



**TOWN COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
APRIL 7, 2021  
APPROVED MINUTES**

**1) CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Trinks called the meeting to order at 6:30 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, Councilor Lenworth Walker and Councilor Kenneth Wilkos

**2) BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Board of Education (BOE) President, Leonard Lockhart; Vice President, David Furie; Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Terrell Hill; and BOE Business Manager, Danielle Batchelder presented the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

Mr. Lockhart explained that there were no changes to the budget that was previously submitted by the Superintendent and proposed by the Board. Mr. Furie explained the challenges faced by changes in staff as well as the ever changing regulations on the teaching environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Superintendent Dr. Hill discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the school system and when preparing the budget he took that into consideration along with how the community has been effected financially and physically. As a result, the Superintendent and Board of Education did not want a budget that would add any further hardship to the community, while continuing to educate our students at the highest level possible.

Ms. Batchelder explained the drivers of the 2.5% expenditure increase seen in the FY 22 budget. It includes Fixed Costs such as Bargaining Unit Contracts, Salary & Benefits, Contractual Obligations, Special Education Tuition/Transportation, Renewal of the Dattco Transportation Contract, and Technology needs post pandemic.

Estimated Revenues to the town are \$13,071,568 which include: Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) \$11,547,663; Health Services \$38,905; SPED Excess Cost \$1,300,000; SPED Tuition \$185,000.

Ms. Batchelder said that in addition to the expenditure increase there are decreases in the FY 22 budget too. Some of the major savings are seen in health benefit costs, retirement savings anticipated at \$300,000, and staff reductions as follows:

- 1.0 WHS Safety Monitor
- 1.0 Data Analyst/Technician (no fill)
- 1.0 WHS French Teacher
- 1.0 Poquonock Teacher
- 1.0 JFK Teacher (this reduction was supposed to be for the 20-21 school year)
- 1.0 SPMS Library Media Specialist (no fill)



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Service reductions also include \$200,000 for Kelly Educational Services (the district's provider for substitute services) due to the district hiring the appropriate amount of building substitutes for each building. Other service reductions is \$12,000 for the copier & printer management plan.

In conclusion, the total operating costs for 2020-2021 was \$72,551,799. The increase to the FY 22 Board of Education budget is 2.50% or \$1,814,586. Total operating costs for the 2021-2022 school year will be \$74,366,385.

Mr. Lockhart thanked the Board of Education staff, members and the community. He said that the Board of Education budget has been adopted by the Board and that Dr. Hill worked hard at coming in with a budget that reflects an increase that is in the middle of the road.

Deputy Mayor McAuliffe thanked the Board of Education for presenting and asked about more details surrounding the 10% increase in the Dattco contract. Ms. Batchelder explained that recently Dattco became unionized, which resulted in a significant increase.

Councilor Dobler asked what is going to happen to all the equipment that was purchased for the COVID-19 pandemic and is the staff going to be re-hired. Dr. Hill said that more federal funding is coming and that the BOE cabinet is discussing how that will be spent. He doesn't believe in just hiring bodies, he's looking at how best to utilize those funds. Ms. Batchelder said the equipment is in good shape to keep and that they will benefit because of the efficiencies gained. The dividers become flimsy, but most are for a one year use. They are not sure what will happen to the desks. They need to look at the *Town Charter* to see if they can sell them and give the funds back to the town.

Councilor Rampulla Bress congratulated Dr. Hill on his appointment. She also thanked the team for explaining the moving budget parts so clearly and she appreciates the willingness to rethink the use of Kelly Services and for going into a contract in good faith with Dattco since they employ Windsor residents. It's a difficult year financially and emotionally.

Councilor Jepsen asked if special education student outplacements trigger more revenues from the state for special education reimbursement. Ms. Batchelder said that the thresholds increase every year.

Councilor Jepsen likes the break out of grants in the budget document. Are we getting close to the Smart Start program grant running out? Ms. Batchelder said they are in year 7 of 10.

Councilor Jepsen asked about relying on grant funding to pay salaries and what's going to happen when the town experiences an anticipated hardship in future budgets due to revaluation. Dr. Hill explained they are not hiring anyone paid by grants on a permanent basis. They make it clear that grant funded employee contracts are year to year and they know that grants are not permanent. Ms. Batchelder went on to explain that grant funds received are to close the gap that was a result of the pandemic, and once the pandemic is over, the gap should be closed.



Councilor Jepsen asked if grant funding is going to be used to close the gap caused by the pandemic. Dr. Hill explained that it would and that they are in the planning process of that now.

Councilor Jepsen asked about the use of the word ‘fidelity’ throughout the budget document. Dr. Hill said if you want to make changes, you can’t expect everyone to follow a plan in the same way you direct it. He said if they are going to do something, everyone is going to do it the same way, without taking away creativity, so all students get the same experience.

Councilor Black-Burke expressed appreciation for the attention to the delivery to what’s happening in the schools.

Councilor Walker congratulated Dr. Hill on the appointment of his position.

Councilor Govoni congratulated Dr. Hill and asked if the increased cost for Dattco was absorbed by the company and us, not just us. Ms. Batchelder said yes.

Councilor Govoni mentioned that if we can’t sell the furniture, then we should give it to communities that can’t afford it. Ms. Batchelder said that they will consider that and that they recently donated old playground equipment at an elementary school to third world countries.

Mayor Trinks suggested that the Board of Education not be required to present again on where they are scheduled to come back on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The other councilors agreed.

### **3) REVENUES**

Jim Bourke, Finance Director for the Town of Windsor, provided a brief overview of the current fiscal year revenue projections and the proposed FY 22 revenue budget.

For fiscal year 2021, the adopted budget totals \$122,148,810. We are estimating revenues for this year to be approximately \$3M more than what was budgeted (returning \$900K and getting an additional \$2.1M).

For fiscal year 2022, the proposed General Fund revenue budget totals \$126,070,620. Most of the town’s revenue will come from two main sources. General Property Taxes are expected to contribute approximately 86% and State Aid for Schools is expected to contribute 12%. We are proposing to use \$900,000 from opening cash, which is the same level as the current fiscal year.

Councilor Jepsen asked about conveyance fees. We usually come in higher than budgeted, so why not budget higher. Town Manager Souza said it’s hard to predict large sales, such as the land sale on Kennedy Road for the Amazon business and the Great Pond property too.

Councilor Jepsen asked the same question about tuition from other towns. Ms. Batchelder said it all depends on state placements, which is an unknown.



Councilor Jepsen asked the same question about motor vehicle tax registered after the grand list. It's unknown and the value and collection rate fluctuates over the years.

Councilor Bress mentioned about houses flying off the market and does this have an impact on revenues. Mr. Bourke said we won't see an impact until revaluation and Town Manager Souza said it will impact conveyance fees.

#### **4) PUBLIC WORKS**

Bob Jarvis, Director of Public Works/Town Engineer and Whit Przech, Building & Facilities Manager presented the proposed FY 22 budget for the Public Works fund as follows:

##### FY 2021 Budget and Estimate

- Our overall FY 2021 expenditures are expected to be under budget by approximately \$161,000 (or 2%). This is primarily due to savings in Personal Services and Energy & Utility Savings. We had positions vacancies, employees on workers compensation, retirements and hiring of new employees, of which contributed to the Personal Services savings.
- In FY 2021 we performed or oversaw – the milling and paving of about 7 miles of roads, sealing of 21 lane miles of pavement cracks, cleaning of about 2,200 catch basins, the replacement of the high school tennis courts and the replacement of the stairs to Moorlands Street.
- With the guidance of the Public Building Commission, we directed the completion of construction of the new Police Department at 110 Addison Road. We also oversaw the completion of construction documents, bidding and commencement of construction of the improvements to the Fire and EMS Station at 340 Bloomfield Avenue.

##### FY 2022 Budget

- The overall FY 2022 budget reflects an increase of approximately \$110,000, or 1.4%, when compared to the FY2021 budget. This is mostly due to increases in Personal Services.

##### In FY 2022 we anticipate:

- Completing construction of the first phase of the International Drive Road Rehabilitation project, which is yet another project funded through the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Grant Program.
- We are also looking forward to working with the Board of Education to complete the installation of an air conditioning system and partial roof replacement at the Sage Park Middle School.
- We will be working with the Public Building Commission to complete the construction of the new Fire & EMS improvements at 340 Bloomfield Avenue.



- And we expect to complete the construction of the improvements to the athletic fields at the Sage Park Middle School during FY 2022.

Councilor Jepsen asked about vehicle and equipment replacement and the correlation to the maintenance budget. Mr. Jarvis said the fleet is between 7 and 8.5 years old on average. They have been able to reduce the age of the fleet and they now buy from one manufacturer so supplies are cut down. 60% of the maintenance is on the larger equipment and 30% on smaller equipment and the rest on environmental requirements. They also maintain equipment in-house as much as possible.

Councilor Rampulla Bress asked if there are any other capital improvements planned in this budget other than the couple big ones that everyone knows about. Town Manager Souza said within the General Services budget there is the on-going programs for the pavement and sidewalk management. 340 Bloomfield Avenue will be completed this fall and there is funding budgeted for debt service for this project.

Councilor Black-Burke asked where does the funding live for maintenance to the broken down medians on Windsor Avenue that are not in the southern part of town. Is there a plan in this budget for that. Town Manager Souza said that the lower part of RT 159 is the state's responsibility but the town took it over recently. There is reconstruction planned in the CIP. Mr. Jarvis said that Public Works has deployed new planters and that they do address maintenance issues in that area.

Councilor Wilkos commented on the aging of the vehicles and large trucks and that there is support for full blown equipment replacement due to the costs of maintenance on old equipment. Now is the time to look at this. Mr. Jarvis said that they have been replacing one large truck in the last couple of years and smaller equipment is slated to be replaced each year too.

Councilor Govoni said that the Wilson median is in disrepair because of utilities in the area as well as vehicles damaging them.

Town Manager Souza added that there is funding in the Town Manager's budget for littering and the Public Works budget includes additional funding for hiring seasonal staff to maintain medians and public spaces.

## **5) LANDFILL ENTERPRISE FUND**

Bob Jarvis, Director of Public Works/Town Engineer and Mark Goossens, Solid Waste Manager were present to answer questions regarding the Landfill Enterprise Fund.

## **6) RESIDENT TRANSFER STATION**

Bob Jarvis, Director of Public Works/Town Engineer and Mark Goossens, Solid Waste Manager, were present to answer questions in regards to the Resident Transfer Station.



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Regular FTE's are going from 3.8 to 3.85. Mr. Goossens said that it's a reallocation of the manager's time from one fund to the other.

Councilor Rampulla Bress mentioned that the weighing clerk took the time out to show her how everything worked. She also showed her the office and provided assistance. She appreciates that.

Mayor Trinks asked how the closing is going. Mr. Goossens said they were minimally slowed down last spring during the onset of the pandemic, but they re-diverted their efforts and got back on track.

Councilor Jepsen asked why the big bump in services. The wetlands mitigation project will begin this Spring.

Councilor Jepsen asked if the 3.80 employees will be absorbed when the landfill closes. Mr. Goossens said that at the end of the 2022 construction everything should be buttoned up. At that point, the staffing levels will be subject to change, most likely in the spring of 2023. Those that are contracted with the Teamsters will have opportunities to move to the Public Works department and there are also retirement possibilities. There will also be additional roads and open space brought onto the responsibilities of the town and there may be a need for additional maintainers.

Councilor Jepsen asked about the price guide increases. Town Manager Souza said they are directly related to the tipping fees we are charged.

Mayor Trinks asked if we will have issues disposing our trash due to CRC closing. Town Manager Souza said they have other locations other than the Hartford location, so regionally we should have an outlet, but costd will probably continue to increase.

Town Manager Souza added that there is a great recycling program at the Transfer Station.

**7) ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen and seconded by Councilor Rampulla Bress to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Collins  
Recording Secretary