



**TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING
APRIL 18, 2022
APPROVED MINUTES**

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trinks called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Present: Mayor Donald Trinks, Deputy Mayor Lisa Rampulla Bress, Councilor Nuchette Black-Burke, Councilor James Dobler, Councilor Ronald Eleveld, Councilor Kristin Gluck Hoffman, Councilor Kenneth Smith, Councilor Jody Terranova, and Councilor Len Walker

2) HEALTH SERVICES

Michael Pepe, Director of Health Services, and Jennifer Waldo, Public Health Nurse provided an overview of the proposed FY 23 budget. Highlights from the Health Services budget are as follows:

Synopsis of Budget Commentary from Page I-1

- For FY 22, overall expenditures are expected to come in over budget by \$97,490 or 12.9% due to the cost of additional part-time temporary staff and contractual nursing services. These costs are offset by the receipt of grant funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- FY 22 General Fund expenditures are expected to be under budget by \$28,560 or 5.1% due to grant funding associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The proposed FY 23 budget reflects an increase of \$41,150 or 5.4% due primarily to Personal Services cost increases and well as COVID-19 pandemic-related funding.
- The proposed FY 23 General Fund portion of the budget shows an increase of \$23,050 or 4.1% due primarily to Personal Services.

Councilor Dobler appreciated the work that has been done over the past two years. He asked about incorporating everything that the town has done in regards to COVID-19 and are planning on doing in the Emergency Operations Plan. Dr. Pepe said that yes some of that planning has been done through our Public Health Emergency Preparedness and this is an ongoing item. This is updated yearly, but during COVID-19, it was done more often.

Councilor Terranova thanked the Health Department for the COVID-19 vaccinations of children in the community. She asked about the increase in the bike helmet sales. Ms. Waldo said that most families had staycations this year.

Mayor Trinks asked about the mask dispensing event. Dr. Pepe stated that the town partnered with South Windsor for the last two years to do this event.



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Councilor Black-Burke asked if the Department had what it needed in its budget to continue to educate the community the way they have been. Dr. Pepe stated that there would be a community health needs assessment done at some point this summer to determine the areas that need to be focused on. At this time, the Department has what they need. Councilor Black-Burke thanked the Health Department for all the team does and continues to do.

Town Manager Souza stated that the plan is to ask the Town Council to fund the needs assessment using America Rescue Funds (ARF). There was a request for proposals on a range of costs and there was allocated money using ARF for potential outreach and programming that would tell us what the community assessment tells us. He said he wanted everyone to understand that was not built into the General Fund portion of the Budget, but that money came from ARF.

3) INFORMATION SERVICES

Anna Posniak, Town Clerk, and Enita Jubrey, Assistant to the Town Manager, presented the Information Services budget as follows:

For the current fiscal year, both our department's overall and General Fund budget is estimated to come in under budget by \$6,290 (1%) primarily due to savings in the Personal Services line related to staffing vacancies in the Town Clerk's office.

Our proposed FY 23 overall budget reflects an increase of \$38,410 or 5.5% due to Personal Services, increased costs for election-related postage, and the printing of the magazine *There's a lot to do in Windsor*.

The Town Clerk's overall and General Fund FY 22 budget is expected to come in under budget with a savings of about \$8,220 or 2% due to a staff member on disability. The FY 23 overall and General Fund budget reflects an increase of \$18,810 or 5.3% due primarily to Personnel Services and 2022 State Election Postage costs.

The FY 22 General Fund Public Relations budget is expected to come in over budget by \$1,900 due to an increase in printing costs for the *There's a lot to do in Windsor* magazine. That increase carries into the FY 23 proposed budget, and when coupled with additional increases in Personal Services, results in a \$20,000 or 6.8% increase.

Councilor Eleveld stated that Public Relations outreach is great. He asked about the person on disability and if they came back. Ms. Posniak said that the employee on disability did not come back. The Recording Clerk was promoted to the Deputy Town Clerk position and a new Recording Clerk was hired from within the organization.

Councilor Terranova asked about the Citizens Academy and what are the plans for this. She stated that one of the things that were discussed with ARF money was to incorporate the students into the Citizens Academy program. Ms. Jubrey stated that the feedback was to try it



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on another night. It was moved to Tuesday night but did not get enough registration for it. Ms. Jubrey said that a lot of ideas have been entertained and there are many challenges with this. Councilor Black-Burke asked with the FY 23 goals, is Public Relations able to share what communication methods are leading the work out of the public relations arm? Ms. Jubrey replied that they are what residents' preferences are and how they can reach them – print or digital. As far as social media, there is a Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook accounts. Councilor Black-Burke thanked them for their response.

4) LIBRARY SERVICES

Gaye Rizzo, Director of Library Services, and Gabbie Barnes, Wilson Branch Manager, were present and reported on the FY 23 budget as follows:

The FY 22 General Fund budget is expected to come in under budget by \$19,610 or 1.1% due, in large part, to a partial year Children's Services Librarian vacancy and electricity savings from converting exit lighting to LED. The FY 23 General Fund budget reflects an increase of \$48,300 or 2.7% due to personnel costs.

Library Services consists of a 32,620 sq. ft. main library in the town center that operates 61 non-summer hours per week and a 4,400 sq. ft. branch in Wilson that is open 44.5 hours per week year-round. The libraries employ 9 full-time and 36 part-time staff members.

Ms. Rizzo stated they are finally reaching a "new normal" after two long years of trying their best to both dodge and accommodate COVID-19. Foot traffic is increasing, masks are no longer required and meeting rooms are being used for their intended purpose again rather than as storerooms for much of the library's furniture. A goal for next year will be to survey patrons about other services the libraries offer and find out if there are ways to make them more accessible as well.

Each year, the Library is awarded a small grant from the State Library for participating in the Connecticard program which enables patrons from any public library in the state to borrow and return items to any other of the 192 public libraries in Connecticut. This past year, Windsor was awarded \$17,800, a clear indication of just how busy our two fully open town libraries were compared to libraries in surrounding towns.

Councilor Eleveld thanked the library and his experience has always been incredible there. He asked how the library helps people with memory loss. Ms. Rizzo stated that Social Services has helped with resources to better reach these people.

Councilor Terranova stated that it's wonderful for doing this program with the students to help increase the pipeline for library sciences. She asked about the mobile app from last year. Ms. Rizzo said that it finally started last week.



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Councilor Black-Burke thanked the library team. She asked about tutoring and if there is room to expand. Ms. Barnes stated that there are more tutors than students this year. In previous years there was a waitlist.

5) HUMAN SERVICES

Jasmine Hall, Social Services Coordinator, and Enita Jubrey, Assistant to the Town Manager, were present to discuss the budget and answer any questions from the Town Council. Ms. Hall reported on the following:

Our focus this evening is our proposed FY 23 budget. It includes increased use of grant funding and a request to move a part-time position to full-time. These two reasons account for more than half of the \$62,000 increase to our overall FY 23 budget. The remaining increase is due to other personal services needs within the department.

To date in this fiscal year, our part-time energy caseworker has facilitated energy assistance for 205 households. This is already more than last year's total of 189 and we still have 10 weeks left to go. Our proposal to increase this position to full-time is directly correlated to that rising trend, coupled with the rising demands for relocation cases, renters' rebate program, housing assistance, and overall case management inquiries. In short, our department is handling increased service demands with a staffing level that is the same as it was ten years ago.

Councilor Walker said that the Social Services department has increased its contact with residents that need energy assistance, so how does that differ from what Eversource offers. Ms. Hall stated that Eversource offers assistance through matching payment programs. Ms. Hall stated that our services provide education to their clients on how to go about processes and where to find resources.

Councilor Walker asked about what percentage of interactions are with the residents living at the Windsor Housing Authority. Ms. Hall said that she does not have the percentage, but they do have clients from there. Councilor Walker asked about the relocation services. Ms. Hall stated that if it is triggered, then relocation would be considered.

Councilor Terranova stated that she is in full support of increasing the staff and hoped to fund this full-time position this year.

Councilor Eleveld asked if Eversource is doing as well of a job as it could. Ms. Hall said that providing more seminars for customers would be great and helpful.

6) SAFETY SERVICES

Fire Services

Bill Lewis, Fire Chief, Steve Bianchi, Assistant Fire Chief, and Paul Goldberg, Fire Administrator, presented the proposed FY 23 Budget for Safety Services as follows:



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The 2021-2022 fiscal year budget expenditures are expected to come in under budget by \$24,460 or 2.1% due to lower than expected Energy and Utility costs as a result of moving into the renovated Fire/EMS facility at 340 Bloomfield Ave. later than originally anticipated. The FY 22 General Fund expenditures are expected to come in at \$46,740 or 3.9% under budget for the same reason.

Our FY 23 budget reflects an increase of \$99,970 or 8.4% as compared to the FY 22 budget primarily due to Personal Services, increased funding for firefighter recruitment and retention efforts, and operational costs associated with the newly renovated facility at 340 Bloomfield Ave.

We are taking a look at cooperative efforts with our surrounding fire departments who are part of a Task Force that we belong to. This includes training, mutual aid responses, equipment purchases, and sharing of ideas. The utilization of regional activities is being studied.

New members – we have developed and implemented a department-wide Recruitment and Retention Committee. To keep the Department all volunteers, the goals and objectives of that committee are to:

- (1) to discover and implement methods to recruit new volunteer members as firefighters and/or administrative assistants.
- (2) to complement our Junior Firefighter Program in an effort to have them become valuable active members.
- (3) to suggest and coordinate efforts to retain all present firefighters.

We are already experiencing some additional applications due to the efforts of this committee. This includes past members and new members alike. We have a total of 88 members with 62 active members and 6 junior firefighters. We remain one of the largest all-volunteer towns in the state.

It should also be noted that there is a House Bill #5213 in the State Legislature that is an act concerning payments to volunteer fire departments that respond to calls on limited-access highways. In our town, this includes I-91, Rt. 20, and Rt. 291. We are hoping that it becomes law and alleviates some costs associated with our highway responses.

Through the efforts of Assistant Chef Bianchi, the high school will be starting a firefighter elective course in the fall. Hopefully, this will help the kids to possibly decide on a career that they were not thinking about and to possibly get more volunteers for all departments.

Councilor Eleveld asked how many fire responses are there to the highway in a given year. Chief Lewis said that there has been approximately 125 responses.

Councilor Eleveld asked who provides reimbursement for that. Chief Lewis said that the State would reimburse \$700 for every response on the highway.



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Councilor Eleveld asked what the Town Council could do to try to help and attract more volunteer members. Chief Lewis stated that the biggest thing is recognition and replacement equipment as needed.

Councilor Walker stated that the taxpayers and residents in town owe the volunteer fire department a huge debt of gratitude.

Councilor Dobler stated that a class at the high school is a wonderful idea. How do we do it sooner than later? Assistant Chief Bianchi said that there are now three schools in the State of CT offering this class. He said that it has always been his goal to have a class. This would be a credited class of four blocks that would eventually do hands-on at the training facility on Bloomfield Avenue. Councilor Dobler asked when it would start. Assistant Chief Bianchi said it would start this September. Town Manager Souza said that this program would be called *Firefighter I*. Councilor Dobler asked if that counts towards their volunteer hours. Assistant Chief Bianchi said that it does.

Councilor Eleveld asked if there is still the Fire Juniors program. and would *Firefighter I* go in another direction. Assistant Chief Bianchi said that is correct.

Councilor Eleveld asked once they are done with the program, they would be a Firefighter I? Assistant Chief Bianchi said that they would be ready to take the class for state certification at the age of eighteen and hopefully pass the requirements for Firefighter I.

Mayor Trinks asked if there is any way to tap into the people who come to work in Windsor for firefighters. Assistant Chief Bianchi stated that they are starting that with recruiting.

Mayor Trinks asked if their own departments would want them to work in Windsor even though they are volunteering somewhere else.

Ambulance Services

Terrance Greaves, Ambulance Services, presented the proposed FY 23 budget for Safety Services as follows:

The FY 22 budget is expected to come in over budget by \$103,609 or 5.8% due mostly to overtime related to not being able to fill open vacancies. We currently are understaffed by one full-time Paramedic and one full-time EMT. Personnel-related expenses account for 71% of our costs.

Medical supplies are expected to come in over budget by 18.75% due to increased costs of medical supplies due to lack of supply as an ongoing result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The FY 23 budget is expected to come in 7.7% or \$138,610 above the FY 23 budget mainly to account for increased salaries to retain staff as other departments have raised the market rate



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for entry-level Paramedics and EMTs making it hard to retain and recruit staff. Additionally, medical supply costs, especially medications, have increased due to supply chain issues resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Mr. Greaves would be remiss if he did not thank the members of the community that have donated as part of our current community fund drive. As we begin the final quarter of FY 22 and move towards FY 23, we will be increasing our fundraising through grants, community and corporate donations to improve services with upgraded equipment and vehicles.

Councilor Dobler stated that what this department does is so incredible. He asked how the collections are going. Mr. Greaves said that the Medicare rates are set by the Federal Government and we only receive 70% back. It comes down to the volume and doing a lot of calls which leads to burnout. Many commercial ambulance departments have increased their funding and have alternatives to doing this job in areas of services that we do not offer. Councilor Dobler said that unless something changes at the State or Federal government, the Council would see him again next year with the same problem.

Councilor Walker stated that he fully understood Mr. Greaves' statements of payment rate from the Federal government. Most of Windsor is elderly and will be getting progressively more ailments and will need more. Councilor Walker said that what is troubling is that a lot of the residents have worked their whole life, paid their taxes, and we really need to have a good understanding of what we are doing with the tax dollars. Councilor Walker said that he will see the same problem next year and it might be even worse. Councilor Walker thanked Mr. Greaves for all that his department does.

Councilor Black-Burke said that she has had to use safety services over the last year and would probably see them again. This is a needed service and we have to figure out how to assist your department more.

Councilor Eleveld said the typical charge is about \$1,300 and the state only reimburses you about \$300. The rate by Medicare and Medicaid is automatically enrolled. This is a no-win situation. Mr. Greaves said that private insurance pays about 9%. Councilor Eleveld thanked the ambulance services and it is truly appreciated and needed.

Mayor Trinks asked about mental health calls and if Social Services should also be involved. Mr. Greaves said that yes and some towns have community paramedics who do a follow-up after people leave the hospital. There is a model that we could follow and start to explore. Mayor Trinks stated that he would love to hear more about this.

Councilor Smith said that he used the Ambulance Services for a personal matter and was greatly appreciative of their services. Councilor Smith asked how many ambulances there are. Mr. Greaves said that there are five ambulances and four support vehicles. Councilor Smith asked where the fuel comes from. Mr. Greaves said that they use the town fuel from the Highway



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Garage and pay for it. Councilor Smith asked about the utilities and cleaning costs at Bloomfield Avenue. Town Manager Souza said that is paid through the Fire Department budget.

Police Services

Donald Melanson, Chief of Police, Andrew Powers, Captain, and Suzanne Brannack, Executive Assistant, presented the proposed FY 23 budget for Safety Services as follows:

For the 2023 Fiscal Year, the Police Department's overall budget reflects an increase of \$466,230, or 4.2% over the FY 22 budget.

The Police Department's General Fund budget, including Town Support for Education, is increasing by \$431,170, or 4.1%.

Increases in both the overall and General Fund budgets are mostly due to costs associated with Personal Services related to wage and salary step increases and the addition of a new police officer position equivalent to .48 FTEs for the year and funding for .25 FTEs of a dispatcher position for a full fiscal year. Increases in the area of Maintenance and Repair include additional funding needed to pay the first full year of the public safety radio system maintenance contract and increases in software licensing fees. These two areas account for about 3.7% of the 4.1% increase in the FY 23 General Fund budget.

Councilor Dobler congratulated Chief Melanson for their first Arabic-speaking officer. Councilor Dobler asked if that was something they were actively looking for. Chief Melanson said that was a side benefit of their recruiting process. Councilor Dobler asked if the criteria has changed to include second language officers coming in. Chief Melanson said that they made it known through more colleges and diverse publications. Councilor Dobler stated that Windsor is a very diverse town and this would be a good thing. Councilor Dobler asked what getting accredited with the State entails. Chief Melanson said that a law was passed that requires all police departments in the state to receive accreditation by CLEA. There is also a State accreditation which the department is focusing on now. The State accreditation focuses on Connecticut law and the Connecticut requirements. Councilor Dobler asked about the amount of speeding in town. Chief Melanson stated that Windsor is two to three times higher at stops for speeding.

Councilor Black-Burke thanked them for the presentation. Councilor Black-Burke stated that she is looking forward to *National Night Out*. She asked about the Special Revenue funds and if the Social Work funds needed to be beefed up. Chief Melanson said that the Collaboration Federal Grant was from 2015 and was for two years. Some of the funds were offset by using the General Fund budget.

Town Manager Souza stated that as we move forward with our conservations with our Community Health resources through contractual agreements we would hopefully make this a full-time agreement by using the General Fund and the Community American Rescue funds.



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Councilor Eleveld asked what the cost is for a new officer just starting their career with the department. Chief Melanson stated that once there is an application, testing is done right away, a physical agility test, and then an interview is completed. Once that is done, a background investigation is made, home visits and speaking with neighbors. Chief Melanson stated that there is then a psychology exam, a polygraph exam and a medical exam. At that time, the applicant is offered a seat at the academy. There are seven months of training at the academy and then four months of field training. Chief Melanson stated that we are paying for someone for a year and cannot use it until they complete the certification process of eleven-months to a year.

Councilor Walker asked about the Park Wood Drive issue with the aggressive dogs. He said that he spoke to the Town Manager Souza about another street. The Animal Control Officer isn't certified, so how are we addressing complaints and what is being done? Chief Melanson said that last fall, the Animal Control Officer retired. At this time, a retired police officer was brought in and had been issued a waiver to be the Animal Control Officer. The new Animal Control Officer is from out-of-state and has been issued a waiver until the class is offered again. Councilor Walker asked if he heard correctly, we are not ignoring the residents and have taken care of the issues? Chief Melanson stated that the issues were handled.

Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress thanked the Department for the presentation. She asked about transparency and putting information on the website. Would more information be put up on the website? Chief Melanson said that we have the ability to put more information on the website, but what is the appropriate amount of information to put on there? Windsor is a very safe community. Chief Melanson said that they really look at the information that will jeopardize the public and that is when they really push to release information. Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress said that truth is more important than rumors that are being spread.

Councilor Eleveld asked about the Animal Control Officer in Hebron helping out. Who pays for that? Chief Melanson said that it was not for enforcement but for animal placement and assistance. Chief Melanson said that we are being reimbursed every day by Hebron that we are there.

Councilor Smith asked about *Bullying, Gangs, and Drugs*. He asked about the catalytic converters being stolen and where do we stand with that. Chief Melanson said that it's a problem that is still occurring statewide. Windsor Detectives are working with a statewide task force. The task force has identified several key players. Once they are arrested, it should slow down.

7) RECREATION & LEISURE SERVICES

Paul Norris, Director of Recreation and Leisure Services; Rich Henderson, Recreation Assistant Director; Rebecca Joyce, Senior Services Coordinator; George Headley, Senior Transportation Coordinator; Marilyn Smith, Northwest Park Manager, and Sarah Maffiolini, Youth Services Bureau Coordinator, gave an overview of the Budget and were available for questions.



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The FY 22 overall Recreation and Leisure Services expenditures will be under budget by approximately \$93,750 or 3.0%. This is primarily due to reduced and canceled or lower program enrollments due to the continued COVID-19 pandemic. The FY 22 General Fund expenditures are also expected to be under budget by \$41,430 or 1.9%.

The overall FY 23 budget reflects an increase of \$185,220 or 5.9%. The General Fund Budget is expected to increase by \$115,320. This is a reflection of an increase in Personal Services, Energy and Utilities. Driving forces with these increases include the effects of changes to the State minimum hourly wage, converting a part-time position into a full-time position in Senior Services.

Councilor Eleveld said that recently someone asked about animal care issues at Northwest Park. Mr. Norris stated that it was more about training for the animal feed volunteers before COVID-19.

Councilor Eleveld asked about the special revenue funds increase due to looking at the expansion of available programs. Councilor Eleveld said that they are looking into increasing one full-time staff this year. Mr. Norris said that seasonal workers are temporary and part-time employees. Councilor Eleveld asked if Mr. Norris is providing the necessary services to our seniors. Mr. Norris said that is correct and they are looking for more types of programs and staff.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked about the specific programs for the Senior Center. Mr. Norris said that they are looking for different types of programs for younger senior members such as health and fitness. Mr. Norris said that they are increasing their number of evening trips to attract the younger senior population. The Senior Center has always done an amazing job with the senior program Early bird suppers they love and want more of it. A lot of this is happening because of the superior staff we have in transportation.

Councilor Terranova asked about the increases in the price guide and the driver behind the increases. Mr. Norris said that driving increases are due to the cost of personnel services and the cost of supplies.

Councilor Black-Burke asked about a survey regarding the summer programming. What are the benchmarks that are in place for residents to utilize it? How would that impact what is before us? Mr. Norris said that they benchmark with other towns across the state. The program surveys are done after every program and the percentages are calculated from them. Annual surveys of the residents that have taken our programs are sent out to see what else the residents might want.

Mr. Norris stated that nothing beats networking. Mr. Norris said that they are constantly looking for programs to make them better.

Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress thanked the different departments for their presentations. She encouraged everyone in town to join the Senior Center if they are of age. She also stated that the Department is doing an amazing job in advertising and promoting these programs. When



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she is on Facebook, she sees posts regularly about what the students are doing, programs and trips. Mr. Norris and his department are doing a wonderful job informing the community. She added that the only request she has is if there are any scholarships for seniors to participate in programs. Mr. Norris said that the Senior Center has no required fee to join or participate in any of their programs. Mr. Norris said that there are no policies for scholarships and they do not turn away anyone who can't afford to participate.

Councilor Walker said that he noticed that the town has different publications for different areas. Mr. Norris said that their number one "go to" is the *There's A Lot to Do in Windsor* magazine, followed by the Town website.

Councilor Smith said that he has used the Senior Center and wanted to give Rebecca and Stephanie a shout-out for the job they do there. The website is confusing when you look up the Senior Center as it comes up as 330 Windsor Avenue where it's at L.P. Wilson. Mr. Norris said that he would look into that.

Councilor Eleveld asked about private contributions. Mr. Norris said that private contributions could be the Friends of Northwest Park or a Memorial fund.

8) CHILD AND ADULT DAY CARE ENTERPRISE FUNDS

Laura Casey, Discovery Center and Montessori School Director, and Cheryl Rosenbaum, Caring Connection Manager, were present to answer questions posed by the Town Council.

CHILD DAYCARE

Montessori School

Laura Casey, Discovery Center and Montessori School Director, stated the FY 22 budgeted loss was \$144,360. The Office of Early Childhood increased their capacity to 100% in July of 2021, but there were still families that were anxious over the uncertainty of the COVID-19 virus for unvaccinated children. In addition to the uncertainty, families were working from home therefore they no longer needed before and after school care for their elementary-age students. The elementary program had 85% enrollment during the summer months and 40% during the academic year.

The Primary Montessori program averaged 93% capacity for the summer months and 83% during the academic year.

The infant and toddler programs have been at 100% capacity this entire fiscal year.

We are still rebuilding from the COVID-19 pandemic. As families are returning to the office, we've experienced an increase in inquiries.



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As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Child Development fund has an estimated loss of \$233,990 for FY 22.

Child Development

Ms. Casey stated that an operating loss of \$176,640 is projected for the Child Development Fund for FY 23. The FY 23 budget was developed with the assumption of returning to full capacity in most programs. It is anticipated that it will take at least one more year to return to full capacity in the elementary programs as families return to the office.

After \$70,000 from the Office of Early Childhood Stabilization Grant is applied to the Child Development fund, we will have a net position of \$79,920.

To date, we are implementing most of the Office of Early Childhood recommendations to mitigate the spread of the pandemic.

These mitigation practices require additional staff to maintain student cohorts. Due to these practices, we have been effective in reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus within our school. By implementing these recommendations, we are beginning to build the trust that families need to enroll their children in a school setting.

We will continue to offer the full and half-day programs five days per week in the Primary and Toddler classroom, full-time infant care, and after-school care for the elementary groups plus summer programs for all ages. The FY 23 proposed revenues include a \$25 increase for registration and a \$100 per child activity fee. The FY 22 projected expenditures are based on current staffing.

Councilor Eleveld asked about the projected loss for this year and next year. Do we charge a level of tuition that is the same amount for private service? Ms. Casey said that we charge lower on Montessori services.

Councilor Eleveld asked what about the Daycare and younger child development areas charges. Ms. Casey said that they are comparable.

Councilor Eleveld asked why we are lower on Montessori than other communities. Ms. Casey stated that the school stays lower to attract the residents. She said that other schools have grants that help run their schools and that Windsor Montessori is solely operated by parent tuition.

Councilor Eleveld asked about what state grants Ms. Casey is expecting. Ms. Casey said that the school received money from the Office of Early Childhood in the Ready, Set, Rebuild grant where \$73,000 would be spent this year. There would be approximately \$100,000 left in grant money to be spent by September of 2023.



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Councilor Eleveld said that we are competing with for-profit enterprises. What percentage of the people who participate are not from Windsor? Ms. Casey said that most of the people are Windsor residents. Councilor Eleveld said that we need to see if this is economically feasible and maybe start down a different path. Town Manager Souza stated that this has been a policy discussion in past years for previous Town Councils. Town Manager Souza said that unfortunately, the Discovery Center has had to tap into over \$350,000 of its retained earnings. In general, it's been a positive growing concern and there have been ups and downs depending on the year. Town Manager Souza said that prior Councils have continued to believe it was an added value to the community as a whole.

Councilor Eleveld asked Town Manager Souza for the percentage of Windsor residents and also to take a look at data from five years ago. Town Manager Souza said that can be arranged.

Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress appreciated Councilor Eleveld's questions. She stated this is a program that is not available everywhere and a benefit to children. She understands totally about COVID-19 and asked how many citizens we actually serve. What are other towns projecting if grants were taken away and are they seeing enrollment problems? Ms. Casey said that there is a total 94 students during school. There is 100% enrollment for the summertime. The Elementary Program should be growing soon. Ms. Casey said that the numbers are looking better now than before.

Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress stated that there is a lack of daycare and this problem is happening everywhere. She asked when you think we would be back to normal. Ms. Casey stated that we are struggling to get qualified staff.

Councilor Black-Burke thanked Ms. Casey for her presentation. She said that this is a national problem. What consideration has been given to outreach for grant funding? Councilor Black-Burke said that she knows there are not as many grants for a Montessori program. Do you need assistance with this? Ms. Casey said that she has applied for a few grants and that the Office of Early Childhood did give them a grant. She looks for grants all the time and applies for them. Councilor Black-Burke said that she credits the staff's dedication and what they want to do for their students.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked about more people keeping their children home instead of coming there. Ms. Casey said that she has 57 students out of 60 for September and is confident what they are doing is working. There is a referral program. Ms. Casey stated that she is constantly conducting tours. Councilor Gluck Hoffman stated that she is a big supporter of Montessori.

CARING CONNECTION

Ms. Cheryl Rosenbaum stated that revenues and attendance are still being affected by the pandemic. We are just beginning to see some small increases in our numbers and I am thrilled. When we prepared the budget back in early March we were looking at needing a \$30,000 end-



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of-year transfer. However, tonight I am very happy to report that we received additional revenue as a result of the increased Medicaid reimbursement rate and recently received \$4,272.00 in ARPA funds. The Caring Connection is trending toward a positive net position for FY 2022 but we may need to request a small end-of-year transfer out of an abundance of caution.

Adult Day Centers across the state together with our professional organization are currently lobbying for legislation that will avail perspective Medicaid clients more direct access to our program. A possible supplemental payment to assist with transportation costs is also included in the bill.

Ms. Rosenbaum is most excited about a couple of recent partnerships between the Caring Connection and two new referral sources working with us and promoting our services. The Caring Connection has also been working with Zen City, a marketing consulting firm that is helping us to look at outreach and marketing with a fresh perspective.

Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress said that she loved the idea of using the marketing firm and finding new ideas through that avenue. She stated that she is very grateful for the Caring Connection keeping our seniors safe. She is happy they are working with the State Representatives to get more aid for this program.

Councilor Black-Burke thanked the Caring Connection for all that they are doing.

Councilor Eleveld asked for five years' worth of history of the Caring Connection. What percentage of your clients are Windsor residents? Mrs. Rosenbaum stated that at this time 50% are Windsor residents. Councilor Eleveld asked if there are other alternatives that offer similar services in the private sector. Ms. Rosenbaum stated that there are adult day centers across the state, but several of them close to Windsor have closed. Councilor Eleveld asked if they are charging an appropriate level for the services performed. Ms. Rosenbaum stated that yes they do.

Town Manager Souza asked Ms. Rosenbaum to expand on the reimbursement. Ms. Rosenbaum stated that the rate that is charged is the same as other centers. The Medicaid rate was just increased and moved this year from \$74.74 to \$81.50 a day. Councilor Eleveld said that is a 10% increase.

Councilor Eleveld asked where you are attracting people from. Ms. Rosenbaum said that she markets it, on Facebook, and receives calls from residents. This is a service that people do not always know about until they need it. Councilor Eleveld stated that it's not only a daycare but respite care. Ms. Rosenbaum stated that it's not always a parent, but spouses. She is seeing

Parkinson's patients and early-onset Alzheimers. Councilor Eleveld said that it's not fair that other towns are taking advantage of Windsor. Ms. Rosenbaum said that it's a valid program we provide. Councilor Eleveld asked for five years of the past year's data to look at. Councilor Eleveld thanked them for the services they provide.



Town Council Special meeting
April 18, 2022

Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress said that military families don't have to travel to Newington and could be closer to Windsor and have this program be available to them. Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress said that there are similar towns that provide this opportunity to us. Ms. Rosenbaum said that they are contracted with Veteran's Affairs (VA) and have VA clients in our programs.

Councilor Smith asked if Enfield closed their facility. Councilor Smith said that one town to support this is hard and it should be a county thing to bring in more people. Town Manager Souza said that he has had conversations with other communities about contributing. Councilor Smith asked if they are state-certified. Ms. Rosenbaum said that they are accredited and are a part of the CHCP.

9) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) April 4, 2022, Public Hearing (FY 23 proposed budget)

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress seconded by Councilor Smith to approve the unapproved April 4, 2022 Public Hearing minutes (FY 23 proposed budget) as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- b) April 4, 2022, Regular Town Council meeting

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress seconded by Councilor Smith to approve the unapproved April 4, 2022 Regular Town Council meeting minutes as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

10) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilor Eleveld and seconded by Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Ozaki, Recording Secretary