'GoFundMe' page in order to fund the statue's move. Ms. Grossman believes that many people would be happy to donate to this fund to avoid seeing any more social media posts about it. Regarding the Millbrook Village apartments, Ms. Grossman has read the petition submitted by the tenants about the conditions and how the residents have been treated. Issues that were discussed in the petition as well as previous issues have not been addressed. A great number of tenants are people of color as well as elderly or disabled. It is heartbreaking to read the issues being brought up in the petition and letters that have been sent. There have also been racist accusations.

Ned Bacigalupo, 89 Farmstead Lane, stated that he called in to represent 1,300 taxpayers from the Town of Windsor who have signed a petition to keep the John Mason statue where it is. Mr. Bacigalupo believes that the statue needs to be left alone and the issue needs to be dropped immediately. It is becoming neighbor against neighbor. Thankfully to a citizen's watchful eye, we have discovered that the Historical Society is hoarding funds in the millions. The Historical Society would like to build a palisade around the statue. This would be a wonderful solution for the Historical Society to pay for this and not the town. The palisade is a great idea and is supported on both sides.

George Slate, 74 Ethan Drive, stated that the Windsor Historical Society should be denied the \$15,000 request. For the latest IRS from 990 tax return, publicly available, the Windsor Historical Society had \$418,000 in non-interest-bearing cash. It also had \$410,000 of temporary cash investments. There were many investments well over one million dollars. The Windsor Historical Society is a well-oiled organization, financially speaking. The Town of Windsor should be asking for money from them. The September 8, 2020 agenda item summary indicated that the Windsor Historical Society would be paying for the \$15,000 of landscaping. The Council should remove the Historical Society as a recipient of the John Mason statue and the Council should direct the Town Manager to find an organization that will live up to its word and replace the Windsor Historical Society. Regarding the mural, Mr. Slate stated that procedures need to be put in place for murals on town roads. There should be procedures for Windsor based non-profits seeking gifts or handouts from the town.

Leonard Lockhart, 57 Columbia Road, on behalf of the Windsor Board of Education, extended an invitation to the Council to participate in the budget forum on January 20th, as the interim superintendent reveals the budget. Mr. Lockhart would also love for the Town Council to participate in viewing the budget process on January 26th at 6 p.m., January 30th at 10 a.m., February 2nd at 6 p.m., and February 9th at 6 p.m. There has been a large public relations blast in order to ensure that there is an understanding of the budget. Everything that is discussed will be public information. The Board of Education is trying to encourage more participation. The school district has sent invitations to all council members as well as the Town Manager.

John Dunn, 15 Strawberry Hill, called to speak about agenda item 12c, the approval of \$15,000 to the Windsor Historical Society. When the Windsor Historical Society agreed to accept the John Mason statue, they did not ask for \$15,000. Mr. Dunn would like to know why Windsor taxpayers should now be responsible for this expense. Mr. Dunn suggested that the Windsor Historical Society use their own funds that they have already. Mr. Dunn would like the Council to consider making a decision that is favorable to the Windsor taxpayers.

6) COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Dobler asked if anyone is available to participate on Thursday, January 21st, stating that Councilor Govoni will be giving a presentation on trees in town during the next Windsor Climate Action meeting. This meeting should not be missed and please do not leave the meeting early. Councilor Dobler stated that he too will be attending the meeting because without trees and vegetation we would not be able to survive. The link to the meeting can be found by getting in touch with Susan Miller, chair of the Windsor Climate Action, or go on the Windsor Climate Action Facebook page. Regarding the removal of the John Mason statue and the cost to the town, there was a discussion months ago both publicly and privately that there could be a cost to the town. At the time, the Town Manager did not think it would be significant, but he still felt that there might be a cost associated with the moving of the statue. Regardless of how much money the Windsor Historical Society has, Councilor Dobler feels that the cost is appropriate and worth it. Finally, Councilor Dobler addressed the article in the most recent *Windsor Journal* by a member of the Windsor Housing Authority Commission. It is not proper or appropriate to call someone racist because they have witnessed questionable behavior by a committee and

have called them out on it. That is the type of behavior that we are looking to get past. The letter was out of bounds and Councilor Dobler supports the person in question.

Councilor Walker asked everyone to stay safe as we are in the process of getting everyone vaccinated. Wear masks, practice social distancing, wash hands and follow additional CDC guidelines in order to keep everyone safe. As always, Councilor Walker urges everyone to support the local businesses in Windsor. Councilor Walker addressed comments from Mr. Slate, by stating that some of those topics will be cleared up later in the meeting regarding the moving of the John Mason statue and the issue of funds that the Windsor Historical Society has. Councilor Walker relayed a conversation he had with a young family who is doing everything that society is asking of them. This family had put their house up for sale. Councilor Walker discovered they are leaving Windsor because COVID had changed their financial abilities to stay in Windsor. This brings things into perspective when delegating how taxpayers money is being spent. Every penny that people are paying to the tax coffers in Windsor is important. We need to keep that in mind when we look at spending taxpayer money. Lastly, Councilor Walker addressed the issue with the Windsor Housing Authority. This problem with the Windsor Housing Authority has been going on for quite some time and it does not seem to be going away. Councilor Walker referred to a letter written by Mr. Bunk, commander of the VFW in Windsor, from December 2019. The letter explained that things have gotten worse over time, and now here we are in 2021 still hearing serious complaints from residents. Mr. Bunk's letter was sent to the town of Windsor, the Windsor Housing Authority Commission Chair, and carbon copied Mayor Trinks, Town Manager Souza, Town of Windsor Health Department, and Jane Garibay, State Representative. Councilor Walker stated that he is sure the Council will do something about the elder abuse that has been happening at the Windsor Housing Authority. When the letter was written and sent to the Council, Councilor Walker was not present, and he would like to know what was done with the complaint from Mr. Bunk.

Councilor Govoni followed up about the presentation that he will be giving to the Windsor Climate Action group. The presentation will be about the history of our forests, the impacts we predict will happen from climate change, and a chronological timeline of the major impacts that we've had on the forests from the 1620's to our present day. Different organizations that manage it and the necessary education to manage the forests in the future will also be discussed. There will be a question and answer portion at the end of the meeting as well. More information can be found on the Windsor Climate Action Facebook page, which will then prompt individuals to sign up. There will be follow-up information emailed to participants about zoom links and instructions.

Councilor Black-Burke stated that a special memorial was held earlier this evening for 400,000 Americans who succumbed to the COVID-19 virus. Councilor Black-Burke took a moment to acknowledge them with a moment of silence. Councilor Black-Burke also wanted to discuss the local statement in the paper regarding the Windsor Housing Authority. It is disheartening that the personal attack on one commissioners' character was based on observation of another commissioner. What is troubling is the lack of response to the borderline inhumane treatment. Councilor Black-Burke urged the commission to ask themselves what the response is/should be and now interjecting an allegation of racism. The thoughts and concerns of the residents could fall by the wayside because folks may be more focused on the racism allegation. It is the responsibility of the Windsor Housing Authority Commissioners to address, dispose of concerns,

and have discernment to determine the next steps. Things must be addressed. There is not room for anyone's personal slant. Race is an issue that we will continue to grapple with, but it is the complaints of inhumane treatment from the constituents that need to be addressed immediately.

Councilor Rampulla Bress concurred with Councilor Black-Burke's remarks. There were letters received regarding money spent on the equity and diversity proclamation. The community should know that the mural was secured by a grant by one of our boards and commissions, and not a penny was spent by the Town of Windsor or came out of the budget. Councilor Rampulla Bress shared that anything moving forward in terms of the diversity and inclusion initiatives comes to Council first through the agenda. We will and have been hearing of proposed items and they will be discussed openly by the Council. Councilor Rampulla Bress commented on the allegations made in the newspaper regarding the Windsor Housing Authority by stating that some of the things that are being said in the community and elsewhere are not facts. The facts are that a letter was received from Mr. Bunk by every councilor, and communications were made with the commission at the time. More recently, when the Council received more allegations sometime in November, a process began, and the process moved quickly. Reaching out to the constituents was our first responsibility to offer support. Quickly after that, the process continued and everyone became aware of allegations that began to surface. Our role as the Council is to respond to the constituents, to look at the way the commission was functioning, and to reach out to the commission to ensure they were aware of the allegations and why the duties have not been fulfilled.

Councilor Wilkos stated that he will hold his comments for the line items on the agenda.

Councilor Jepsen responded to Mr. Slate about the funding to the Windsor Historical Society. Years ago, we created a policy for this. It would behoove us to follow the policy we had regarding this appropriation. Councilor Jepsen wished the first lady of Windsor a happy birthday, on Thursday, January 21st. Councilor Jepsen stated that lastly, the Pierson Lane trucking outfit needs to go.

Deputy Mayor McAuliffe mentioned that we had adopted racism as a public health crisis back in June, well after the FY21 budget was adopted. When we adopted the resolution, we were all very clear in saying that there may be costs associated with it. At the last council meeting we approved \$35,000 toward employee diversity, equity, and inclusion training. This will now be a common training for town employees, which is a great thing. The trainings are expected to be finished by March. There is an RFP posted on the town website to get trainers. There were twelve companies that showed interest and the best for the Town of Windsor was chosen. This process has been just as transparent as any other acquisition of services in the town. There is not a plan to track any of the costs associated with the resolution separately, as the training is categorized under employee training. The Town Council, along with previous Councils and the Town Manager, have done an excellent job of keeping the Town of Windsor in an exceptional financial place. There should not be any concerns about this resolution and costs associated with it, draining the funds. Deputy Mayor McAuliffe weighed in on the attacks made about a member of the Windsor Housing Authority Commission. Adam Gutcheon joined the commission in November 2020, and quickly realized that there were serious problems with the commission

as evidenced by the petition that has been mentioned. Several articles in *The Courant* and *Windsor Journal* have been written about the project management problems with the renovations of Millbrook Village and the harsh treatment of the residents by staff at the Housing Authority. Deputy Mayor McAuliffe admires Mr. Gutcheon because he is there to support the residents and he will support him in this endeavor, as Deputy Mayor McAuliffe would support any commissioner who is willing to address the issues there. Lastly, Deputy Mayor McAuliffe wanted to address what happened at our nation's Capitol on January 6th. It was incredibly upsetting for a lot of people and should be recognized as an insurrection, not a protest. We need to remember that we are a country led by laws, not by men. Deputy Mayor McAuliffe asked that everyone think deeply about what happened for the first time since 1812 on January 6th. This is not something to be taken lightly.

Mayor Trinks stated that Councilor Black-Burke and Councilor Rampulla Bress articulated the topics on the allegations so well that he concurred with their statements. Mayor Trinks will discuss the other items as they come up on the agenda. Mayor Trinks wished Councilor Jepsen a happy birthday in advance as he shares the same birthday as the first lady of Windsor.

7) REPORT OF APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSION

a) Public Building Commission

A written report was given to all Council members prior to the meeting.

8) TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

COVID-19 Testing

Charter Oak Health Center is again offering COVID-19 Testing at The Holy Temple Church at 691 Windsor Avenue. Drive-up testing is available tomorrow Wednesday, January 20th. Hours are from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. There is no fee. To pre-register call 860-550-7500 and dial '0'.

Wireless Telecommunications Facility off of Prospect Hill Road

A private company has filed a permit application with the Connecticut Siting Council to construct a communications tower off of Prospect Hill Road near the Day Hill Road end. Per State regulation, the Siting Council has exclusive jurisdiction over the siting/approval of cell towers.

The Siting Council has set two hearings for March 4, 2020. An evidentiary session will be held at 2:00 p.m. and at 6:30 p.m. that day there will be a public comment session. The applicant will provide a brief overview of the proposal and the public may make brief statements into the record. Both sessions will be held virtually.

Later this week, town staff will be posting hearing information on the town's website. This will include how to sign up for the evening session as well as links to the CT Siting Council.

State Grant for Multi-Use Path Along Connecticut River

I'm excited to let the community know that Windsor has been awarded a \$500,000 state grant for the multi-use path along the Connecticut River in the Windsor Meadows State Park. This

grant will go towards the construction of an 850 foot trail segment that will connect Riverfront Recapture's trail in Hartford to the town's existing segment just north of Decker's Brook. According to CT DOT, this was an extremely competitive round of funding, with 43 municipalities applying for funds, and we were one of only ten being awarded this round. My thanks to town staff and our partners at Riverfront Recapture for all the work they did in preparing the grant application.

Youth Services Bureau Circle Groups

The Youth Services Bureau continues to offer a variety of virtual programs. These programs are free and will be held via Zoom.

The **Mother-Daughter Circle** creates a dialogue on healthy communication, stress reduction skills, setting clear limits, and relationship success strategies. This group will meet weekly via Zoom from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. beginning Saturday, January 23rd - March 20th. Program is for 4th, 5th and 6th graders.

Girls Circle will focus on community connectivity, healthy self-expression, and relaxation techniques during these challenging times! Girls will periodically receive kits with activity material delivered to their homes. The group will meet weekly from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. beginning Friday, January 22nd - Friday, March 19th, 2021. No program on February 12th. Windsor residents only. Space is limited so we are requiring registration. For more information on these and other programs, please call the Youth Services Bureau at 860-285-1946 or go to the town's website.

Electric Vehicle Charging Station

The EV Charging Station at Broad and Maple Ave public parking lot is up and running. In the first few days of operation we already have had a handful of users.

Per Town Council direction there will not be a user fee through the end of June 2021.

COVID – 19 VACCINATION UPDATE

Residents 75 years of age or older are now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. The Town is encouraging these residents to make an appointment to get vaccinated.

Given the currently limited supply of vaccine, it will take time for all individuals in Phase 1b to receive the vaccine.

Currently there three different ways you can make an appointment.

1. **Online**

A form can be accessed online that allows individuals to schedule an appointment through the web-based Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS).

2. **Telephone**

You may call Connecticut's COVID Vaccine Appointment Assistance Line at (877) 918-2224. The phone system was created in partnership with the Department of

Public health and United Way of Connecticut. The line will take calls on Mondays through Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and will offer a call-back option when all contact specialists are busy serving other callers. The team will aim to return calls as soon as possible, with the goal of same-day response.

3. Healthcare Provider

You may have already been or will be contacted by your healthcare provider to schedule an appointment **IF** your healthcare provider is participating in the state's vaccine program. ***Not all providers are administering the vaccine. Please don't call your doctor's office – they will contact persons 75 years old and older if they have vaccine.***

On Friday, staff mailed letters to 316 clients over 75 years old from the Senior Center & Social Services providing them details about vaccine distribution and a frequently asked questions guide. There is a limited supply of vaccine at this time.

The tiered approach to Phase 1b will proceed as follows:

- **Scheduling now:** Individuals over the age of 75
- **Scheduling next (likely early February):** Individuals between the ages of 65 and 74
- **Scheduling soon (likely late February or early March):** Frontline essential workers and individuals with underlying medical conditions who have an increased risk for severe illness

Please continue to take COVID-19 precautions. Remember to mask up and maintain proper social distancing.

Councilor Rampulla Bress thanked Town Manager Souza and his staff for going the extra mile and sending out the letters to our citizens who are seventy-five and older, as well as being willing to field questions and concerns.

Councilor Govoni would like to know if another bridge will have to be installed on the River Walk. Town Manager Souza stated that the thought is that Riverfront Recapture will put a crossing at Meadowbrook on the city Hartford line and there will also be either a culvert or a crossing over at Decker's bridge on the north end. Councilor Govoni stated that this is a great plan and a wonderful opportunity to receive the grant for the project.

9) **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

Town Improvements Committee – Councilor Dobler stated there is nothing to report.

Special Projects Committee – Councilor Dobler – nothing to report.

Health & Safety Committee – Councilor Black-Burke stated there is nothing to report.

Personnel Committee – Councilor Rampulla Bress stated the Personnel Committee met earlier this month and there are more citizens to put forward for the Council's consideration for boards and commissions.

Finance Committee – Deputy Mayor McAuliffe stated there will be a Finance Committee meeting coming up on Monday, January 25th at 5:30 p.m.

10) ORDINANCES

11) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Approve a bond ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$1,100,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE L.P. WILSON COMMUNITY CENTER BOILER REPLACEMENT PROJECT; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$1,100,000 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 bond ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$1,100,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE L.P. WILSON COMMUNITY CENTER BOILER REPLACEMENT PROJECT; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$1,100,000 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 being made available to those persons attending this meeting; and that the full text of the ordinance be recorded with the minutes of this meeting.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to approve a bond ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$1,100,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE L.P. WILSON COMMUNITY CENTER BOILER REPLACEMENT PROJECT; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$1,100,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION.”

Motion Passed 9-0-0

12) NEW BUSINESS

- a) Resolution of intent to remove appointed commission member

Mayor Trinks skipped over this Agenda Item and motioned for Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to add an agenda item.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, seconded by Councilor Jepsen, to add the resignation of Randy McKenney from the Windsor Housing Authority to item 13 on the agenda.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- b) Approve acceptance of COVID-19 related grants

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to authorize the acceptance of a \$241,114 grant through the State of Connecticut Coronavirus Relief Fund and a \$27,273 grant from the Federal CARES Act, Aid to Firefighters program.

Town Manager Souza stated the Finance Department has applied for a grant in the amount of \$241,114 from the State of Connecticut Coronavirus Relief Fund. These funds are intended to offset personnel costs for public safety, public health, health care, human services and similar employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

As part of the Federal CARES act, the Fire Department applied for a grant under the Aid to Firefighters program in the amount of \$27,273. Funds will be used to purchase disinfecting equipment which can be used to disinfect fire apparatus, buildings and various equipment used by firefighters.

Councilor Wilkos thanked Chief Lewis and Mr. Goldberg for participating in the meeting tonight. He extended his congratulations on securing these grants. This is great for all of us in the community.

Councilor Walker echoed the sentiments of Councilor Wilkos regarding his congratulations in securing the grants.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- c) Approve an appropriation of \$15,000 to Windsor Historical Society for costs associated with relocation of John Mason statue

MOVED by Councilor Dobler, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe that an appropriation of \$15,000 be approved from the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance for a contribution to the Windsor Historical Society related to site preparation costs for the relocation of the John Mason statue. Said contribution is subject to a final agreement between the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Windsor Historical Society.

Mayor Trinks wanted to start the discussion since he feels partial responsibility for this. While Mayor Trinks appreciates Mr. Slate's given numbers from earlier and his ability to articulate numbers, Mayor Trinks stated that he disagrees with him in this case. In the best-case scenario, this would not have cost anyone anything. Mayor Trinks was hoping in the beginning that the state would be willing to pick up these expenses. It was a compromise that was put together and it is fair to everyone. It will still allow the educational piece to be included. Mr. Shipman, from the Historical Society, and others involved in the Windsor Historical Society, have been at work on how they want to present all sides of John Mason's life. The Historical Society did not come to the Council asking for this, we put it toward them because they were kind enough to accept the statue. It is a partnership between the town, the Historical Society, and the state of Connecticut. The state will absorb the cost of moving the statue, the Historical Society is going to take care of maintenance, security, and educational costs. Mayor Trinks does not think it is unfair for the

town to pay for the installation of the base and landscaping costs associated with the movement of the John Mason statue.

Councilor Wilkos would like to know if the Windsor Historical Society is officially becoming the owners of the John Mason statue or if it is for the balance of the agreement from the original agreement with the State of Connecticut. Town Manager Souza asked Mayor Trinks if the Executive Director from the Historical Society, Doug Shipman, could answer Councilor Wilkos' question as he has been in much more detailed conversations with the State of Connecticut.

Mr. Shipman stated that the transition of ownership is the single largest point of discussion for the State of Connecticut DEEP and the Windsor Historical Society for negotiations. There are members of the Historical Society's board of directors that are concerned about potential future vandalism to the statue and are reluctant to own the statue immediately outright. The Deputy Commissioner of DEEP has instructed their subordinate staff that the state wants a clear transition of ownership by the end of the Lamont term of office. The Historical Society is currently negotiating a short-term loan that would, if not terminated by either party, result in a transfer of ownership after approximately two years from the State of Connecticut to the Windsor Historical Society.

Councilor Wilkos stated that Mr. Shipman's response helps his understanding of the current situation. Councilor Wilkos stated that he has been thinking about this subject and how it should be approached. There have been many good points brought up about the financials of the Historical Society among other things, but some callers did bring up that the Historical Society as an organization is a "well-oiled machine" and Councilor Wilkos agrees with that. There is a responsibility to cover these costs ensuring generations of Windsor to be able to go to the Historical Society to see and learn about the "rights" and the "wrongs" of John Mason. Councilor Wilkos feels that he is being pulled in two directions. As much as he appreciates the fact that we are able to put the statue there which helped ease concerns for a lot of people. He believes that at this time we should not be using public funds on this small amount because it has generated a lot of controversy and it would only be serving the best interest of half the people. From a public funding perspective, Councilor Wilkos does not think it is appropriate. It is important that the Historical Society have the ability to provide that continued education for generations to come.

Councilor Jepsen reiterated his position on this topic by stating that he did not care if the statue stayed in its current location or if it was moved, he just did not want town money to be spent on it. Councilor Jepsen stated that he will not be supporting this motion as it stands. It was mentioned before in communications, but there is a policy, and in Councilor Jepsen's opinion, that this motion is in violation of Council policy. There are three main items in the policy, Community Contributions and Grant Funding Policy, with eligibility criteria, factors to consider, and approval of funding. By our policy, these items end up in the general government portion of our budget, which is where a lot of community organizations are. That is the policy we adopted and that is where this should go. Contributions over \$15,000 are supposed to be accompanied by a formal financial review by a CPA and audited financials. Currently, it is not wise to pass this agenda item.

Mayor Trinks stated that he knows the item that Councilor Jepsen is referring to is specific to the budget process. Councilor Jepsen stated that it does not say it is specific to the budget process. Mayor Trinks stated that the Windsor Historical Society has received funds from the town under the policy. Councilor Jepsen stated that is possible, but this is not that. Mayor Trinks stated that if they did and they were vetted through that, then it would include something like this. Councilor Jepsen stated that it may be that the vetting is not an issue. Most of the criteria can be met but our policy states that we do this as part of the budget process.

Councilor Walker stated that this statue issue is and has been a divisive issue in the community. We have gotten to a point where we negotiated an impasse in something that is palatable to most of our residents. Councilor Walker is not sure that the issue is moving the statue as much as it is the process. We have a not-for-profit coming to the Town Council saying they want a certain amount of money. The Town of Windsor has a policy in place for every entity that comes to the Town Council to request taxpayer funds which meets a certain criterion. That is what Councilor Jepsen is referring to, the policy about expending certain funds. Based on the 2018 tax returns that are public record, there is about \$9,000,000 the Windsor Historical Society is cash heavy with. Councilor Walker stated he understands that there are restrictions on how that \$9,000,000 can be spent. Councilor Walker believes that if the Historical Society agreed to take the statue, he does not see any reason why they should not be able to pay for any costs that go along with the statue's removal from its current location. Councilor Walker does not support the movement of this item.

Councilor Rampulla Bress would like to know more about the policy that Councilor Jepsen is referring to. Councilor Rampulla Bress would like to know if this is something that Town Manager Souza could clarify at this time or if it is a matter of difference of opinion. Councilor Rampulla Bress stated that she is a rule follower and wants to ensure that we are abiding by policies that have been put into place. Secondly, Councilor Rampulla Bress feels that the Council voted to move the statue and we have given money in many cases with much larger amounts. If there is a cost already being incurred by the Historical Society, then this is a very small amount the town could contribute to have the statue in a place in town. Councilor Rampulla Bress stated that she heard someone talking about healing earlier, and for her healing would be acceptance of the fact that a vote was taken to move the John Mason statue. The statue was accepted by the Windsor Historical Society and the people in the community on both sides have been happy to see that it will be able to be honored and depicted truthfully there. If there is an answer to her first question, Councilor Rampulla Bress is in support of this motion.

Councilor Black-Burke stated that regarding the relocation of the statue, the conversation began with how we can work with the Windsor Historical Society and the DEEP to ensure that the statue is moved to a location that could still allow everyone to see the history in all of this. We made that decision as a Council and Councilor Black-Burke is concerned that this topic is still somehow creating a rift. By reading the backup provided of the statue's moving process, the \$15,000 is a portion of the cost. The Historical Society is only requesting that the town help with a portion of the cost. As a Council, this is the opportunity to ensure that the history of the statue is preserved. Councilor Black-Burke is voting in favor of this motion because as a Council we have the right to decide to give the Historical Society the \$15,000 so we can put this rift behind us.

Councilor Govoni stated that he has listened to all his fellow councilors and he has a lot of respect for every comment made. Councilor Govoni reflected on Councilor Wilkos' comment. Additional information is that the ownership of the statue seems to be changing in two years, which Councilor Govoni wishes was known in the beginning of the decision process. As Councilor Walker stated, this has divided people in town and Councilor Govoni has concerns about how the divisiveness will carry on as we go through our budget process. Councilor Govoni has been following the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims arriving in Plymouth, Massachusetts. It was nice the way they celebrated it. They recognized that when the settlers arrived they were not the best people toward indigenous peoples, but during the celebration they brought together people from the Netherlands, British, the Wampanoag nation, and the pilgrims for the first time to tell the story. That is very notable and it would be nice to see something like that on the town green. Councilor Govoni stated that the \$15,000 is a monetary value, but it is more about how the community reacts to it. Councilor Govoni hesitantly is going to vote no on this motion, because spending the money on something like this will upset a lot of people in town.

Deputy Mayor McAuliffe stated that while he appreciates Councilor Jepsen's input and vast knowledge on this topic, he does feel that there is a misinterpretation on those roles. Deputy Mayor McAuliffe stated that it is relatively nominal in the grand scheme of the town budget. At the same time, we need to have flexibility built in, which makes Councilor Jepsen's interpretation more rigid than mine in cases such as this. Some things cannot be predicted, so it would not be right to set the precedent of having strict rules for such nominal amounts of money. Deputy Mayor McAuliffe stated that he will be voting in favor of this motion.

Councilor Walker stated that he has listened intently to everything that has been said. We continue to say it is a nominal amount to be put toward the moving of the statue. If you listen to the sentiments of the councilors, it's saying give the small amount of money to the Historical Society, but what is hard to swallow is that the Windsor Historical Society has immense amounts of money compared to everyone else. The bottom line is the Windsor Historical Society is able to budget for the entire cost of the relocation of the statue and the \$15,000 could make a bigger difference somewhere else.

Councilor Black-Burke would like to know when conversations began about where the statue would go and as a town if we stated that we would assist if we needed to. Mayor Trinks stated that he had always hoped that the State or some other entity would come in and help with this, but he always knew there would be the possibility of the town contributing something toward the moving of the John Mason statue. With the way that it is mapped out now, we are not picking up the whole cost. Everyone is taking part in the general costs, and for the people who are in favor of keeping the statue in town, this is the vote to take because the Historical Society can continue negotiations with the State of Connecticut to ultimately own the statue.

Councilor Rampulla Bress stated that she firmly respects fellow Councilor Walker, but she believes that he may be mistaken in the connection between the young family and the \$15,000 toward the Historical Society for the statue. Councilor Rampulla Bress stated that she does not see how the two are connected nor how it will impact the budget in such a way that it will impact that deserving family. We do need to do more for the people in our community like that.

Councilor Black-Burke stated she understands that not everyone will like the outcome but people in the community have stated they want the statue to stay here in Windsor, not in public view, but somewhere we can go to see the statue and understand its full history. Voting in favor of this motion is the way to go if we want the statue to remain in the Town of Windsor.

Councilor Jepsen stated that it is true we have spent money out of the general fund but not to a 501c3. We have done it for lighting projects and other items that benefit the town. The only other organization we have given money to is the ambulance district and we had to do that because if there is a dire emergency you want an ambulance to come. Aside from that, we do not usually do this which is why we have a policy. Councilor Jepsen stated that he is sad to see the policy is going to be ignored. The Council has the power to ignore policy, but it sets a horrible precedence. Why set policies if we are not going to follow them.

Motion Passed 5-4-0 (Councilors Govoni, Jepsen, Walker and Wilkos against)

13) RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

MOVED by Councilor Rampulla Bress seconded by Councilor Dobler to accept the resignation of Randy McKenney from the Windsor Housing Authority.

Councilor Govoni would like to know if the allegations being made toward the Housing Authority will be put toward another person. Mayor Trinks stated that there are other entities that are looking into the allegations. Councilor Rampulla Bress stated that as the chair of the Personnel Committee, it is the job of the Windsor Housing Authority Commission to take care of the concerns. It is not that the Council will no longer be listening, but rather it would now go directly to the Commission where they have oversight of those concerns. It should also be known that the concerns have now gone beyond our Council and are now with State Representative Garibay. Ms. Garibay attended our meeting where we heard many resident concerns. These concerns and allegations will not be overlooked or dismissed. Councilor Govoni is very pleased to hear that because seeing the article in the paper and having conversations, it seems that we are moving in a positive direction.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Councilor Rampulla Bress stated that there will be more people up for their consideration and vote at the next meeting.

Councilor Walker stated that he hopes it is an appropriate time under the resignations and appointments agenda item to discuss the January 6, 2021 Personnel Committee meeting and an appointment with a vote of two in favor and one opposed for a position on the Human Relations Commission. Councilor Walker would like to know if this should be entertained now or at the next meeting. Mayor Trinks would like to know if that was a vote to appoint someone or if it was referred from the Personnel Committee to the Council and somehow did not make it to the Council. Councilor Walker stated that it is coming up to the Council for a vote, which will

appear at the next meeting. Mayor Trinks stated he believes it would be more appropriate to discuss it when the person comes up to vote.

14) MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

- a) Minutes of the January 4, 2021 Regular Town Council meeting

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to approve the unapproved minutes of the January 4, 2021 Regular Town Council meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

15) PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

Charles Windsor Jackson III, stated that he enjoyed this meeting. It was not quite the meeting he had anticipated it to be but urged anyone who is tuning into the meeting to get involved. It is very important that we the people run the government, and not just the government run us. Mr. Jackson does not want the open field named Wilson Park because it sounds like a project. If the school is going to disappear, it may be better to name it Roger Wolcott Park.

Ned Bacigalupo, 89 Farmstead Lane, stated that he is looking at a *Hartford Courant* article dated July 6, 2020, and there is a quote stating, "One thing is clear though, it does have to come down to, that is the bottom line." It seems that there was not much of a vote or argument, based on this quote. People were set on tearing down the John Mason statue. When the statue was commissioned, it had the granite rock. Mr. Bacigalupo stated that those things go hand in hand together. Removing the statue from the rock is an act of vandalism and desecration. Mr. Bacigalupo opted for the palisade museum expansion. Mr. Bacigalupo would like to know why the Historical Society is asking/being given the \$15,000 without showing the plans for the statue and landscaping. Mr. Bacigalupo would like to start the Windsor Musical Society and would like to receive \$15,000 to hire Max Creek to play on the Windsor green this summer.

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to enter Executive Session at 9:13 p.m. for the purpose of:

- a) Discussion of the selection of a site or a lease, sale or purchase of real estate (451 Windsor Avenue)

Motion Passed 9-0-0

16) EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Staff: Peter Souza, Town Manager; Scott Colby, Assistant Town Manager

MOVED by Councilor Wilkos, seconded by Councilor Rampulla Bress to exit Executive Session and re-enter the Regular Town Council meeting at 10:02 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

17) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilor Wilkos, seconded by Councilor Rampulla Bress to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Brisebois
Clerk of the Town Council