



**TOWN OF WINDSOR
TOWN COUNCIL
VIRTUAL MEETING
April 5, 2021
PUBLIC HEARING**

APPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Mayor Trinks.

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

Mayor Trinks read aloud the notice of the public hearing to hear public comment on:

“FY 2021 – FY 2022 BUDGET AS PROPOSED BY THE TOWN MANAGER.”

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

Coralee Jones, 1171 Matianuck Avenue, does not believe that there should be a tax increase for FY 21-FY 22. There is money being given from the government as well as the added revenue from Amazon. There should not be a tax increase at all. Residents should also be able to vote on the budget.

John Dunn, 15 Strawberry Hill, stated that last year the Town Council approved a \$122.1 million budget for FY 20-FY21. This was an Increase of 2.9% or \$3.43 million. The tax rate is currently 33.11 mills up by 2.25%. Windsor increased spending in taxation in a year when the world was falling apart and job losses were increasing weekly. For FY 21-22 we again have more of this. At this time, the proposed budget is an increase of 3.21% over the current year or \$3.9 million, bringing the total to approximately \$126 million or more. This would increase taxes by 1.8% of 33.71 mils. Mr. Dunn stated that Town Manager Souza said this is in line with the median budget tax increase which has been an additional 1.44% over the past 5 year average. We must maintain the budget so we don't reduce the services. Mr. Dunn asks that the Town Council review where cuts can be made so that taxes don't get increased over last year's. He also requests that the voters have the opportunity to vote via a referendum this year.

Ned Bacigalupo, 89 Farmstead Lane, stated that the town did not get the chance to vote on the taxes last year. When you buy a house, that's an investment. You're putting away money toward your future with each mortgage payment. When the taxes are increasing almost the same amount as the mortgage is, that investment becomes a liability. Tax money will never be returned to you. When you pay these taxes, it's a total

loss. Mr. Bacigalupo added that the people of Windsor do not want to pay \$15,000 to move the historic John Mason statue to appease the lawless liberals. Taxes are raised each year in Windsor. 10 years from now, we are going to be way over our heads. This is unsustainable. It's always the same argument that it's for the children so everyone feels guilty into voting for more taxes. He has attended every Town Council meeting for a year now and they're just finding ways to use money on ridiculous items that we don't want or need. They have a strange re-education program for the police. 8 hour classes are not free. LED light bulbs aren't needed. The democrats on the Town Council are tyrants with unending greed. They have a \$30 million rainy day fund they are sitting on. Windsor is one of the poorest towns in the region. We cannot keep up with West Hartford. Seniors are living on a fixed income and simply do not have the money to support the tax vultures at town hall. Simply do not raise taxes this year.

Susan Miller, 130 Palisado Avenue, called in support of the proposed budget. Ms. Miller wanted to thank the Town Council and town staff for all the thoughtful effort that goes into putting this together. One thing she was really thrilled to see in the town budget was the goal areas that were outlined with one of them being sustainability and environmental stewardship. She applied all the efforts that the town has made to date to reduce her energy costs and her fossil fuel burden. She's glad to see that the proposed FY 22 budget includes adding additional solar through the power purchase agreements and increasing the HVAC efficiencies at the schools and other places. These efforts have made and will continue to make a difference in reducing costs in fossil fuel emissions which is essential for our climate. She's also happy to see that the proposed budget has money placed aside for the Clean Energy Task Force initiatives. She feels that is important. She would like to see Windsor join the Sustainable CT program. They have a lot of options and it can help track our progress. More importantly, if we are part of Sustainable CT, the town can get grants to do those projects and non-profits could take advantage of those programs as well. She'd like to see the town hire an energy specialist like they have in West Hartford. These folks find savings that help cover their salaries many times over. She thanked the Town Council for keeping Clean Energy and sustainability a focus for the town.

John Dunn, 15 Strawberry Hill, called in and reiterated the comments that he previously made in the beginning of the meeting.

George Slate, 74 Ethan Drive, said that he doesn't recall ever seeing it before, but it was nice seeing color pictures in the proposed budget this year. Page 'xi' states that the town will continue their focus on diversity, equity and inclusion this year and will support efforts to enhance police officer training. Since the Town Council started these efforts in the past year, many of us would like the Council to be transparent and to disclose all of the spending done in the past year for these efforts and to disclose all the spending effected in the proposed and adopted budgets for these efforts. He just wants the Council to be honest with the spending they are doing for these efforts. I believe it was the Deputy Mayor who said there were no town funds spent on the mural. This is a false statement. He has asked unofficially for the cost of the public works employees

who brought and then removed barriers around the mural. He may have to resort to an official FOI request to get this information. Mr. Slate added that he and his wife budget \$100/week for groceries at Geissler's. One week he shopped at Price Chopper and his wife asked him, how much did you spend for the groceries? He said nothing because according to the Deputy Mayor because they were budgeted, there was no cost. Finally, since the Town Council has recognized Indigenous People's Day, how much is in the budget for the town's new logo and motto. Since you now recognized that there were actually people that now came to be Windsor when the white settlers came here in 1633, you now recognize that we are not the first in Connecticut. So please let us know how much is in the budget for the new town logo and motto since you now recognize that Windsor is not first in what came to be called Connecticut. As a Council you have certainly changed our dynamics in town over the last 12 months. Now when we say Windsor is first in Connecticut, you are telling us that that is a racist comment.

3) ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trinks declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Brisebois
Clerk of the Town Council