



**TOWN OF WINDSOR
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING
FEBRUARY 6, 2023
PUBLIC HEARING**

APPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

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

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

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

Fiscal Year 2024 budget development

And

AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$260,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH TOWN AND SCHOOL FACILITY PAVING IMPROVEMENTS; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$260,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION.

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

John Dunn, 15 Strawberry Hill, commented on the FY 24 budget. He stated the new budget should be created with no increase in taxes for residents and businesses. Keep what money residents have in their pockets not in the Town of Windsor rainy day funds for future spending on what they feel will be needed. Residents are being forced to cut back on spending and fixed costs so our town should also.

Jill Canter, 689 Palisado Avenue, stated that she is asking that there be no tax increase to the residents and taxpayers. A few years ago, property tax values increased and the town reassessed real estate which caused a significant increase on the grand list thereby collecting more real estate tax. Every year with the property tax on automobiles, the tax has increased. Auto taxes went up by 8% from 2021-2022 even though our vehicles became a year older. Groceries have increased, gas has increased, home heating oil has increased, diesel increased, electricity and water increased. Companies are laying off employees. She is asking that the town put the budget on a diet and that there be no tax increase. In addition, she is opposed to diet roads. They are unsafe and will increase the number of accidents. Drivers will speed onto nearby sidewalks where pedestrians walk endangering their lives. Numerous school buses drive on RT 159. This will cause delays for everyone. Emergency vehicles, such as fire engines travel on this

road. Realistically, there will not be a place for vehicles to move out of the way for the fire engines.

Jim Durant, 166 Sunnyfield Drive stated that he had proposed some chess boards be placed on the town green. He remembers that he was told by the Mayor that a boy scout was working on the project. He would suspect at this time that there would be a need to start doing the project. To do that, you need money. He would like to see the town budget include an item for the town chess boards on the green. He feels it would be good for the town and he believes most individuals on the Town Council believe the same as well. Mayor Trinks added that he sat down with the boy scout the other day. He has it all mapped out and now he is at the point where he is doing the fund raising for the project. Mr. Durant added that the fundraising is a good idea but he would hate to think that the fate of the chess boards will be left to the funding of it.

William Pelkey, 133 Portman Street, stated we should try to keep a status quo this year on things. Regarding the budget, he'd like to take a look at the small services such as subscription services, etc. These small services have added up over the years. Perhaps it has become customary to do them and maybe it's not something that we really need to do. He is looking at the Milo Peck School as an example, or the Caring Connection, etc. It is not about the work that is being done there, it's about if it's something that we as a town should be doing. Let's make it a part of the Board of Education or let's have it stand on its own. It's the small, little things that add up. In example, if you take a median residential tax bill in town for a year, let's say that's \$7,000, for every \$7,000 we choose to spend or not spend, we basically have a lottery. We can say to one potential resident in town that you can have \$7,000 off your tax bill. Every time that the town spends money, that is one property owner that doesn't have to necessarily spend some money. He stated it isn't that there aren't items that should be invested in, such as Mr. Durant's suggested chess board project. He stated that the town should take a fine toothed comb and take a look at some things and at the same time look at paying for projects up front and not bond as much. Tonight we will be looking at a \$260,000 bond ordinance. It's not about whether the project is actually needed or not. It's more about do we need to get another \$20,000 a year in debt. Some of that cost we will have, but just in terms of the interest alone, it works out to about one person per year who wouldn't have to pay property tax. He asked that the Council keep the small things in mind.

Cora Lee Jones, 1171 Matianuck Avenue, stated that the budget is her number one priority each year. She feels that the priority for the Town Council should be for the health and safety of its residents and visitors. She wants to make sure that Police and Fire Departments have the funds they need to get the equipment and staff they need to keep us safe. It has become very difficult for people with the economy as it is. Her grocery bill used to be \$60 when she went shopping, but now she can't get out of the store without paying at least \$100. That's got to be devastating for those that have families. We need to keep in mind what we are doing with our money. With the infusion of all the American Rescue Funds the town has received, she doesn't see a reason for an increase in taxes.

Linda Alexander, 155 Fieldstone Drive, stated that she is echoing what Cora Lee Jones said. She was Chief Medical Director for several different companies and her job was to provide healthcare services. She was never handed a blank check. She was never asked how much money she needed for the year. Instead, she was asked to cut her expenses by 7.5% for her department. She didn't want to do it, because it would have been difficult but she also didn't want to lose her job. So every year, she has reviewed where we could save money in the town's budget. She said that it should be the Town Council's job as well. Can you do an excellent job and keep your expenses level?

Karin Ravalese, 23 Quail Hollow Drive, stated that she is here to support the other residents at the meeting on not having a tax increase. She also stated that she is in agreement of taking care of our medical and police personnel.

Charles Jackson, 26 Wilson Avenue, stated he wanted to echo what everyone else is saying, he doesn't want a tax increase. He mentioned that there will be an emerging market coming into play soon in Windsor. He asked Town Manager Souza if he could have Pat McMahon, Economic Development Director, reach out to him. This venture will include a 3% sales tax that will be going directly to the local municipalities. It has a potential of providing many jobs.

3) ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trinks declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary