



Council Agenda

Council Chambers
Windsor Town Hall
May 1, 2023



Zoom Instructions

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Please call: **312 626 6799** or **646 558 8656**

1. When prompted for participant or meeting ID enter: **835 2735 5006** and then press #
2. You will then enter the meeting muted. During 'Public Comment' if you wish to speak press *9 to raise your hand. Please give your name and address prior to voicing your comments.

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1. Only if your computer has a microphone for two way communication, then during Public Comment if you wish to speak press **Raise Hand** in the webinar control. If you do not have a microphone you will need to call in on a phone in order to speak.
2. During 'Public Comment' if you do not wish to speak you may type your comments into the Q&A feature.

7:20 PM Public Hearing

To hear public input on the Fiscal Year 2023 Community Development Block Grant program

7:30 PM Regular Council Meeting

1. ROLL CALL
2. PRAYER OR REFLECTION – Councilor Dobler
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Councilor Dobler
4. PROCLAMATIONS/AWARDS
 - a) Proclamation declaring April 30, 2023 – May 6, 2023 as National Small Business Week
 - b) Proclamation declaring May 2023 as Historic Preservation Month
 - c) Proclamation declaring May 2023 as National Mental Health Awareness Month
5. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS
(Three minute limit per speaker)
6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS
7. REPORT OF APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
 - a) Board of Education
 - b) Economic Development Commission
 - c) Board of Assessment Appeals



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8. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT
 9. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES
 10. ORDINANCES
 11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 12. NEW BUSINESS
 - a) *Set a Public Hearing for June 5, 2023 at 7:20 p.m. to solicit public comment on applications for participation in the Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit Program (Town Manager)
 - b) *Approve an appropriation of \$65,000 from the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance for Goslee Pool Bathhouse Renovation Project (Town Manager)
 - c) *Approve an authorization of \$35,000 in American Rescue Funds to the Windsor Housing Authority for design services related to Shad Run (Town Manager)
 - d) *Introduce an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS' EXEMPTION." (Town Manager)
 - e) *Set a Public Hearing for May 15, 2023 at 7:20 p.m. for an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS' EXEMPTION." (Town Manager)
 13. *RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS
 14. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS
 - a) *Minutes of the April 3, 2023 Public Hearing
 - b) *Minutes of the April 3, 2023 Regular Town Council meeting
 - c) *Minutes of the April 4, 2023 Special Town Council meeting
 - d) *Minutes of the April 17, 2023 Special Town Council meeting
 - e) *Minutes of the April 19, 2023 Special Town Council meeting
 - f) *Minutes of the April 24, 2023 Special Town Council meeting
 15. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS
(Three minute limit per speaker)
 16. EXECUTIVE SESSION
 17. ADJOURNMENT

Proclamation

*Designating April 30, 2023 – May 6, 2023 as
Small Business Week in Windsor*

WHEREAS, from storefront shops, restaurants and personal services in downtowns and neighborhood commercial villages to high tech firms that keep America on the cutting edge, small businesses are the backbone of our economy and the cornerstones of our nation's promise; and,

WHEREAS, small business owners and Main Street business have energy and a passion for what they do; and,

WHEREAS, when we support small business, jobs are created and local communities preserve their unique culture; and,

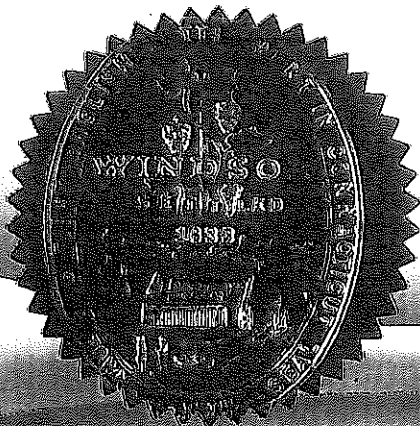
WHEREAS, because this country's 33 million small businesses create nearly two out of three net new jobs in our economy, we cannot resolve ourselves to create jobs and spur economic growth in America without discussing ways to support our entrepreneurs; and,

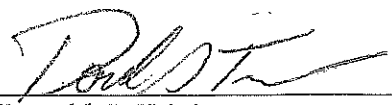
WHEREAS, Windsor is enhancing its entrepreneurial ecosystem by partnering with First Town Downtown, the Chamber of Commerce, Windsor Arts Center and creative businesses, Windsor Public Library and its makerspace, CT Small Business Development Center, Windsor Worx, the Collective Space, Regus, and small business financing entities; and,

WHEREAS, the Town of Windsor supports and joins in this national effort to help America's small businesses do what they do best – grow their business, create jobs, and ensure that our communities remain as vibrant tomorrow as they are today.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE MAYOR OF
THE TOWN OF WINDSOR THAT:**

The week of April 30, 2023 - May 6, 2023 be recognized as Small Business Week in Windsor.




Donald S. Trinks
Mayor of Windsor
May 1, 2023

PROCLAMATION

Declaring May 2023 as Historic Preservation Month

WHEREAS, The National Trust for Historic Preservation established May as Historic Preservation Month in 1973 as a way to promote historic places for the purpose of instilling national and community pride, promoting heritage tourism, and showing the social and economic benefits of historic preservation; and,

WHEREAS, it is important to celebrate the role of history in our lives and the contributions made by dedicated individuals in helping to preserve the tangible aspects of the heritage that has shaped us as a people; and,

WHEREAS, as Connecticut's First Town, Windsor is rich in history and historic buildings and is designated by the National Park Service as a Certified Local Government demonstrating Windsor's commitment to local preservation and saving the past for future generations; and,

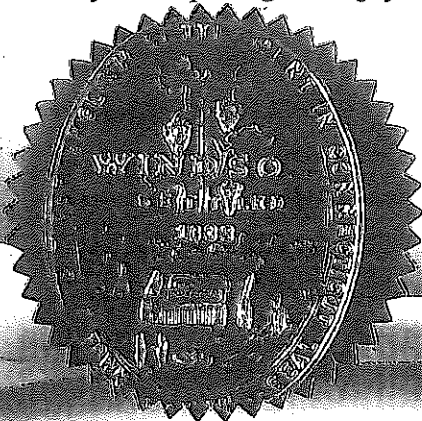
WHEREAS, Windsor maintains a Historic Resource Inventory and has dozens of properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including the Oliver Ellsworth Homestead, a National Historic Landmark; and,

WHEREAS, the Windsor Historic District Commission is an appointed commission charged with the preservation and protection of the historic character of the Windsor Historic District along Palisado Avenue, between the Farmington River and Bissell's Ferry Road; and,

WHEREAS, the Windsor Historical Society, founded in 1921, preserves and interprets nearly 400 years of Windsor's history through exhibitions, education programs, publications, active collecting, and research.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WINDSOR THAT:

The month of May 2023 is proclaimed as Historic Preservation Month in the Town of Windsor and that all citizens are encouraged to join in this special observance by learning about local Windsor history and exploring and enjoying the town's many historic assets.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donald S. Trinks', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is located in the bottom right corner of the document.

Donald S. Trinks
Mayor of Windsor
May 1, 2023

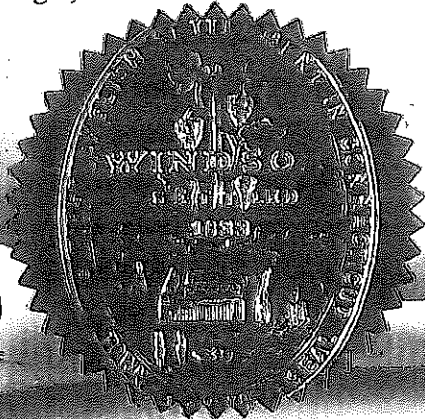
Proclamation

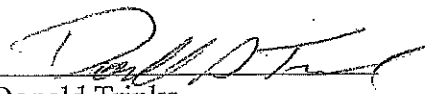
Declaring May 2023 as Mental Health Awareness Month

- WHEREAS,** Mental health is essential to our overall health, and the importance of attending to mental health has become even more pronounced since the COVID-19 pandemic; and,
- WHEREAS,** Millions of adults and children across America experience mental health conditions including anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder; and,
- WHEREAS,** 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year, 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental health conditions, and 1 in 6 U.S. youth (6-17) experience mental illness, yet stigma and fear of discrimination keep many who would benefit from mental health services from seeking help; and,
- WHEREAS,** Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people aged 10-34, and is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. Help can be found through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 or by calling 1-800-662-HELP; and,
- WHEREAS,** People with mental illnesses make important contributions to our families and our communities; and,
- WHEREAS,** Although our Nation has made progress in promoting mental health services, many communities still face prevalent barriers in accessing mental health care; and,
- WHEREAS,** People with mental illness can recover if given the necessary services and support in their communities and should receive it without discrimination.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE MAYOR AND THE WINDSOR TOWN COUNCIL:

That May 2023 be declared as Mental Health Awareness Month and that we call upon Windsor citizens to raise mental health awareness in order to continue to help Americans live longer, healthier lives.





Donald Trinks
Mayor of Windsor
May 1, 2023

Agenda Item Summary

Date: May 1, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council

Prepared by: Flavia Rey de Castro, Community Development Specialist

Reviewed by: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: 2023 Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit Program

Background

The Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit program, established by the Connecticut General Assembly, offers municipalities and tax-exempt, non-profit organizations an opportunity to enhance their fundraising by providing state corporate tax credits to eligible donors. Corporate donors receive a tax credit equal to 60% of their contributions. Contributions for certain energy conservation projects may earn a 100% tax credit.

A municipality's role in the program is limited to: 1) marketing the program, 2) holding a public hearing to allow for comment on all applications, 3) having the town's governing body act upon all applications, and 4) submitting all approved applications to the Department of Revenue Services.

Discussion/Analysis

Organizations that have participated in the recent past include CRIS Radio, Windsor Police Cadets, Saint Gabriel School and Madina Academy.

Town staff is once again soliciting applications from NAA-eligible organizations by way of direct email and press releases. Projects for the 2023 application round must be submitted to the Office of Community Development by close of business on May 25, 2023. Applications must be approved by the governing body of the town after conducting a public hearing. Therefore, staff is requesting that the required public hearing be set for the evening of June 5, 2023 and that the list of submitted and eligible applicants be placed on the Council agenda for consideration on the same evening. Approved applications will then be submitted to the Department of Revenue Services by July 1, 2023.

Financial Impact

The cost to the Town of Windsor to participate in the NAA program is minimal. Costs are limited to mailings, copies, a legal notice and minimal staff time.

Recommendation

If the Town Council is in agreement, the following motion is recommended for approval:

“MOVE that a Public Hearing be set for June 5, 2023 at 7:20 p.m. to allow for public comment on applications submitted for the Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program administered by the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services.”

Attachments


None

Agenda Item Summary

Date: May 1, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council

Prepared By: Paul Norris, Director of Recreation and Leisure Services

Reviewed By: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: Goslee Pool Facility Renovations – Supplemental Appropriation

Background

The town is faced with aging infrastructure at the outdoor pools and a need to provide suitable aquatic facilities to serve Windsor residents who participate in organized swim lessons, open swim, and lap swim. To address the condition of these community assets and to help provide direction for future planning, the FY 17 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget included funding to complete an outdoor pools assessment and evaluation. The assessment was completed and in FY 21, the Town Council appropriated funds for the engineering and design of the Welch and Goslee pool facilities, which consisted of new building entryways, upgrades to showers, toilets, sinks, faucets, changing area, creating appropriate staff and first aid stations, lighting, and upgrade to the wading pool, fencing, and decking at Welch Pool.

In December 2022 the Town Council appropriated funds for the costs associated with improvements at Goslee Pool House in the amount of \$1,730,000. Construction began in March, with an anticipated completion date of mid to late June. Unfortunately, the project has experienced unexpected costs in large part due to greater-than-expected deterioration of the building's exterior sheathing and structural wood framing, along with relocation of underground water lines. At this time it is respectively requested that a supplemental appropriation of \$65,000 be approved to meet the unforeseen change orders.

The project includes complete interior renovation of the bathhouse with a 270 sq. ft. addition, exterior roof replacement, and new exterior siding. The redesigned interior of the bathhouse will have a new entry vestibule with a staff admittance desk. Completely new ADA code-compliant men's and women's restrooms. Both will have new plumbing fixtures, flooring, and painted wall surfaces. The lifeguard facility will have a 96 sq. ft. addition to accommodate a new pump room and a new chemical room. The existing water filtration area will be fully enclosed for weather protection. A new family restroom will be constructed and the lifeguard office training and breakroom will be enlarged.

Discussion/Analysis

Construction began in March, with an anticipated completion date of mid to late June. Unfortunately, the project experienced unexpected long lead times on equipment and change orders due to greater-than-expected deterioration of existing building materials.

Current approved change orders include additional emergency lights and wiring, an additional entry gate, replacement of exterior rotten plywood and siding, replace rotten ceiling plywood, and relocating an electrical panel. These change orders totaled approximately \$136,000.

Outstanding change orders consist of repairs to several aluminum columns, re-routing of the pool lines, and replacing rotted wood trusses, roof sheathing, beams, and headers. These total approximately \$65,000. The Public Building Commission has reviewed the remaining change orders and concur with the request of additional funding to complete the project.

The unexpected work has negatively impacted the project schedule. Currently it is anticipated the pool will be closed through July and potentially into August. Therefore, recreation staff is developing alternative adjustments to the Welch Pool and Veteran Pool schedules to accommodate the Goslee Pool patrons and programs.

Financial Impact

The Town Council approved the project with a total authorization of \$1,730,000 including a contingency in January of 2023.

Staff has worked with the contractor, our clerk of the works and project architect to determine the estimated cost of the outstanding change orders plus a contingency factor necessary to complete the project. The additional change orders are estimated at \$65,000 plus a 15% contingency which equals \$75,000. Presently there is available project funds of \$10,000. Therefore, at this time staff is recommending a supplemental appropriation of \$65,000

Other Board Action

The Public Building Commission has reviewed the remaining change orders and concurs with the request of additional funding to complete the project.

Recommendations

If the Town Council is in agreement, the following motion is recommended for approval:

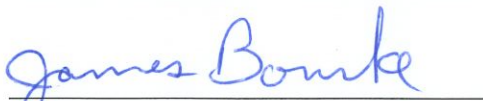
“MOVE to approve an appropriation of \$65,000 from the General Unassigned Fund Balance for the costs in connection with the Aquatic Facility Improvements – Goslee Pool House project”

Attachments

Project Photos

Certification

I hereby certify that \$65,000 is available in General Unassigned Fund Balance to fund the above appropriation.



James Bourke
Finance Director



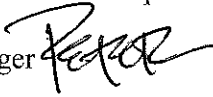


Agenda Item Summary

Date: May 1, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council

Prepared By: Patrick McMahon, Economic Development Director

Reviewed By: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: 2023 Small Cities CDBG Program Application

Background

Funds are currently available, on a competitive basis, through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Small Cities program administered by the Connecticut Department of Housing (DOH). The deadline for applications to DOH is May 31, 2023. DOH is currently prioritizing public housing modernization for Small Cities grant awards and applicants can apply for up to \$2 million for such purposes toward construction and project costs.

In April the Town Council authorized the use of American Rescue Funds in the amount of \$45,000 to cover the estimated cost of design and environmental studies necessary to submit a CDBG application to assist the Windsor Housing Authority in pursuing needed upgrades at the Shad Run Terrace complex, a 52-unit property for elderly and disabled residents. Town staff has solicited proposals from architectural design firms and environmental firms. Combined the proposed fee proposals exceed the existing funding allocation. Town staff is respectively recommending an additional authorization of \$35,000 in American Rescue Funds in order to move forward with design work.

Discussion/Analysis

The proposed improvements and upgrades at Shad Run Terrace involve building envelope work including energy efficient windows and doors; shingle roof, gutters, downspouts, siding, as well as replacement of mini-split heating/air conditioning systems with more efficient units. Improvements for accessibility will be determined as the project scope is further developed. The new energy efficient windows, doors and mini-split systems will help the residents save on their energy bills.

The DOH is expecting that design and environmental review costs be contributed by the local applicant. Competitive applications must include architectural drawings, specifications, an updated Capital Needs Assessment and the completion of Phase I environmental studies and pre-rehabilitation surveys for hazardous materials.

The original funding request was based on anticipated costs for architectural and environmental work based on past history from similar CDBG funded housing authority projects in other communities. We anticipated \$15,000 in environmental assessment costs and \$30,000 for architectural services. The proposals received from environmental firms to complete a Phase I report and conduct the hazardous materials survey ranged from \$13,700 to \$19,400. The selected firm provided the most competitive cost proposal at \$13,700.

Proposals received from architectural firms for the preparation of 90% drawings, specifications, construction estimates and update to Shad Run’s Capital Needs Assessment ranged from \$51,250 to \$99,500. The very short turnaround required for the deliverables in order to meet the grant submittal deadline impacted the cost proposals. The proposal that best meets the ability to complete the project in a timely basis, demonstrated experience on CDBG funded housing authority projects and is cost competitive would result in a \$60,000 fee.

The request for proposals to architectural firms also requested separate costs for services related to assistance with project bidding and construction administration. Based on the selected vendor’s proposal the estimated cost of these services is \$40,000. A local funding match will need to be identified at a later point should the town be successful in securing the Small Cities grant and the project moves ahead to the construction bid phase.

Financial Impact

Funding is requested from the American Rescue Fund allocation originally made for repairs to the Fitch Court Apartments. At this time, there is \$180,000 available from that allocation.

Based on proposals received for environmental assessment and preparation of construction drawings / specifications the estimate cost of design services are as follows:

Architectural drawings and specifications	60,000
Environmental Assessments	13,700
Contingency	<u>6,300</u>
Total Estimated Cost	\$80,000

On April 3, 2023 Town Council appropriated \$45,000 in American Rescue Funds therefore we are requesting an additional authorization of \$35,000 including a contingency in American Rescue Funds for design services.

The proposed application for public housing modernization funds will have no impact on the town’s FY 23 General Fund budget.

Recommendation

If the Town Council is in agreement, the following motion is recommended for approval:

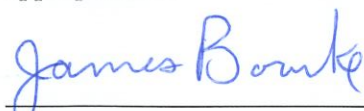
“Move to authorize an additional \$35,000 in American Rescue Funds for design services and environmental studies related to the Shad Run Terrace Improvement project.”

Attachments

None

Certification

I hereby certify that \$35,000 is available in American Rescue Plan Act funds to fund the above appropriation.




James Bourke
Finance Director

Agenda Item Summary

Date: May 1, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council

Prepared by: Joshua Gaston, Assistant Assessor
Scott W. Colby Jr, Assistant Town Manager

Reviewed by: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: Municipal Option to Provide Additional Exemption for Veterans

Background

Connecticut State law provides a property tax exemption to US Veterans whose service meet certain eligibility requirements. The law also provides an Additional Veteran Exemption to those already qualified veterans whose income meets certain eligibility requirements. In addition to these statewide veteran exemptions, the law allows for the municipal option to provide a local veteran exemption. In 1998 the Windsor Town Council adopted an ordinance that provided this local exemption to income qualified veterans. In 2015 the Windsor Town Council amended the ordinance to also allow for a specific additional local option providing an exemption to veterans who have received VA assistance for specially adapted housing.

Discussion/Analysis

Currently there are 990 individuals who participate in or receive the state benefit. Veterans who qualify for the state benefit receive an exemption on their property assessment ranging from \$3,000 to \$21,000 depending upon varying factors (i.e level of disability, age, income).

Below is a table that outlines the State program benefit schedule.

State Benefit Schedule		
Description	Veteran Exemption	Veteran Exemption for Income Qualified <i>(* under \$38,100 if they are unmarried or \$46,400 if they are married)</i>
Vet Regular	3,000	6,000
Vet Disability 10-25%	6,000	12,000
Vet Disability 26-50%	7,500	15,000
Vet Disability 51-75%	9,000	18,000
Vet Disability 76-100%	10,500	21,000
Vet Disability 65+ Yrs.	10,500	21,000
Vet Surviving Spouse	3,000	6,000
Vet Act Duty Death	9,000	18,000

Based upon the income limits, 63 individuals out of the total 990 currently participating receive the additional local benefit. The local benefit is presently a \$2,000 exemption on their assessment if their income is under \$38,100, if they are unmarried or \$46,400 if they are married, regardless of VA qualified status. The current local exemption amount offers a benefit of \$66.54 for the veteran and results in \$4,200 of forgone tax revenue at the current tax rate.

If the Town Council increases the local benefit to an \$11,000 exemption level this would provide an individual benefit of \$365.97 at a mill rate of 33.27 per \$1,000 of assessed value. By increasing the exemption, the total town cost at the current mill rate would be approximately \$23,100 or an overall increase of \$18,900.

Since being initially adopted by the Town Council in 1998, the language of the relevant state statute 12-81f has changed from allowing only a \$2,000 exemption to allowing up to a \$20,000 exemption. However, the local option continues to require an income limit that must not be less than the maximum which is provided annually by the CT Office of Policy and Management for the statewide Additional Veteran Exemption (these limits are the same as the maximum income limits of the Elderly and Totally Disabled Tax Relief Program.)

Financial Impact

Presently, with a total of 63 local veteran exemptions, each in the amount of \$2,000, this annually costs the town approximately \$4,200 a year in lost tax revenues, using the 2021 Grand List mill rate.

Below is a table showing the approximate total cost to the town of the local veteran option if the exemption amount was increased at various levels.

Local Veteran Application Count	Local Veteran Exemption Amount	Individual Tax Benefit at Mill Rate	Total Town Wide Local Veteran Exemptions	Total Town Cost at Mill Rate	Total Town Cost Increase
		33.27		33.27	
63*	2,000*	\$66.54*	126,000*	\$4,200*	\$0*
63	11,000	\$365.97	693,000	\$23,100	\$18,900

**Current benefit amount*

Based on the same number of participants in FY 23, if the local veteran exemption amount were increased to \$11,000 then this would provide an individual tax benefit of \$365.97 at the current mill rate. The total town cost at the current mill rate would be approximately \$23,100 or an overall increase of \$18,900.

Recommendation

If the Town Council is in agreement, the following motions are recommended for approval:

- 1) Waiving of the Reading

“RESOLVED, that the reading into the minutes of the text of the ordinance entitled, ‘AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS’ EXEMPTION’ 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.”

- 2) Introduce an Ordinance

“MOVE to introduce an ordinance entitled, ‘AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS’ EXEMPTION.”

“RESOLVED, that a Public Hearing be held at the Windsor Town Hall on May 15, 2023 at 7:20 p.m. (prevailing time) on the following ordinance entitled, ‘AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS’ EXEMPTION.’”

And

“FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is authorized and directed to post and publish notice of said Public Hearing.”

Attachments

Proposed amended ordinance

Red-lined version of current ordinance

Proposed
Amended
Ordinance

**CHAPTER 5
ARTICLE XIV**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS'
EXEMPTION.**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WINDSOR:

Chapter 5, Article XIV, of the *Windsor Code* is amended as follows:

Section 1. Article is amended to read as follows:

For the October 1, 2022 Grand List and all subsequent Grand Lists thereafter, a local tax exemption shall be provided by the town in accordance with the following income and exemption guidelines:

Qualifying Income	Marital Status	Local Veteran Exemption Amount
\$0 - \$38,100	Single	11,000
\$0 - \$46,400	Married	11,000

The qualifying income levels described above shall be set forth therein or equal to the qualifying income for the Additional Veterans' exemption as published annually by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy & Management, whichever is greater.

Section 2. Savings Clause. The enactment of this Ordinance shall not operate as an abatement of any action or proceeding previously taken, now pending, or taken prior to the effective date of this Ordinance. All said actions and proceedings are hereby ratified to be continued.

Section 3. Severability. All provisions of the *Town Code* in conflict herewith are hereby repealed and that if for any reason, any word, clause, paragraph, or section of this Ordinance shall be held to make the same unconstitutional, this Ordinance shall not hereby be invalidated and the remainder of the Ordinance shall continue in effect. Any provision herein which is in conflict with the *Connecticut General Statutes* is hereby repealed, it being understood that said statute shall take precedence over this Ordinance.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become effective ten (10) days after publication in a newspaper having a circulation in Windsor.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Town Attorney

ATTEST:

Town Clerk

Distributed to Town Council _____

Public Hearing Advertised _____

Public Hearing _____

Adopted _____

Advertised _____

Effective Date _____

**Red-Lined
Version
of
Ordinance**

RED-LINED VERSION

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS' EXEMPTION.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WINDSOR:

The Town of Windsor adopts the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes sections 12-81(21)(C) and 12-81f to provide a total or an additional property tax exemption for veterans or spouses eligible under *Connecticut General Statutes* section 12-81. Such exemption per 12-81(21)(C) shall take effect upon qualification as determined by the Assessor and shall terminate at such time as the veteran ceases to make such house his or her principal residence or ceases to maintain an ownership interest therein.

For the October 1, 2022 Grand List and all subsequent Grand Lists thereafter, a local tax exemption shall be provided by the town in accordance with the following income and exemption guidelines:

Qualifying Income	Marital Status	Local Veteran Exemption Amount
\$0 - \$38,100	Single	11,000
\$0 - \$46,400	Married	11,000

The qualifying income levels described above shall be set forth therein or equal to the qualifying income for the Additional Veterans' exemption as published annually by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy & Management, whichever is greater.



Town Council
Resignations/Appointments/Reappointments
May 1, 2023

Resignations

None

Appointments/Reappointments (to be acted upon at tonight's meeting)

None

Names submitted for consideration of appointment

None

Draft Minutes

4/3/23

Public Hearing



**TOWN OF WINDSOR
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING
April 3, 2023
PUBLIC HEARING**

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:00 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 Ojala Naeem, Councilor Kenneth Smith, and Councilor Walker

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

“THE FY 2023-2024 BUDGET AS PROPOSED BY THE TOWN MANAGER”

2) PUBLIC COMMENT - None

3) ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trinks declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary

Draft Minutes

4/3/23

Regular
Meeting



TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING – VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON
April 3, 2023
Regular Town Council Meeting
Council Chambers

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trinks called the meeting to order at 7:30 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 Ojala Naeem and Councilor Lenworth Walker

2) PRAYER OR REFLECTION

Councilor Black-Burke led the group in prayer/reflection.

3) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Black-Burke led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4) PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS

Councilor Black-Burke read the proclamation recognizing April 2023 as Fair Housing Awareness month.

5) PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS - None

6) COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Naaem gave her condolences to the family of Judge Washington who was very instrumental in the community. Just a reminder that there will be a couple of community clean up events happening this month. Wilson and Deerfield clean up will be on the 22nd. She'd love to see more ideas come in for the Community Neighborhood Enhancement program grants.

Councilor Dobler gave his condolences to the family of Judge Washington and said "Go Huskies!"

Councilor Walker gave an update that he has been following on the status of EMTs and paramedics on ambulances in the State of Connecticut. It's not just a Windsor issue. Senate Bill 1229 got out of committee, got voted on via a very bipartisan vote of 'yea' to

approve the Department of Public Health taking up the reigns and the leadership on looking at what the issues are and reporting back to the State legislators. That's a start in the right direction as we all know that Windsor Volunteer ambulance is experiencing problems. These are some 'life and death' decisions that we have to fix at some point. He noticed that we have appropriations going to design features for Shad Run and for another Housing Authority building. He is in support of that because the funds are not coming out of the town budget. He added that it's been over two years now that we've been asking the Housing Authority to provide us with the results of the audit that has been completed. The previous chair of the Housing Authority presented to the Town Council, we asked about it and we were told it would be coming. Carol Englemann is now the chair of the Windsor Housing Authority. She brought in anew manager. It just seems that there is no intention to quickly provide us with the information we need. We've given the Housing Authority tax payer funds and they promised they would report to us and give us the results. We are waiting on it and we need it.

Councilor Black-Burke gave her condolences to the family and the community for the loss of Judge Washington. She gave a shout out to the Windsor Health Department as it is National Public Health Week. She thanked them for all they do. They have accomplished much. She stated "Go Huskies!"

Councilor Gluck Hoffman – nothing to report.

Councilor Eleveld – nothing to report.

Deputy Mayor Bress thanked everyone who came out to the Special Town Meeting. The annual pancake breakfast took place at NWP. It was a wonderful event and was very much supported by the community. She mentioned this is an extremely holy month for many people in our community. She extended her wish for peace and good times with family during those holidays being celebrated. She gave accolades to Judge Washington and for all that he contributed to the community. He will be sorely missed.

Councilor Smith – nothing to report.

Mayor Trinks stated that Congressman Larson will be at the L.P. Wilson Community Center auditorium tomorrow night at 5:30 p.m. to give an overview of what is happening in congress. He expressed his condolences to Kevin Washington's family. He stated that they'd like to have Juneteenth dedicate the day or a portion of the green activities to the late Judge. He put his heart and soul into that so it seems fitting.

7) REPORT OF APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

a) Board of Education

David Furie, Board of Education, gave a report on the Board of Education as follows:

- March was Board of Education Appreciation Month. This was an opportunity for the district to publically extend its appreciation to the Board members for their dedicated service to our children. Our board members are generous with their time and commitment to public school education. They received a special dish made especially for them by Marge Renno's art students in the SPARK program and the CBTA program and received a special message from some of the district's children.
- At the BOE's last regular meeting on March 21, 2023, Jane Garibay from the Windsor Education Foundation presented the district with a check for \$ 7,775 in grant awards for local public-school educators. The grants funded for SY 2023 will directly benefit nearly 2,000 students across all grades. WEF is a non-profit organization, now in its 15th year, that was formed with the goal of supporting excellence in Windsor Public Schools. Since 2007, WEF has awarded **\$218,892** in grant awards to our district's educators.
- The Board of Education would like to publicly thank President Cindy Daniels and the entire Windsor Lions Club as they were able to purchase 3 spot scanners to be used in our schools for vision screening. The Lions Club now has a trained Vision Screening team and are in the beginning stages of possibly doing the vision screenings in our schools next year. In the State of Connecticut and beyond, teams of Lions successfully do this service. Lions have just completed screenings using the spot scanner for more than 1,200 children in Windsor Locks, Enfield, and South Windsor.
- Spring break will begin on Good Friday, April 7, 2023 and continue through April 14, 2023. Schools will reopen on Monday, April 17, 2023.
- The BOE's next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 7:00 PM in the Board Room at LP Wilson Community Center.
- Dr. Hill's next Coffee Talk will be on Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 5:30 PM in the LP Wilson Auditorium.
- Please remember to check our website, www.windsorct.org, for the most updated information, athletic schedules and academic calendar. Snow day information will be located on a banner on the website as soon as possible if inclement weather should affect the school day. In addition, the district will send out a communication about schools being closed, delayed or early dismissal through our notification system. Families should make sure their child's school has their most up-to-date contact information.

b) Conservation Commission

Ann Beaudin, Conservation Commission, stated that during the past year, the Conservation Commission has worked to meet its mission. We have tried to open doors of understanding regarding the multiple ways the Town of Windsor values conservation

and farm life preservation by protecting the scenic landscape rivers, waterways, wetlands and open space. During the course of the year, the Conservation Commission discussed:

1. Air and water quality
2. Invasive plants affecting town ponds and waters
3. Local Farms
4. PFAS runoff
5. Wildlife habitats
6. Town's appeal as a place to live
7. E-cycling
8. Wonder of Windsor contest

8) TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

FY 2024 Proposed Budget

The Town Council will be reviewing the Town Manager's proposed FY 2024 operating budget through the month of April. There will be formal opportunities to provide public comment at the budget review meetings on April 24 and April 26. The Town Council is expected to adopt a proposed budget on April 26th and to set a budget referendum for May 9, 2023. The full budget can be found at

<https://townofwindsorct.com/finance/town-budget/fy24/>

Multifamily Housing Rehabilitation Grant Program

There will be a Multifamily Housing Rehabilitation Grant program workshop on April 4th at 5:00 at Town Hall in the Ludlow Room. You may attend in person or virtually. The program aims to stabilize and preserve the quality and availability of affordable rental housing throughout the Town Windsor. It also seeks to address deferred maintenance and distressed rental properties.

The program offers small grants to address various building and life safety code repairs in affordable rental properties that have two to four units. This assistance will match the applicant dollars in the form of a matching rebate up to \$10,000 per unit to improve rental units.

To see if you are eligible, to register or to see more information on the workshop, please go to bit.ly/40G1ceW.

International Drive

The International Drive paving project will begin on April 17th and will last for up to six months. Throughout the project, sections of the northbound lanes will be closed. During these periods, traffic flow in both directions will be maintained, with northbound traffic being directed to the southbound side of international Drive. Closures of the northbound lanes shall be limited to a total roadway length of 1000' or the distance between median breaks, whichever is shorter. Access to abutting properties will be maintained throughout the project. No traffic is planned to be detoured down Rainbow Road.

Route 159 Median Replacement

The State funded project to replace the medians on route 159 in Wilson between Route 218 and the Hartford city line has begun. The work will include removal of existing curbing and brick pavers. New curbing and stamped concrete with a brick pattern will be installed. The median width will generally remain the same.

At times there may be traffic delays due to the construction work. We ask that motorists be patient and take precautions as they approach and travel through the work zone. Work is expected to last through the summer.

Wilson and Deerfield Earth Day Community Cleanup

Let's celebrate Earth Day! Take pride in our community and come join us on Saturday, April 22nd from 10:00 AM – 12 noon at Sharshon Park (Skitchewaugh Street). We will be picking up litter and debris to help Wilson be a more walkable, beautiful neighborhood. Feel free to bring a team with you. Water, gloves and clean up materials will be provided for all volunteers. Rain Date is April 29th from 10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon. To sign up, please go to the town's website at www.townofwindsorct.com. For questions, please call Flavia Rey DeCastro at 860-285-1985 or send an email to reydecastro@townofwindsorct.com.

COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

The Windsor Health Department will host COVID Vaccine Clinics in partnership with the DPH/Griffin Hospital VAX Van in March on:

- Wednesday, April 12, 2023, Windsor Library, 10 AM – 1 PM 12yo+
- Tuesday, April 18, 2023, LP Wilson Community Center, 4 PM – 7 PM, 6mo+

No appointment is needed. This clinic is a walk-in clinic and recipients should bring their vaccine, insurance cards and ID with them.

CT Renters Rebate Program

The CT Renters Rebate Program is now open for applications through October 1st!

State law provides a reimbursement program for Connecticut renters who are elderly or totally disabled, and whose incomes do not exceed certain limits. Persons renting an apartment or room or living in cooperative housing or a mobile home may be eligible for this program! *Please note that this is not an entitlement program.*

The Windsor Social Services department will complete Renters' Rebate applications by telephone for qualifying Windsor seniors and disabled renters. Tenants of the Windsor Housing Authority should also contact us to apply for this program.

For more information, contact the Social Services Department at 860-285-1839.

National Public Health Week

April 3-9, 2023 is National Public Health Week, recognizing the critical contributions of public health that are important to improving our communities and nation.

I would like to recognize the tireless efforts of our full and part time, volunteers, and interns in our health department who have worked to provide exceptional services to our community. The past few years caused many of us to pause and adapt our lifestyles due to COVID-19, but this group of dedicated employees never paused and never flinched. Rather, they took on incredible challenges with determination and teamwork, from quarantines to contract tracing, providing accurate information and reassurance to the community, they exemplified what it means to be essential. On top of staffing/hosting over 140 clinics and administering over 10,000 vaccines, this group ensured food safety, conducted community health programs, gave health screenings, and much more.

I thank them for their expertise and determination in keeping our community healthy.

Councilor Dobler asked if there are two annual pancake breakfasts happening? Town Manager Souza stated there are and the other one is at the Hayden Station firehouse. It's their annual pancake breakfast that kicks off the fishing season.

9) REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Town Improvements Committee – Councilor Dobler – nothing to report.

Finance Committee – Councilor Naeem stated the Finance Committee met last week to conduct interviews of auditors. We will be discussing the recommendation that came out of committee later in tonight's agenda.

Health and Safety Committee – Councilor Black-Burke stated the Committee will be looking to set up another meeting based on tonight's discussions.

Personnel Committee – Deputy Mayor Bress said the Personnel Committee will be meeting on May 3. The Committee will be bringing forward to the Council a proposal for an Arts Committee.

10) ORDINANCES

11) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

12) NEW BUSINESS

- a) Approve amendments to Fire Marshal and Fire Inspector job descriptions

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Bress, seconded by Councilor Naeem that the job descriptions for the positions of Fire Marshal and Fire Inspector be approved as presented.

Amelia Bliss, Director of Human Resources and Lauri Volkert, Fire Inspector, gave an overview of the request as follows:

The main duties of the Fire Marshal position are to perform supervisory, administrative, professional and technical work related to fire prevention, investigation and community risk reduction.

The most significant changes proposed to the Fire Marshal job description are:

- Referring to the *Connecticut General Statutes* which outline the role and responsibilities of the local fire marshal
- Adding responsibility for Community Risk Reduction program management and intradepartmental support
- Adding responsibility for data management
- Adding responsibility for departmental fiscal decisions including budget development
- Adding responsibility for public information and communications via social and traditional media
- Clarifying the position's on-call availability for fire investigations and other life safety emergencies after hours
- Updating necessary knowledge and physical demands and adds physical requirement to be medically cleared to wear a respirator

These changes reflect changes to the expected roles and responsibilities of the position of Fire Marshal based on state and national best practices. This includes the shift from traditional fire prevention to Community Risk Reduction as a decision-making paradigm. It also adds that the role of "Emergency Management Director" may be assigned to the Fire Marshal should that decision need to be made in the future.

The main duties of the Fire Inspector job description are to perform administrative and technical work related to fire prevention and investigation.

The most significant changes proposed to the Fire Inspector job description are:

- Clarifying the position's role in fire investigations
- Clarifying the position's responsibility for equipment maintenance
- Clarifying the position's on-call availability for fire investigations and other life safety emergencies after hours
- Updating necessary knowledge and physical demands and adds physical requirement to be medically cleared to wear a respirator.

Councilor Smith clarified that we are going from 2.5 positions to a full 3 positions. Town Manger Souza stated that in terms of job descriptions it is a yes. We are adding a new job title, but are not asking that it be funded at this time. This is basically for future use in professional development and succession planning.

Councilor Smith asked if the Fire Inspector and Fire Marshal are expected to respond after hours at certain times. Is that correct? Ms. Bliss stated yes.

Councilor Smith stated that a 30 minute window be added to that. Many communities do that and he feels the 30 minute window is important.

Councilor Smith said on Page 3 of the Fire Marshal's description it says 'extensive knowledge of building, electric and mechanical code.' What defines 'extensive knowledge' of those codes? He feels extensive knowledge is a bit intense. Ms. Volkert stated, as a Fire Marshal, they are certified by the State of Connecticut and they are required to maintain continuing education on an ongoing basis to stay up to date with those codes. Looking at those applying for permits, this position would be doing plan reviews on all the permits coming in. Therefore, they would need to be up to date on the codes to know how to work through them, through the code path and to do an adequate plan review to make sure that the plans coming in are meeting all of those codes. Also, they are frequently answering questions and conducting consultations with design professionals in how best to meet the life safety intentions of those codes in the buildings. The code in the books is not always as easy to follow, so they need to have a very extensive working knowledge of how those codes interplay.

Councilor Smith stated that it is basically working knowledge and keeping up to date, is that correct? Ms. Volkert stated that is correct. Ms. Volkert added that they also need to have the ability to be authoritative.

Councilor Smith asked in the capacity of a possible Emergency Management Director, who would that be at this point? Town Manager Souza stated that Paul Goldberg is currently the Emergency Management Director. We wanted to have the ability down the line to have those duties and responsibilities go to the Fire Marshal. Councilor Smith asked instead of it going to the Police Chief or somebody else. Town Manager Souza stated yes.

Councilor Smith asked who would be responsible for issuing burning and blasting permits? Ms. Volkert stated the Fire Marshal is responsible for issuing blasting permits. They fill out a form which goes to the State Police. Currently, we've not been doing burn permits to get rid of debris. We've recently updated the ordinances a few years ago that will allow for cooking fires, camp fires, recreational fire but larger fires than that there's very specific requirements. If you're looking to get rid of debris it is recommended that citizens find other ways to do it.

Councilor Smith stated that he understands that the Fire Inspector and Fire Marshall do not currently carry an SCBA. Is that correct? Ms. Volkert responded that is correct. Councilor Smith then added so you're going to add that in? His concern is, he doesn't like to risk people that don't train regularly at that level. He can't remember in his 50 years of experience ever allowing a Fire Marshal to go in with SCBA on. Ms. Volkert clarified that the respirators they wear are 95 respirators which require a physical in order

to be worn in a professional capacity. They are using 95 filter masks, we're not using SCBA.

Deputy Mayor Bress stated she agrees with Councilor Smith about the 'extensive knowledge' piece. The way Ms. Volkert explained it is much more clearer and more specific. She wonders if using Ms. Volkert's words or being more clear in the terms of the knowledge and skill that is required would be better than just saying 'extensive knowledge.'

Deputy Mayor Bress asked about the interpersonal skills section. She has some concern about two phrases that she feels are subjective. Under interpersonal skills it says 'tactful but firm', and then later in the same paragraph it says 'listens to others without interrupting.' She looked at both job descriptions under interpersonal skills and there are two things she noticed. One, they are not the same. They are not consistent across the two positions. Secondly, the phrase 'tactful but firm' and 'listens to other without interruption' is a bit subjective or may be more detail than is necessary in terms of the fact that 'respectful with the ability to establish effective work relationships' would pretty much cover that. She asked why we had put that specifically in the description and if it was felt it was that important, why wasn't it in both job descriptions? Ms. Bliss responded that the 'tactful but firm' language is in most of the departmental head level positions because you need to have those skills when supervising. It is not typically in non-supervisory descriptions.

Deputy Mayor Bress commented that we don't have the same language of 'tactful but firm' in the Deputy Fire Marshal description. She suspects that the Deputy Fire Marshal would have some leadership role, correct? Ms. Bliss stated that they usually have the same competencies for the higher level positions and they are different for different roles in different levels of a position. That is a template that we use. In terms of deciding 'tactful but firm', it can be somewhat subjective, but usually when someone is not using those skills, that's when you know because there are problems that are arising with their ability to either communicate with other people inside or outside of the organization or with their own employees who report to them.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- b) Approve Deputy Fire Marshal job description

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Bress, seconded by Councilor Naeem that the job description for the position of Deputy Fire Marshal be approved as presented and the position be placed in the Administrative Pay Plan in pay grade 6.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- c) Approve an appropriation of \$380,000 from the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance to support delivery of emergency medical services

MOVED by Councilor Black-Burke, seconded by Councilor Walker to approve an appropriation of \$380,000 from the Unassigned General Fund Balance to provide financial assistance to the Windsor Volunteer Ambulance Association to meet fiscal year 2023 operating expenses and increased staffing coverage.

Dan Moylan, President/Chief of the Windsor EMS Association and Bob Holdsworth, consultant that was brought on to work on the issue were in attendance.

Town Manager Souza stated the Health & Safety Committee met on March 1st to discuss the overall delivery system related to emergency medical services or EMS. Additional information was provided to the Council, at the community's request, at their March 20th meeting. We have engaged the Bob Holdsworth group to help gather and analyze data relative to staffing levels, peak call times, response times, to do a utilization study, to be able to identify different staff coverage options and projected expenditure and revenue estimates. This work is underway now and will continue over the course of the month of April through May. This evening, we're here to ask the Council to appropriate financial assistance to meet the ambulance association's needs in a few different ways: to obtain additional staff and coverage, to cover past due vendor invoices, to fund wage adjustments to meet the rapidly changing marketplace and also to meet operating expenses for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Bob Holdsworth, CLA, stated that in the State of Connecticut and nationally there are significant issues in staffing and funding. Right now in Connecticut, specifically in the Greater Hartford region, there's a perfect storm. He's been in this business for 44 years and he has never seen all of these things come together the way they've come together., The three big things that is occurring is lack of personnel, funding is not keeping up with the expenses, and we have inflation and supply chain issues that are really impacting the industry.

To give you a brief overview in the last 10 years about 70,000 members, EMTs and paramedics, have left the field either through attrition, through retirement or have taken jobs in other careers that pay better than EMS. During the two years we were dealing with COVID, courses were not able to keep up with that attrition. In fact, the people that did go through the course over a four year period about 70% of those people went to class in the 2018-2021 time frame did not renew their certifications when it came up. So we put them into the mix, attrition continues, and the people that we thought were going to be part of the replacement issue did not stay.

The other thing that is impacting the State is that there is a change to the provider status amongst ambulance services. The hospitals are buying up ambulance services where for years they ran from the business, they are now running toward the business. Part of that is because they have to move patients from the Emergency Room and up to the floors. Because of shortages there hasn't been the ability for that to happen. If you look at this region, Trinity Health owns St. Francis, Aetna is partially controlled by Hartford Healthcare, Hartford Healthcare also bought Hunters down in Middletown and Meriden and are in the process of negotiations with AMR in Norwich. So we have AMR having

staffing problems, you have hospitals acquiring ambulance services and because of that wages are inflating faster than anybody can keep up with them. Windsor is currently paying between \$4-\$6 less than the market in the Greater Hartford area. So part of the proposal is to establish the ability for those rates to be brought up to market.

Mr. Holdsworth stated funding for the ambulance has not kept up with the accelerated costs of ambulance services. All ambulance services are paid by the patients they transport. Sometimes when you see an ambulance go by, it does not mean that they are generating any revenue, when you've got fire stand-bys, motor vehicle accidents, and patients refusing service. Many people discharge from hospitals for home care and they're calling because they need blood pressure checks or they fell out of their bed or chair that require lift assists. None of those calls are compensated. They are only compensated if they are transported to the hospital. The second part of that is even when the transport happens, there is something called 'payer mix'. That payer mix is who has insurance and what insurance they have when they are transported. Because who and what insurance they are carrying dictates how much the ambulance is paid. In Windsor, about 65% of the patients are either Medicare or Medicaid. Both of those payers are significantly discounted and there is nothing any ambulance service can do about it as they are a Federal and State program and the rates are the rates.

There is a bill in legislature currently to make the Medicare and Medicaid rates equal for the first time in history. As Medicare rates are adjusted, the Medicaid rates will raise to that same amount.

65% of the Windsor's ambulance calls start out discounted the minute the person is on that stretcher. There are also patients that are underinsured or uninsured that still have to get service. So, 70% or so of every patient that gets transported in Windsor either generates no money or it is discounted money. That has not kept pace with the cost of ever rising insurance rates, vehicles, and everything else.

Supply chain and inflation issues is another problem. The cost of medical supplies are through the roof. Insurance is also through the roof. If Dan were to order an ambulance today, he wouldn't see that ambulance for at least 18 months because of supply chain with vehicles. So maintenance costs are higher in keeping those vehicles on the road.

The fourth piece is to actually increase staffing to cut down on the mutual aid requests. That will get service to citizens faster. It will also keep the revenues from those calls in the community to help offset our system.

Town Manager Souza stated the town budget contributes about \$70,000 to the ambulance association of which approximately \$35,000 is a pass through which goes to a regional communications system that connects the hospitals with the ambulances in the field. The Ambulance Association is having an immediate issue of cash flow. The Council has in years past given to the ambulance services. Forecasted expenses including payroll is approximately \$385,000. This evening we are asking to make wage adjustments for the month of May and June to address recruitment and retention issues so that we

maintain the existing staffing, not only for the full time people but also for the part time or per diem individuals that are on the staff at WVA. That will be approximately \$50,000 over a two month period. That will bring folks to, depending on their tenure, the mid-point of the market place for both new hires and those that are more tenured.

Town Manager Souza stated the second component is to add additional staff coverage. Windsor EMS is currently scheduled to run one advance life support ambulance 24 hours per day, seven days per week. A second ambulance is scheduled to run from 7 AM – 7 PM for seven days. At times, there are multiple, simultaneous calls. Depending on the type of call and transport, that could be a 90 minute turn around between the time they are on the scene to the time that they are available to respond to another call. There are also times when that second ambulance is not able to be staffed all the time. That could be due to individuals calling out sick and per diems that aren't available. Just like the general government, we rely and WVA relies on part time individuals. They are a critical component to our delivery system. What we are looking to do is for the month of April is to provide funding and offer overtime as well as potentially, for both per diems and for full time while EMT staff is able to be recruited on a full time basis, for the months of May and June.

There is also a request here for \$15,000 that will go towards medical supply inventory. Part of that is the efficiency. Right now, Dan is purchasing medical supplies on an 'as you go' basis. That takes time and effort.

The last item relates to the cash flow. It takes about 6-8 weeks for a billing cycle. Right now, we are looking at invoices that are 30 days and older to be able to pay those invoices which are at approximately \$135,000. There are not too many vendors when WVA needs to get an ambulance repaired. So, we want to make sure we have a good relationship with those vendors. Overall expenditures for the last quarter of this year is \$635,000. It is projected that there will be approximately \$255,000 in revenue, those reimbursements from the different insurance carriers. That would leave a projected deficit of about \$380,000. That is how we arrived at the request before you this evening.

Councilor Eleveld said we are looking at approximately \$400,000 for this quarter. Will this be an ongoing \$1.6 million new expenditure that the town has to make going forward? Town Manager Souza responded that his expectation is that it will not be to that level. In the proposed FY 24 budget he is requesting \$525,000 additional money to be put into the budget. That would be able to cover some of the increased costs relative to wages and to have some money to provide additional coverage. It may take the better part of a year to 18 months with new staffing to be able to recover from insurance and to get that cash flow back into a cycle. Mr. Holdsworth added he is comfortable in saying to your question 'most likely not' and that it will most likely be less than that. Will there be an ongoing need for the subsidization of an ambulance service in Windsor. That would be a yes. When you see bids come in, an ALS ambulance costs approximately \$600,000 a year to run and a BLS ambulance costs about \$450,000 on a 24 hour basis. Mr. Holdsworth gave an

overview of what might be needed currently and in the future for the WVA and the crisis that is happening in Connecticut.

Councilor Eleveld asked do we see on an annual basis a copy of the audited financials. Town Manager Souza stated that we do.

Councilor Eleveld asked if these funds will be set aside for their ability to pull or are we just giving them a \$380,000 check? Town Manager Souza stated similar to the conditions placed on past funding assistance, these funds will be segregated into a separate account that will be overseen by the Finance Director. Any requests or draws would be reviewed by the Finance Director. Dan, as well as the past administration, have been very open with allowing us to review their books and expenses.

Councilor Dobler asked Mr. Holdsworth if he's done this type of evaluation with other towns? Mr. Holdsworth responded that he has.

Councilor Dobler asked what was the outcome there? Mr. Holdsworth stated that it depends on the volume in that community. When you start getting into 4,000-5,000 calls, that is a busy service with a lot of expenditures for people, equipment and supplies. When the study is done, you'll see the reason for it. You'll have a plan going forward as to what the staffing should be and how to fund it to the best of Windsor's ability. In several towns there has been an increase. There's a program that we did in one community where they ended up with the town not only subsidizing the ambulance service, but going from service personnel to town employees. That is uncommon. Another community in Florida ended up needing to take the service back from the county that was providing it. They ended up getting significantly better service for the community and ended up saving money because of the way the taxes were allocated in that community. Another community we just did is where two ambulance services were merged together and both towns ended up with a similar size increase. One town went from a subsidy of \$70,000, the other was \$105,000. They are both at \$280,000 now. Every community will be different. Once he digs into the data for Windsor, he'll be able to give Windsor a good plan and some good choices going forward.

Councilor Dobler voiced his concerns and mainly that he wanted to have a plan going forward. If Windsor has to subsidize \$500,000 per year, that's fine. Let's just get a game plan. It's a service that we have to have in town in one form or another. He agrees with Councilor Eleveld that he is all in favor of this and he wants to see some type of resolution. Mr. Holdsworth stated there will be a plan to discuss in less than 120 days.

Councilor Black-Burke stated she is glad we are at this point. This has been an ongoing conversation. She's glad that there will be a plan for discussion in 120 days. She would

love to find out if he has worked with other towns here in Connecticut or any town that is comparable in size. She is looking forward to what comes out of the discovery.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- d) Approve Fair Housing Resolution and Policy statement

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Bress, seconded by Councilor Gluck Hoffman to approve the Fair Housing Resolution and Fair Housing Policy Statement as presented.

Patrick McMahon, Economic Development Director, stated in accordance with Federal regulations, the Connecticut Department of Housing (DOH) requires that applicants for Community Development Block Grant – Small Cities program funds adopt a fair housing resolution. A fair housing resolution is to be adopted by the governing body to formally embrace the goals of fair housing.

The Fair Housing Resolution and Fair Housing Policy Statement state that the town will follow fair housing regulations and not discriminate against any protected classes in carrying out federal programs. The resolution and policy also designates the Town Manager or his/her representative to respond to fair housing complaints, provides contact information for same, and sets forth a complaint procedure.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- e) Set a Public Hearing for May 1, 2023 at 7:20 p.m. to solicit public comment on the 2023 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Bress, seconded by Councilor Black-Burke to set a public hearing for Monday, May 1, 2023, at 7:20 p.m., at Windsor Town Hall to obtain citizen input on the Town's 2023 Small Cities Program application.

Patrick McMahon, Economic Development Director, stated the Windsor Housing Authority owns and manages Shad Run Terrace, a 52-unit property for elderly and disabled residents. The proposed improvements and upgrades at Shad Run Terrace would include the following: installation of new energy efficient windows and doors; replacement of mini-split heating/air conditioning systems with more efficient units; and where needed installation of new vinyl siding, soffits, shingle roof, gutters, downspouts, and associated insulation would be. Site improvements for accessibility will be determined as the project scope is further developed. The new energy efficient windows, doors and mini-split systems will help the residents save on their energy bills.

DOH expects that any design and environmental review costs be contributed by the local applicant. Competitive applications must include architectural specifications and the completion of Phase I environmental studies and pre-rehabilitation surveys for hazardous materials.

Program rules also require that in order to apply for CDBG funds, municipalities must follow a Citizen Participation Plan designed to maximize the opportunity for public input. According to our plan, in the preparation of a CDBG grant application, the Town will conduct both a public information meeting and a public hearing to obtain citizen views and to respond to proposals and suggestions from the public prior to grant submission. The Town Council is requested to set a Public Hearing for May 1st.

In order to prepare a competitive application, design work and environmental studies need to be conducted. The Windsor Housing Authority is not currently in a financial condition to fund these necessary steps. Therefore, it is recommended that \$45,000 in American Rescue Funds be allocated to pursue these items for the health and welfare of the low income senior and disabled population residing at Shad Run.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- f) Approve authorization of \$45,000 in American Rescue funds to the Windsor Housing Authority for design services related to Shad Run

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Bress, seconded by Councilor Dobler to approve authorization of \$45,000 in American Rescue Funds to the Windsor Housing Authority for design services and environmental studies related to the Shad Run Terrace Improvement project.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- g) Approve authorization of \$25,000 in American Rescue funds to the Windsor Housing Authority for design services related to the Fitch Court roof replacement project

MOVED by Councilor Dobler, seconded by Councilor Deputy Mayor Bress to approve the authorization of \$25,000 in American Rescue Funds to the Windsor Housing Authority for design services related to the Fitch Court roof replacement project.

Patrick McMahon, Economic Development Director, stated the Windsor Housing Authority manages Fitch Court Apartments, a 40 unit property for low income 55+ residents of the Windsor community. The building has been experiencing roof leaks for several years and there have been numerous patches and small repairs made. The Housing Authority has identified an opportunity to apply to the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority for the State Housing Tax Credit Contribution (HTCC) program to fund the replacement of the roof. This program is generally available once a year and tax credits are awarded through a competitive process. The 2023 HTCC application deadline is June 1, 2023. In order for the Windsor Housing Authority to pursue the HTCC program, the design of the roof replacement needs to be completed. At this time staff is respectively recommending an appropriation of American Rescue Funds to the Windsor Housing Authority for the completion of the required design work.

The former school property was constructed over 100 years ago and multiple changes and alterations have been made over the decades. It was rehabbed into apartments in 1988. The roof, roof drains and gutter system have failed on multiple occasions causing damage to the building interior. The cause of the water intrusion is multifaceted and has not yet been corrected with a long-term solution. Roof repairs would not address the issues of the roof life, its drains, or gutters in a cost effective manner.

The HTCC program helps nonprofit developers build and improve affordable housing in Connecticut and gives local businesses an opportunity to invest in the projects. CHFA allocates up to \$10 million annually in state tax credits under the HTCC program to nonprofits developing or improving very low, low and moderate income housing in Connecticut. Private business can buy the tax credits and apply them to their corporate tax. Nonprofit developers use the money for their affordable housing project and can receive up to \$500,000 through the program. Application is due by June 1st.

Councilor Dobler asked of the original \$250,000 that we allocated a few months ago, how much of that do we have left? Town Manager Souza stated we had used approximately \$15,000 to do a design study relative to the exterior yard drainage. That project came back with a design that was geared to having pumps. The Housing Authority has done a great job in maintaining the current yard drains at a much lower cost. The original estimate was going to be around \$130,000-\$140,000 to put in permanent pumps with a backup generator to address the exterior of the property. With some minor work, the Housing Authority staff has been able to rectify the outside drainage issues. Therefore, we have about \$230,000 left of the \$250,000.

Councilor Dobler asked if we plan on using that money towards this project. Town Manager Souza stated if need be, that could be a request. We will get a better cost estimate of what the roof replacement will be after the design is complete. It can also make the tax credit application stronger so the Council could consider putting some money towards the roof.

Deputy Mayor Bress stated she supports both of the motions and that having the opportunity to volunteer at the three Housing Authority buildings and getting to know the residents, they will be very excited about this opportunity if we receive it.

Councilor Walker stated he has no problem voting for the funds for the necessary repairs at the Housing Authority. He will make his statement again that when we gave the funds from the taxpayers to the Housing Authority that it's been two years that we have been waiting for an audit from the Housing Authority and we still don't have one. He's not sure how the Housing Authority can function without providing HUD that requirement or doing something else with the State for that requirement. Either it was done and they don't want to share it or they just haven't done one. He will vote for this tonight without a problem, but the Housing Authority made a promise and they have not come forth with the materials. Mr. McMahon stated that the Housing Authority has secured audit reports for 2021. They are still in the process of getting their 2022 numbers. We will provide that

information to the Council once it is done. They expect to have that done within the next 60 days.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

h) Approve appointment of auditor for fiscal years 2023 through 2025

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Councilor Black-Burke that the Town Council appoint CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) as Town Auditor to carry out the annual financial audit of the Town of Windsor for fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025 as per the firm's proposal of January 24, 2023.

Town Manager Souza stated an RFP (Request for Proposal) for auditing services was issued in January 2023. The Town received proposals from RSM US, LLP and CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA). The proposals were reviewed by the Town Manager and Finance Director with regard to requirements of the RFP, such as experience in working with municipalities with similar populations and who have received the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting award. Other criteria examined were overall audit approach, adequate continuing training of personnel, and costs. There is a cost differential over the course of a 3 year period that is in favor of CLA. Staff feels comfortable with the background, references and research that has been done of the recommended firm CLA.

Councilor Naeem stated that the two proposals were pretty equal. As you can see, there is a significant financial difference.

Councilor Smith recused himself from the vote.

Councilor Eleveld said that there is a \$50,000 difference. Were we told why? Town Manager Souza said RSM (our existing auditors) noted that they have seen substantial increases in salary and wage to both retain and hire new staff accountants. That is the primary reason for the cost increase.

Councilor Eleveld asked if CLA is just hungry for a job. Town Manager Souza said it could be that. There might be a different staffing position than RSM. It's a firm that has been in Connecticut for quite a while. They formerly were the Blum & Shapiro firm and merged with this national firm of CLA. It just may be the situation that they are in. Neighborhood communities are also seeing notable increases in their proposals as well.

Motion Passed 8-0-1 (Councilor Smith abstained)

13) RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Bress, seconded by Councilor Black-Burke to accept with regret the resignation of Adam Schibley from the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission.



Motion Passed 9-0-0

14) MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

- a) *Minutes of the March 20, 2023 Public Hearing

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Bress, seconded by Councilor Naeem to approve the minutes of the March 20, 2023 Public Hearing as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- b) *Minutes of the March 20, 2023 Regular Town Council Meeting

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Bress, seconded by Councilor Gluck Hoffman to approve the minutes of the March 20, 2023 Regular Town Council meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

15) PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS - None

16) EXECUTIVE SESSION

17) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Councilor Black-Burke to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary

Draft Minutes

4/4/23

Special Meeting



**TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING
APRIL 4, 2023
UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

1) CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Present: Mayor Donald Trinks (arrived late), Deputy Mayor Lisa Rampulla Bress, Councilor Nuchette Black-Burke, Councilor James Dobler, Councilor Ronald Eleveld, Councilor Kristin Gluck Hoffman (arrived late), Councilor Kenneth Smith, Councilor Ojala Naeem and Councilor Len Walker

2) BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board of Education (BOE) President, David Furie; BOE Director of Business Services and Human Resources, Danielle Batchelder; Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Terrell Hill and Finance Chair and Vice President, Leonard Lockhart were present. Danielle Batchelder presented the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024.

Ms. Batchelder stated that there was a BOE budget increase of 4.84% or \$3,699,575 over the FY 2022-2023 budget.

The major drivers of the 4.84% increase are increases in the six bargaining unit contracts at \$1,865,200, the employee benefits (health, dental, life & disability, 401 employer match and FICA/Med) at \$598,103 and an increase in Special Education tuition of \$1,194,246. The additional increases to the budget are \$459,051 for technology equipment and software as well as an increase in utility and supply costs totaling \$442,450.

We anticipate a reduction in the salary account by \$300,000 as we anticipate staff retirements for June 2023. This figure is based on discussions with staff and historical experience.

Additional staffing for FY 23/24 is as follows:

- 1.0 FTE – Math Intervention – Oliver Ellsworth
- 0.5 FTE – ELL Teacher – Oliver Ellsworth
- 0.5 FTE – ELL Teacher – Poquonock
- 1.0 FTE – Math Interventionist – Poquonock
- 1.0 FTE – Special Ed Teacher – Sage Park
- 1.0 FTE – Social Worker – District wide
- 1.0 FTE – Special Ed/Alternative Ed Teacher – SPARK
- 1.0 FTE – Math Teacher – SPARK
- 1.0 FTE – PE/Health Teacher – 0.8 FTE Clover & 0.2 FTE SPARK



- 4.0 FTE – Tutors – 1.0 FTE at OE, Poquonock, Clover and JFK
- 2.0 FTE – Tutors – Sage Park
- 1.0 FTE – ELL Tutor – Clover
- 1.0 FTE – SEL Specialist – Oliver Ellsworth
- 1.0 FTE – SEL Specialist – Poquonock
- 1.0 FTE – SEL Specialist – JFK
- 2.0 FTE – SEL Specialist – Clover
- 2.0 FTE – SEL Specialist – Sage Park
- 1.0 FTE – Nurse – Floating – District Wide
- 1.0 FTE – Adult Ed Program Assistant – Adult Ed
- 0.5 FTE – Mentoring Coordinator – OFCP
- 1.0 FTE – Custodian – Sage Park

There are a total of 25.5 positions.

Mayor Trinks asked if the ARP ESSER funds would fully cover all 25 FTE positions. Ms. Batchelder and Dr. Hill both said yes.

Mayor Trinks asked if all of these positions are filled. Dr. Hill said yes.

Councilor Dobler asked how it was going with DATTCO. Ms. Batchelder stated that it is going better. Councilor Dobler asked if they were comfortable with where it is right now and Ms. Batchelder responded they are.

Councilor Dobler asked when the rate would be locked in for fuel and diesel. Ms. Batchelder said they share services with the town and she believed we purchased fuel around Christmas time. Town Manager Souza added that diesel is received through the Capital Region Council of Governments cooperative purchasing effort and is usually bid around the first part of the year for the July contract period. He stated that electricity is locked-in in October. There is a three-year lock-in period starting in October of 2023.

Councilor Dobler stated that there are a lot of buildings that are getting security cameras and he asked if there was a plan to have a certain percentage of the schools covered. Ms. Batchelder replied that they have had consultants review the buildings over the past two years to look for blind spots and places that weren't covered. They have purchased cameras as funds are available.

Councilor Dobler looked to page 39, under "salaries", and stated that it looked like we are in contract negotiations with three of the bargaining units. He asked if the WEA and Windsor School Administrators contracts are already settled. Ms. Batchelder said yes they are. Councilor Dobler asked if it was just a matter of dealing with the other three groups. Ms. Batchelder said yes. The certified staff were bound by state statutes, so those were settled back at the start of this school year.

Councilor Naeem asked for clarity from Dr. Hill on going from a 6.22% potential increase to 4.84%. She asked if there were any areas where Dr. Hill saw significant decreases. Dr. Hill replied that technology took the biggest hit in the budget. Ms. Batchelder explained that another one of their biggest reductions in the budget was bussing. COVID allowed them to make some changes and through the years the trend has been that parents bring their kids to school much more than in the past. Prior to this year, they would always budget 100% of the buses and last year was the first year they did not spend all of the money because they could not find drivers. With the driver shortage, they were able to look at different ways of doing services and picking students up. They put more monitors on buses to help so they could get more kids on the buses and they were able to decrease their budget by a little over \$400,000.

Mr. Furie added that they have seen close to an 8% inflation increase for the past year, yet the major maintenance line is staying the same. He stated that they can't buy as much or do as much major maintenance with the same amount of money as last year because of the costs. While there are no decreases in funds, there will be a decrease in what can be done.

Councilor Black-Burke asked if the decrease in technology will leave a gap in the future and she wanted to be sure they were thinking ahead. Dr. Hill responded that he thought in education as a whole that we have become overly comfortable with technology. He said that in the next year there will be some blackout dates where there will be no computers used. He believes technology is a great tool but wants to ensure there is engagement and interaction between students and teachers and to ensure that the students are thinking. He briefly discussed his process for determining how he budgeted for technology costs.

Councilor Black-Burke stated that she appreciated what Dr. Hill shared.

Councilor Naeem stated that it sounded like a significant amount in the technology budget that wasn't being funded were to do with upgrades and replenishment of devices. She asked if there were other technological elements that we have and that we should be thinking about in the future. Ms. Batchelder stated that companies would only support an iPad or a Google Chromebook for four years. She said that they would not use an unsupported device for state testing but that they could still use them in the classroom. She discussed that they have also been evaluating software costs. Dr. Hill wanted to be clear that they are not eliminating technology but that they are striving for a better balance when it comes to screen time.

Ms. Batchelder added that there was a huge savings this year because students in grades K-5 were not taking their devices home any longer. They had fewer devices to replace and were able to save some money.

Councilor Walker asked about the requirements for certificates of residency for children in Windsor, how many are there and what is the cost to the Windsor tax payers and to the budget. He also commended Superintendent Dr. Hill for standing up against students being disruptive in the classroom and for standing up against "sagging" in the schools. Councilor Walker asked Dr. Hill to speak about these issues. Dr. Hill said that there are students attending the school with



certificates of residency but he said he would have to get back to the Council on the number of students in the schools and the cost. Dr. Hill briefly discussed how they ensure students are Windsor residents or have a certificate of residency. He said there is no appreciable number of students who are coming to our public schools with or without a certificate of residency that are causing a fiscal issue. Dr. Hill said they will continue to address the clothing issue and encouraged parents to be aware of how their child is dressing. He said that they will handle this together with the parents.

Deputy Rampulla Bress asked how often they renew their contracts for utilities and if they have the same opportunities that residents do to choose a supplier for electricity. Ms. Batchelder said that it is all done through the town and the school pays the town. Town Manager Souza said that for electricity, they have had a third party supplier for the better part of 12 or 13 years. He said the rate is usually locked-in for a 24-36 month period. Unfortunately with water, there is only one supplier and thankfully they are holding their numbers for this year relatively low. He acknowledged that costs from the MDC have been escalating over the years.

Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress agreed with decreasing screen time. She believed that the majority of parents will agree with them, but it will be a transition for students.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked if they were decreasing software licenses. Dr. Hill said yes. When they are getting rid of a particular software, no one is using it. Councilor Hoffman asked what software was being removed. Dr. Hill and Ms. Batchelder didn't want to disclose which ones as they hadn't had a final discussion with staff.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked if any of the software programs that were being removed would be replaced with better or more efficient software for the team. Dr. Hill responded that most of it would not be replaced but he is always looking for programs that can make them more efficient or that can serve multiple functions. They are also planning some trainings to help better utilize the programs that they do have.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman commended Dr. Hill on enforcing the dress code.

Councilor Eleveld commented on the increased cost of health insurance at almost a half a million dollars. Ms. Batchelder responded that they were over \$1.7 million in claims last year versus prior years. They believed a lot was due to COVID-19, but it shocked them. She said that they are trending this year like they used to but now they are in the hole. They have to keep that fund at a certain percentage and need to put more money into their insurance fund moving forward to protect them from a loss like they've had last year.

Councilor Eleveld said he heard that many of the claims were not related to the disease but that the testing aspect got very expensive. He also spoke about the budget for special education and remembered at one time that the Roger Walcott School was looked at as a special education hub. He asked if something of that nature was being looked at as an option to help cut down the costs. Dr. Hill said he didn't have details, but yes.



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Councilor Eleveld asked if the staffing reductions were coming through attrition. Ms. Batchelder said yes. Councilor Eleveld presumed they calculated in the budget the cost deferential from retiring staff versus new hires. Ms. Batchelder said yes.

Councilor Eleveld looked to appendix F, on page 50, and asked what “GF” meant. Ms. Batchelder said it stood for general fund.

Councilor Eleveld asked about the ROTC program and if it was in good shape. Dr. Hill shared that he is a veteran and supports the program. He said that it is doing well but according to the national program, a school of their size should be larger. He encouraged students to join and discussed the program’s benefits.

Councilor Eleveld asked how many students are participating and Ms. Batchelder replied about 65.

Councilor Eleveld asked if we are still not paying for students to go to the Hartford magnet schools. Ms. Batchelder said yes that’s correct.

Councilor Eleveld stated that looking at the numbers, it looked like the CREC schools have doubled in price. Ms. Batchelder said that’s correct.

Councilor Eleveld believed Mr. Lockhart was a representative on CREC and asked him if he’d like to speak about the increases. Mr. Lockhart said that he believed CREC provides a good education and that they have been advising all the districts for some time that there was going to start charging full cost. Windsor has been proactive over the past five years by attracting students back into the district and when they come back, it cuts costs. Mr. Lockhart said that Windsor is actually competing with CREC, but families have a right to choose where their children go to school. The BOE has a responsibility to fully fund the students from our district who choose to go to other districts. The BOE has to do a good job so that no one will look at another school unless we can’t offer it.

Councilor Eleveld commented that everyone could agree that the amount being asked for is more than what we would like it to be, however, it is justifiable. He did not see any reason to make any changes to the BOE budget. He understood that all of the school’s budget increases are due to inflationary pressures and items out of their direct control.

Dr. Hill followed up and reported that Ms. Batchelder found that there are 76 students in the Air Force ROTC program. Mr. Lockhart added that they have been actively recruiting 8th graders as well.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked if they had ever thought about bringing ROTC graduates back so students can see where they are now and the progression. Dr. Hill said he would look into that and thought it was a great idea.



Councilor Smith said he supported the budget as presented. He asked how many special education students there are and asked when the town's obligation ends. Dr. Hill said there is not a clear ending. They will have planning and placement team (PPT) meetings where they'll decide what the plan is for the student after graduation, what their needs are and look at their individual education plan (IEP). He said they just changed the law so some kids will be with them until the age of 23. They won't be at the high school but at L.P. Wilson. Councilor Smith asked if that fell under the responsibility of the Board of Education. Dr. Hill said yes.

Mr. Furie said there is a heavy emphasis on life skills, jobs and working in the community. He said it is a fairly intense monitoring to make sure that those students have opportunities that we want everyone to have.

Councilor Smith asked if there was a desire to get off the alliance list or are they content being on the list because of the funding it provides. Dr. Hill said that he wants to get off the list but acknowledged that his team doesn't agree with him. He doesn't like the designation and believes it brings a negative connotation. The State had a great plan to get schools into this, but no exit plan and most people don't want to get out of it because of the money. Windsor receives about \$580,000. He has staff members looking into big grants, not from the Federal government, but from large foundations. He has not yet figured out how to get the money so they could be taken off the list.

Mr. Lockhart added that he also believed it has a negative connotation but that it has protected them from state budget cuts and it has at times been weaponized during elections. He believed that an alliance district should be able to earn their way off of that designation with no loss of funding. He said schools on the list are seen as problem schools and that is not true for Windsor.

Dr. Hill said that other districts are de-incentivized to get off the list because they receive millions of dollars and it is a benefit to them. He said from the beginning he did not like being a part of that group and didn't like any kind of negative connotation. He feels like he has the collective intellect and skills set in the district to get their kids to move.

Councilor Smith shared that in the 1960's, the Windsor schools were competitive with West Hartford and Avon. He couldn't believe that we are at the bottom of 169 towns based on what he's seen within the fire department and within the community. Dr. Hill said they are working on it and hopes to find a way to get off the list.

Councilor Eleveld asked Mr. Lockhart if they are still doing CBTA events. Mr. Lockhart said that they are. Councilor Eleveld thought Councilmembers would be interested in attending future events. He said these events were put on by students with mental and physical handicaps. Mr. Lockhart said he will be sure the Council receives an invitation next time.

Dr. Hill followed up from Councilor Smith's question that there are 740 special education students. Councilor Smith was very surprised by that number.



Councilor Gluck Hoffman clarified that the number includes a wide range of services. She requested that it might be helpful to have a breakdown of the different levels included for the Council next year.

Councilor Black-Burke said that as a district it is our responsibility to educate every child.

Mr. Lockhart commented that special education is not just for the kids that are struggling but also includes our gifted students. Unfortunately, special education always has a negative connotation.

Councilor Walker thanked everyone from the BOE, Dr. Hill and Ms. Batchelder for their work.

Mayor Trinks said that the BOE is scheduled to come back on April 17 but with the presentation tonight, he did not see the need for them to come back before the Council. No one from the Council objected. Mayor Trinks thanked them for their work.

3) REVENUES

Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress announced that this agenda item had been moved.

4) PUBLIC WORKS

Bob Jarvis, Director of Public Works; Jessie English, Public Works Operations Manager; Gary Dowgiewicz, Assistant Buildings and Facilities Manager and Suzanne Choate, Town Engineer were present. Mr. Jarvis presented the proposed FY 24 budget for the Public Works fund as follows:

FY 2023 BUDGET AND ESTIMATE

- The FY 2023 General Fund expenditures are expected to be under budget by approximately \$102,000 (or 1.4%). This is primarily due to savings in Personal Services. We had position vacancies, employees receiving workman's compensation, retirements and hiring of new employees, all of which contributed to the Personal Services savings.
- In FY 2023 we performed or oversaw – the surface restoration to almost 7 miles of roads, sweeping of about 160 miles of town roads, repairs and replacements to over 120 catch basins, and the improvements to the Sage Park athletic fields.
- With the guidance of the Public Building Commission, we directed the construction of the L.P. Wilson Social Services Relocation Project. We also oversaw the ongoing HVAC Efficiency project at the Sage Park School and the commencement of the Goslee Pool Renovation Project.

FY 2024 BUDGET

- The FY 2024 General Fund budget reflects an increase of approximately \$351,000, or 4.4%, when compared to the FY2022 budget. This is mostly due to increases in Energy



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and Utility costs and increases in Personal Services, due primarily to the addition of a full-time Maintainer in Public Works.

In FY 2024 we anticipate:

- Completing construction of the first phase of the International Drive Road Rehabilitation project, which is yet another project funded through the State-funded, Local Transportation Capital Improvement Grant Program.
- And, we look forward to the completion of the Baker Hollow Road Improvement project.
- We will be working with the Public Building Commission and the board of Education to continue the HVAC improvements at Sage Park Middle School, the L.P. Wilson Community Center and also the 330 Windsor Avenue Community Center.

Deputy Mayor Rampulla Bress congratulated Mr. Jarvis on his retirement and welcomed Ms. Choate to the town.

Councilor Black-Burke congratulated Mr. Jarvis on his retirement. She shared concerns about medians and wanted to ensure that there is enough money in the budget to keep all medians in town maintained equitably. Town Manager Souza responded that there is a state funded project to replace the medians on Route 159 from 218 to the city line where there will be significant change in appearance to the Wilson corridor. He stated that part of the replacement will include new trees, planting beds and also refreshment of what is there. Staff is also working with the Wilson Deerfield Advisory Committee to add additional plantings. He stated it is a little bit of a challenge in this section as there is not as much right-of-way as there is in town center but they have identified a number of locations where planters will be added in late spring and early summer. He stated they also had a conversation with CREC to re-establish the planting bed in front of Roger Wolcott School at the corner of east Walcott and Windsor Avenue, so there are a variety of activities going on. Some funds will be used from the FY 23 budget. There will be a regular schedule to maintain the medians once the repairs have been done. This spring in the Wilson area, the sidewalks will be swept as the medians will be under repair. He stated that there are a variety of efforts at the State level and in the town's budget through the Department of Public Works.

Councilor Black-Burke summarized that the medians would be pulled up, re-done, planters will be added and they will be maintained. Town Manager Souza said, yes and the town will have the responsibility to maintain them. He wanted to note that the town has been maintaining the medians from Windsor center to the Hartford line for the last 40 years and the condition of those medians is not because of the lack of effort by our town staff. He said with some advocacy from a variety of people, the State will be putting in over two million dollars into this project.

Councilor Eleveld asked about the increase to personal services by \$400,000 and if it was because of contractual increases and the additional person they are looking to hire. Mr. Jarvis replied that the line item includes both.



Councilor Eleveld noted increases to energy and utility costs by \$150,000 but understood that was out of our control. One item that caused him some concern was the average number of days to close SeeClickFix complaints regarding pothole and pavement issues. In FY 22, the target was eight days, in FY 23, it was 10 days and in FY 24, the target is nine days and he asked why the target isn't going back to the eight days. Mr. Jarvis said that their response time would be nine days and that they wouldn't want to see anything greater than that. He said they expect the actual response time to be less than nine days.

Councilor Eleveld noted that there has been a savings by Public Works going out to bid for paving instead of using the State bidding process and commended them for diligently attempting to keep costs down.

Councilor Smith noted the increased costs of utilities across the board and he asked Town Manager Souza what can be done to get a better price on utilities. Town Manager Souza stated that it is a challenge in this environment and that we are using a third party supplier. He briefly discussed what has been done in the past from purchasing to attempts to lower the town's usage and consumption. He mentioned possibly entering into a contract for virtual net metering, which would allow us to meet two objectives – to save costs in the long run on a per kilowatt hour through a power purchase agreement and to meet our goal of sustainability and adding sustainable energy to our portfolio. He said the most immediate issue is to use the town's purchasing power to be able to lock in prices over the course of the next 36 months.

Councilor Smith asked what is the need to add the extra position. Mr. Jarvis listed the several different developments where Public Works has taken over the infrastructure. He also stated that the amount of street lights they maintain has increased by 266 and the sidewalks' square footage has increased by 30,000. He said they have seen a significant increase in the amount of infrastructure that the town must maintain going forward.

Town Manager Souza commented that they have added seasonal and part-time positions to help but that it has been challenging. He said a full-time position brings more stability and efficiency than having to bring in seasonal workers every 120 days or so.

There were no further questions and Mayor Trinks thanked everyone for their work.

5) LANDFILL ENTERPRISE FUND

Mark Goossens, Solid Waste Manager presented the proposed FY 24 budget for the Landfill Enterprise Fund.

Revenues for the Enterprise Fund no longer include tipping fees for solid waste disposed at the Landfill. There are now two primary sources of revenue funds. One source is from interest earnings on the "fund balance" of the Enterprise Fund. Interest rates rebounded in FY23, resulting in approximately \$300,000 from this revenue source.



The other primary source is from reimbursements for the closure and capping work at the site, from a State Grant that has been designated for this purpose. Reimbursement for FY23 is projected to be approximately \$260,000, and the total of reimbursements received by the end of FY23 are expected to be approximately \$1.6 Million.

Reimbursement for FY 24 is projected to be approximately \$300,000 which will nearly deplete the \$2 Million total grant.

Expenditures for both fiscal years are primarily related to the closure and capping work at the site. The FY24 proposed budget includes funds for the continued application of additional capping materials and for work designed to improve aesthetic conditions within the adjacent wetlands. The Town continues to work with the CT DEEP to finalize a design of a “modified wetlands”; a less-intrusive approach that utilizes the wetlands natural ability to attenuate and filter out contaminants to improve the aesthetic condition within the wetlands.

This approach is expected to have a much smaller impact to the wetlands than the previously agreed-upon method and to be significantly less costly to the Town. Because of this, Net Operating expenses at the conclusion of FY23 are expected to come in approximately 45% under budget due primarily to savings in the Services line item.

The retained earnings of the Landfill Enterprise Fund will be used to meet costs associated with landfill closure as well as post-closure monitoring, which includes leachate management, methane gas collection system maintenance and repairs, and other long-term obligations.

At the end of FY24, the estimated end-of-year retained earnings balance available for future obligations is estimated to be approximately \$18 million.

Councilor Dobler remembered that there used to be sporadic complaints about a pungent odor and asked if they were still getting complaints. Mr. Goossens said absolutely not. The last complaint he had received was in the fall of 2011.

Town Manager Souza asked Mr. Goossens to explain to the Council what was done to eliminate the odor. Mr. Goossens explained that an odor like rotting eggs was produced when bacteria consumed dry wall. To eliminate the odor, they put in an active gas collection system. Town Manager Souza added that the system is still currently in place and is part of the long-term O&M cost that we’ll have to maintain.

Councilor Eleveld said looking in FY 23, we expected to receive \$530,000 in revenue from a DEEP grant but estimated that only \$258,000 will come in. He asked if that was because it was tied to what was actually spent. Mr. Goossens said yes. With the 45% reduction and lack of construction, they didn’t have anything to submit for the grant, so the savings has generated a temporary lack of revenues.



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Councilor Eleveld asked if he was expecting the numbers in services to go up this coming year. Mr. Goossens explained that the \$778,000 includes \$400,000 for the wetlands with the new cost so the \$1.1 million has been displaced and moved from this fiscal year and reduced to \$400,000 for next fiscal year.

Councilor Eleveld asked if the wetlands was going to solve the coloring issue. Mr. Goossens replied that it is intended to treat some of it. It has got to do with stabilization and to try to revegetate it in different ways that screen it a bit better. The condition there is aesthetic, it is not a health condition. The intent is to deal with the invasive species in the wetlands and stabilize some of the banks and then let Mother Nature take over.

Councilor Eleveld asked if there was enough in reserves. Mr. Goossens said that there is a 30-year post closure period but there has been talk for decades of the EPA extending that indefinitely. He said the current yearly estimate is \$416,000. He believed we are in a strong position but they just don't know what the future holds with regulation.

Town Manager Souza said that past Town Councils have set them up well and gave credit to Mr. Goossens for running the landfill for the last 20 years. He appreciated the Council's understanding of the long-term stewardship responsibilities we have as a community.

Councilor Eleveld asked if we had received credits for methane. Mr. Goossens said they did it as long as they could. The gas credits had to be within 10 years of the construction of the system and we were able to capture close to \$300,000 worth of credits for simply burning off the landfill gas. He said that gas degrades with time, losing both quality and quantity.

Councilor Eleveld asked if the gas depletes itself as time goes by. Mr. Goossens said yes.

Councilor Walker stated he has always been an advocate for closing the Windsor Landfill but has since changed his thinking. He asked what it would take if the town extended the closing date to allow Windsor residents to use the landfill until the State can figure out what to do with its waste. He said that Windsor taxpayers are currently at the mercy of Windsor Sanitation where every year they increase the cost of disposal of waste with no notice. Town Manager Souza said it would be extremely difficult to extend the life of the landfill, partly from a regulatory perspective and also a practical perspective. He said the landfill was permitted to reach an elevation of 212 feet and we have reached that capacity. We would have to go to the State DEEP and get a revision to that permit and undo our closing and capping plan that has been approved by DEEP. He didn't think that DEEP would allow us to re-open it and even if we were to pursue it, it would be a multi-year process, including significant regulatory review. Town Manager Souza said that he and Mr. Goossens continue to participate in regional conversations about solid waste. He said he would raise Councilor Walker's concerns up with Windsor Sanitation.

Mr. Goossens agreed with Town Manager Souza and said that the optimum time to reconsider has passed.



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Councilor Walker thanked Town Manager Souza for his response and said he would like to find a way to help residents dispose of their waste.

Councilor Dobler asked if the technology or the costs have gotten to the point where it's worth considering plasma gasification. Town Manager Souza said that he didn't believe that anyone in North America has proven it to be cost efficient.

Mayor Trinks asked what year are we in the process of closing the landfill. Town Manager Souza said the clock hasn't started yet. It does not start until it is certified by DEEP.

Mayor Trinks asked if we are on target with the early estimates for closure costs. Town Manager Souza said, yes we are on target.

Mayor Trinks asked if Bloomfield has any part of the landfill. Town Manager Souza said yes, they retain environmental liability as part of the agreement. Bloomfield residents are also allowed to bring food scraps, yard waste and other materials to the transfer station.

Mayor Trinks asked if they have a similar enterprise fund. Town Manager Souza said they do not to his knowledge.

6) RESIDENT TRANSFER STATION

Mark Goossens, Solid Waste Manager, presented the proposed FY 24 budget for the Resident Transfer Station.

Mr. Goossens stated the FY 24 Transfer Station budget proposes to continue to provide the same services as was provided in FY 23, including the continuation of an Organics Recycling program where residents drop their organic waste materials in a dedicated food scraps container onsite.

Our tonnage intake during this fiscal year continues to drop towards that of pre-pandemic years; we expect to receive approximately 450 tons of municipal solid wastes (or "MSW"), and approximately 950 tons of bulky wastes at year's end. The FY 24 proposed budget carries the same intake tonnage levels as those projected for the end of this fiscal year as activities at the TS seem to be down to, or near, their pre-pandemic levels.

The transfer station operates as a separate, "stand-alone" enterprise fund, with the goal of operating with a positive-fund-balance. Based on current waste stream volumes and the additional expense of the food scraps recycling program, the fund expects to realize a \$14,650 net loss at the conclusion of FY 23 and will not have met that financial goal.

The State of Connecticut remains muddled in a waste disposal crisis; and the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund continues to absorb significant disposal price increases from its various vendors. This condition requires us to propose another set of increases in FY 24 in order to try to maintain a "near-neutral" Net Operating Income at the conclusion of FY 24.



In our proposed budget, we have recommended that the cost of half-year and full-year permits be raised in FY 23 by \$5 and \$10 respectively. The FY 24 proposed budget also includes price increases of \$10 per ton for both Bulky and Yard wastes to account for increased costs for managing those materials as well.

Councilor Eleveld asked what the fees are currently for permits. Mr. Goossens said the full-year is \$180 and \$95 for the half year.

Councilor Eleveld asked if we are looking to increase those fees. Mr. Goossens replied yes, the proposed full-year permit would become \$190 and the half-year would become \$100.

Councilor Eleveld said he noted there had been a loss in the last few years and asked if the increased adjustment would help. Mr. Goossens said they try to stay near neutral so the residents are paying as little as possible. Town Manager Souza said that they have taken a moderate view with fees, as they understand there are increased costs across many households. He added another factor here is that we had been receiving more money for the sale of recyclable materials and that has changed drastically in the last four years.

Councilor Eleveld stated that he wasn't implying that we should be making a profit but wants to mitigate losses when we can.

Councilor Walker asked what is the difference in price for a resident taking their trash to the landfill versus paying Windsor Sanitation. Mr. Goossens explained that Windsor Sanitation's costs are broken down so that 50% is attributable to collection and 50% is for disposal. The town is at about where they are for disposal with full-year permits.

Councilor Walker wanted to be sure residents knew that it is cheaper for them to bring their trash to the dump, and that the Town of Windsor does not control Windsor Sanitation.

Mayor Trinks thanked Mr. Goossens for his presentation.

7) **ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by Councilor Hoffman and seconded by Councilor Naeem to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea D. Marcavitch
Recording Secretary

Draft Minutes

4/17/23

Special Meeting



**TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING
APRIL 17, 2023
UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trinks called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 Ojala Naeem and Councilor Len Walker

2) REVENUES

Jim Bourke, Finance Director, provided a brief overview of the current fiscal year revenue projections and the proposed FY 24 revenue budget.

Mr. Bourke stated for fiscal year 2023, the adopted budget totals \$129,894,300. At this point, we are estimating revenues for this year to be approx. \$4.2M more than what was budgeted. This does not include any use of \$1.8M that was budgeted as opening cash.

- Building permit fees are expected to provide additional revenue of approx. \$3.2M due to the several new warehouse projects, such as the new Target facility on Groton Rd.
- Interest income is projected to come in over budget this year by approx. \$1.1M due to continuously improving interest rates over the past 9 months.
- State Aid is expected to come in over budget by approx. \$800,000. The main contributors to this are \$300K in additional Special Education-Excess Cost funds and approx. \$570K from Municipal Revenue Sharing grant that the Town received but did not budget for.
- General property taxes are showing favorable collections from the current levy, supplemental motor vehicle taxes and interest on prior year collections.
- Conveyance fees are expected to be \$225K more than budgeted.
- Most of our other revenue categories are relatively stable, and are expected to come in slightly over or slightly under budget.

For fiscal year 2024, the proposed General Fund revenue budget totals \$139,228,850. General Property Taxes are expected to contribute approx. 85% and State Aid is expected to contribute 12%.

- Interest income is projected to increase approximately \$1.6M as compared to the FY 23 budgeted level, as we are expecting interest rates to continue at or near their current levels over the next 12-18 months.



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- State aid is based on the Governor's budget that was presented in February, and is anticipated to be approx. \$730K higher as compared to the FY 23 budgeted amounts.
- Most other non-tax revenue categories are level funded to FY 23 budgeted amounts, or seeing small to moderate increases.

Councilor Dobler asked about licenses and permits. In 2023 we budgeted \$74,000, it was about \$3.2 million more. In 2022 it looks like we budgeted \$732,000 and it turned out to be about \$6,000 more. It seems like it's a trend. Do you expect the licenses and permits to be similar to the last couple of years? Mr. Bourke asked if Councilor Dobler was referring to the total of the whole category. Councilor Dobler stated that is correct. Mr. Bourke stated the main driver there is building permits. He explained there is a methodology that we allow for a certain amount per month, and then if there is big economic development in town, we see that revenue come in. That's the main reason why it fluctuates the way you see it. Councilor Dobler stated all indications seem that there is a decent chance that it will be a little bit higher than it is. He was wondering if there was anything special or not causing that. Mr. Bourke replied that the Building Department took a look at that and they increased the budget somewhat. We always want to try and keep it at a conservative amount.

Councilor Eleveld said we've done relatively well this year with the budget being less than the \$1 million and we're looking at over \$2 million. He said is that \$2.6 million? Mr. Bourke stated it is \$2.3 million. It includes the cell tower revenues and they go up by 3-5% annually based on those contracts.

Councilor Eleveld stated that when we are looking at licenses and permits, the bulk of that money is coming from permits. Do we have any idea how much of the \$823,740 is due to permits? Mr. Bourke stated just about everything you see on page B-1 does not fluctuate that much except for the building permits. Councilor Eleveld then asked if licenses are half a million or a quarter of a million dollars in that number. Mr. Bourke responded from the \$823,740 amount Councilor Eleveld is referring to, \$726,000 is just the building permits. Councilor Eleveld then stated it is then roughly \$100,000 for licenses. Mr. Bourke stated yes. He added that the other items that you see are all price guide items, which are generated from the different town departments.

Councilor Eleveld stated we budgeted \$826,000 in Charges for Current Services and we are looking to collect \$1.02 million, which is an increase of approximately \$200,000. He noticed that fiduciary you are reducing that number from \$826,000 in FY 23 to \$749,000 for FY 24. Mr. Bourke stated the main drivers there are conveyance and recording fees in the Town Clerk's office. That's a function of higher mortgage interest rates that are causing us to take a more measured approach to anticipating what we might get. Recording fees are less mortgages being recorded due to high interest rates. Councilor Eleveld then stated that the higher interest rates and the presumed slow down in real estate transaction is what is driving the reduction. Mr. Bourke said that was correct.



Mayor Trinks asked how did COVID affect us revenue-wise? Did we as a town see a significant decrease? Town Manager Souza stated the biggest type of programs that were effected were our Special Revenue accounts, which are summer camps. Those are the ones that saw the biggest decrease because they had to operate at the modified rules of the state programs. Also, the two enterprise funds for Milo Peck and Caring Connection were affected because of COVID. Most of our General Fund revenues were in good shape. 85% of our revenue comes from property tax. We have incorporated within revenue projections the adjustment to the Grand List based on the ordinance Council adopted regarding the Elderly Tax Relief. If the Town Council would like to get a Veterans' Tax Exemption, the Council can make that consideration for this upcoming July billing. This would need to be incorporated into the final deliberations and final budget.

3) HEALTH SERVICES

Dr. Mike Pepe, Director of Health Service and Jennifer Waldo, Public Health Nurse, gave the following presentation on the proposed FY 24 budget:

Dr. Pepe stated the budget is organized into four main program areas which include, inspection and regulation, disease prevention and control, clinic services and Emergency Management.

- For FY 23, overall expenditures are expected to come in under budget by \$71,000 due to a decrease in available grant funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- FY 23 General Fund expenditures are expected to be under budget by \$16,000 due to grant funding associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The proposed FY 24 budget reflects a decrease of \$38,000 due to a decrease in available grant funding.
- The proposed FY 24 General Fund portion of the budget shows an increase of \$64,000 due to an increase personal services costs which includes the addition of a new full time sanitarian position.

The new sanitarian position involves working a portion of the time as the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for MDA #31 which is comprised of the Towns of Windsor and South Windsor. Previously, this role was filled by a contractor; however, the CT Department of Public Health now requires this coordinator role to be fulfilled by a staff member. In addition, this position will help to expand community health efforts throughout the Town via increased departmental partnerships and private non-profit partnerships. Lastly, the proposed sanitarian position will allow for additional support to meet the increasing demands of the town's inspectional requirements under the CT Public Health Code.



Councilor Black-Burke said under Inspection and Regulation, looking at the product and services, institutional health and safety line, the amount that is stated, does that represent the cost to maintain the licensing of the entities referenced on page I-5 or is that cost in reference to what it takes to actually carry out the inspection? Dr. Pepe responded that is the overall cost of personnel. Councilor Black-Burke then said that the cost is attributed to the individuals going out to do those functions and is not the actual cost for the inspections correct? Dr. Pepe responded yes.

Councilor Eleveld asked how many facilities in Windsor we inspect currently. Dr. Pepe said as of this fiscal year, it is 147 establishments. Councilor Eleveld said they are not all restaurants. Dr. Pepe stated they are not only restaurants, they are nursing homes, convenience stores, etc.

Councilor Eleveld stated that the department will have to add another employee on the payroll. For instance having an outside consultant who covers South Windsor and Windsor. Dr. Pepe said correct. He asked how that cost is split. Dr. Pepe responded that currently that money is being covered by grant funds that are associated with that position through the CT Department of Health. South Windsor gives us their portion and we combine our portion to fulfill that need. Councilor Eleveld then said it's a shared expense between Windsor and South Windsor? Dr. Pepe said that is correct.

Councilor Eleveld asked if there would be shared services provided by ourselves and South Windsor in the public health area. Dr. Pepe stated that Windsor does offer assistance when it is needed. Currently, there has been no communication regarding a shared service agreement. For now, it is on a 'request' basis if their Health Department needs some help with services. We do vice versa as well. Town Manager Souza stated akin to mutual aid you see in public safety services, we have a long history of working with South Windsor with our mass dispensing area or MDA. That is where the public health has morphed into over the last ten years or so. There has been informal conversations, especially as we continue to have challenges with the availability of certified sanitations, and other health professionals. There have been conversations with his colleague in South Windsor, but nothing has evolved beyond those conversations.

Councilor Naeem asked a question about the Disease Prevention and Control section of the budget. It looks like there is a reallocation of personnel by about a third of the staff that was there. Is that a reflection of the COVID pandemic and not needing as much staff there, but no other areas have been impacted? Dr. Pepe said everything was shifted back to the pre-pandemic funding. That's why you see that shift.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked how often restaurants are inspected. Dr. Pepe responded that it is based on a risk level. In example if it's a convenience store, it would be once a year. If it's a nursing home, it would be four times per year.



4) INFORMATION SERVICES

Enita Jubrey, Assistant to the Town Manager, and Anna Posniak, Town Clerk, presented the proposed FY 24 budget for Information Services as follows:

Ms. Posniak stated the proposed FY 24 general fund budget reflects an increase of \$90,000 or 14.5% primarily due to a request for a new position in Public Relations.

Expenditures in the Town Clerk's budget are aligned to reflect state mandated functions. My division's general fund budget will come in on budget for FY 23, while FY 24 we will see an increase of \$4,800 or 1.3% associated to increases in our Services and Personal Services lines.

Ms. Jubrey said that in Public Relations, they are proposing an \$85,000 increase in the FY 24 general fund budget. About \$10,000 of that amount is due to increases in our Services line for printing costs increased paper costs and other contractual services. A new position in Public Relations is the primary driver of our proposed increase. We need another team member to help us achieve our goals.

A portion of both my time and Patrick Silver's time is devoted to

- Educating
- Informing
- Engaging residents about town programs and services.

Of those, we spend the majority of our time informing - (such as announcements and reminders, "winter parking rules," "where to get a COVID vaccination," etc.)

In order to grow, and truly be effective communicators, we need to expand our spectrum of services to include more diversified content to better engage and educate residents on the value of town services.

The new position will provide the town the capacity to bolster our collaboration efforts across the organization. This impacts social media, but it also includes non-electronic communication efforts such as print publications, targeted post card mailings, displays and other outreach efforts. The creation of a strategic plan positions the department for future years to more effectively communicate with the community on a wider range of topics - not just the "announcement of the moment."

- Increased storytelling
- synergizing the look and feel of our marketing efforts throughout the organization
- energizing our brand
- and an updated email newsletter

These are all examples of new and exciting ways we can elevate and diversify our reach to varying audiences in both electronic and traditional methods.



Mayor Trinks stated his support for the new person being considered for Information Services. There are individuals out there that love the magazines, etc. that are published through this department. He does not go on Facebook, so announcements using that media he would not see. Therefore, he feels the hard copy of information is important for not only him but for others as well.

Councilor Walker said the Connecticut legislature has looked at and approved early voting requirements. Is the State of CT providing funding for early voting? If there is no funding, where in the budget are we projecting to take funds from? Ms. Posniak stated the State legislation is looking at three different bills. They all made it out of committee. Each one of them has varying days. At this point, there is no indication if there will be state funds to cover early voting. Early Voting would fall under the directive of the Registrar of Voters as these bills will give that duty to the Registrar of Voters because it's an extension of the election day. Therefore, it would be in the Registrar of Voters budget.

Councilor Eleveld asked about the three bills. Ms. Posniak stated 10 days is the Secretary of State's bill and then there are two different bills from the leadership. One is for 12 days and the other one is for 14 days.

Councilor Eleveld asked about the new person. Will they be doing Public Relations only or are we looking at having that person work in the Town Clerk's office as well? Ms. Jubrey said the position would be in the Public Relations division only.

Councilor Smith asked if Public Relations takes care of the See Click Fix? Ms. Jubrey answered that she handles the cost of it in the Public Relations budget.

Councilor Black-Burke stated she thinks it's great that we are adding staff capacity to Public Relations. The aim is that this person will be a content creator. That position is an entire body of work. Ms. Jubrey stated Councilor Black-Burke is on target. It will be as a team (the three of them) that they will be looking at that strategic approach at what they're doing and leaning to what they're doing well, but also introducing more. There is a shift where we are doing more story telling about different departments and initiatives here within the town as opposed to just informing the public of dates of events, etc. There is definitely a large piece of content component to it.

Councilor Black-Burke stated as we look to build that muscle in the public relations arena, how do we also tie it up to what is happening in our schools. Is that an area that we can work with? Is there an internship opportunity for school kids? She thanked Enita and Anna for all the hard work they do.

Councilor Naeem asked is there a more targeted approach plan to reaching out to more communities? She feels the social media we are currently putting out there is generalized. She



thinks there are pockets of our communities that are not engaging with that content because it's not speaking to them. It would be helpful to think of that as we bring another person on board so that we aren't just capturing the same people and that we are expanding out to those who are not getting the message. Ms. Jubrey stated part of their goal is to increase their reach and then in doing so, do the engagement piece as well.

Councilor Eleveld remarked that you can now go to Town Clerk's office to get copies of a death certificate that may have been issued in another town? Ms. Posniak stated any death from 2020 – present, the Town Clerk's office can access that in the state registry. Councilor Eleveld asked about birth records and can that be done as well? Ms. Posniak stated the Town Clerk's office can access them from 2001-present for anywhere in the state.

Deputy Mayor Bress asked about customer service and transactions with people who are responding to Public Relations on Facebook. Will this position be able to respond in real time? Is there going to be an aspect of customer service attached to this additional position or is it just going to be putting information out there, but not being able to respond to customer queries or questions on the site? Ms. Jubrey stated we do respond when misinformation is posted – particularly on Facebook. We will respond to questions. With just her and Patrick in the office, they are not on Facebook all day long, but they do respond when there are direct questions and when misinformation has been stated, but not trolling. Deputy Mayor Bress clarified that she was really asking about the new position. Doing social media is a full time job. Ms. Jubrey agreed and said it would take some time to get the new person accustomed to the culture, the language and the way we respond. We would certainly train that person accordingly.

5) LIBRARY SERVICES

Gaye Rizzo, Library Director, and Gabrielle Barnes, Wilson Library Branch Manager, gave the following presentation on the proposed FY 24 budget.

Ms. Rizzo said the FY23 general fund budget is expected to come in just under budget. The FY24 general fund budget reflects an increase of \$68,400 due to Personal Services, utilities, books and much of the funding needed to expand one part time Director of Special Services position to a full time Librarian in response to the growing demand for Early Literacy programs and services.

And while we acknowledge the library's important role as a community gathering place, a number of our patrons have confided in us their need for more space apart from other library activity. A place to study, to take an online course or for a small uninterrupted meeting. To that end, a goal for next year will be to explore the potential for additional quiet study space at the main library. We'll consider options similar to the existing rooms on the lower level or even installing moveable pods within the building.

Last year, 85% of the 2,500 meetings, attended by more than 9,000 people were held in small meeting spaces.



Along those same lines, a second goal next year will be to re-purpose the Kidspace program room into a small meeting room for adults and organizations serving children. With an exploding population of young children at the library and program attendance often exceeding 50 little ones per session, the program room can no longer be used for its intended purpose. Nearly 5,500 children attended Kidspace programs last year and with nearly half under age 5, our FY 24 proposed budget includes moving one part time staff member to a full time Children’s Librarian position entrusted with the unique early literacy and program needs of our pre-schoolers.

A third goal next year will be to research and consider environmentally friendly alternatives for delivering some library programs and services. Staff is committed to sustainability and has already served as an example to the community through raised bed gardening at the branch and a seed collection at the main library. Through this goal the staff will continue to be more mindful of ways that we can all learn to conserve, protect and respect our natural resources.

The FY 24 Library Services budget is one that allows us to manage utility expenses, to purchase more books in multiple formats and to offer outstanding programs and services to every age group in our growing Windsor population.

Councilor Eleveld commended the library on their performance measures. He went over some of the statistics.

Councilor Black-Burke asked if the kids space room is going to be reconfigured, will there be another space allocated for the children at the library? Ms. Rizzo said they use the large meeting room a lot of the time and they do quite a bit outside.

Deputy Mayor Bress asked about the Maker Space program. How is it being utilized and how do you see it continuing? Ms. Rizzo said it’s being utilized a lot. Town Manager Souza added that within the proposed budget of Library Services is the use of American Rescue funds to partially support the new position which comes to \$30,000. In FY 25 we would scale that back to a potential \$15,000 contribution, add \$15,000 to the General Fund, and then in FY 26 it would be the General Fund only.

Councilor Walker asked how the Library advertises to the Windsor community for the “Touch a Truck” event. Ms. Rizzo responded that it would go on the website, be added to the web calendar, social media, newsletter, etc.

6) HUMAN SERVICES

Jasmine Hall, Social Services Coordinator, and Enita Jubrey, Assistant to the Town Manager gave the following presentation on the proposed FY 24 budget for Social Services.

The FY 23 General Fund expenditures are expected to be slightly under budget as a result of using grant funds.



The FY 24 proposed General Fund budget reflects an increase of about \$40,000, including a request for a part-time position to assist with the increased demand for renters rebates, and energy and housing assistance requests.

The first half of our FY 23 highlights shown on page H-6 provide data and an overview of the increasing demand for service the department is experiencing.

Our team continues to adapt to changes in service demands resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The increases are due in part to state and federal resources rescinded as the pandemic leveled off.

Housing, food, and energy assistance requests continue to rise.

This year the department will be processing more than double the amount of renters rebate applications than we have in the past with the addition of Windsor housing authority residents. While an additional part-time staff member will provide us with additional capacity to handle the workload, we have already set in motion a number of initiatives to streamline this process including marketing efforts, drop-boxes, and communication outreach to all housing authority residents.

Councilor Gluck-Hoffman commended the Human Services unit on the job they have done with the space at L.P. Wilson.

Councilor Eleveld asked why we are taking care of the renter's rebate program instead of the Windsor Housing Authority. Town Manager Souza stated that what we have transitioned into is a common practice among many municipalities. We had a long standing relationship with the Housing Authority where they took that on. It's more or less reprioritizing the Housing Authority's work load and this allows them to focus more on their daily supportive efforts.

7) SAFETY SERVICES

Police Services

Don Melanson, Police Chief; Heather LaRock, Captain; Andrew Power, Captain; and Suzanne Brannack, Executive Assistant.

Chief Melanson gave the following presentation on the proposed FY 24 budget.

The Police Department's FY 23 Expenditures are expected to be under budget by \$219,160, or 1.9%. This is primarily due to savings from Personal services, partial year vacancies, hiring new officers at a lower rate, and staff out on workers compensation and disability leave. This is offset in part by an increase in use of American Rescue Funds to increase our mental health clinician to full time. The FY23 General Fund Budget is expected to come in \$269,700, or 2.4%, for the same personal services reasons.



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For the 2024 Fiscal Year, the Police Department's Overall Budget reflects an increase of \$855,690, or 7.3% over the FY23 budget. This increase is primarily due to added funding for an additional Police Officer position, an additional dispatcher position, and an increase in rates for CMERS, which is the police officers pension system. It also includes continued use of ARF funding for our mental health clinician services and an increase in higher Services and Energy & Utility costs.

The Police Department's General Fund Budget, including town support for education, is increasing \$777,220, or 7.1%.

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 and a new dispatcher position. Over the past few years, we have seen an increase in time demands for officers to properly handle calls for service along with hours for required training. These new positions will allow our department to meet these increasing requirements of training and the growing demands for public safety services.

Councilor Dobler asked why the Police Department has been so successful in obtaining new recruits as opposed to other towns. Chief Melanson stated he believes our hiring process is very flexible. We also respond back to the applicant within 1-2 days after receiving an application. Some departments have a process where you apply but they may not test until 2-3 months down the road.

Councilor Dobler asked from a supply standpoint are you seeing any challenges with that. Chief Melanson stated that supply has been relatively available to us to provide the equipment that the officers need.

Councilor Black-Burke stated she was excited to see the position of an additional dispatcher in the budget. Does that meet the demand? Do we need additional dispatchers? Chief Melanson stated it meets the demand.

Councilor Walker said recruiting for police departments is a problem. He asked Chief Melanson if he thinks that not just the salary, but support from state local governments has anything to do with police officers/recruits coming to Windsor versus going somewhere else? Chief Melanson stated that he thinks so. Windsor has a diverse community and police department. That in of itself draws candidates, seeing how well we interact with our community and how much we're invested in community policing. The candidates that we are attracting really want to be a part of the community and carry out that community policing profession. Town Manager Souza added that although we've been successful, it's still a very huge lift. To go through the process to get hired, there are requirements that have to be made and even some applicants are having challenges meeting the physical standards. It's been close to 20 years that our contracts with our police officers require they be at a certain level of fitness to become a police officer, even if you've been here throughout your career. He believes that in the long run, that makes for a



better physical and mental police force. He gave his kudos to Captain Power and Captain LaRock in bringing forth good candidates. They do have strenuous activity through the academy and field training. They don't all make it in that 12-14 month period. Some individuals don't pass that probationary period.

Town Manager Souza asked Chief Melanson to talk about retirement. Chief Melanson stated that in the next 2-3 years there is only 1-2 officers that will be eligible or will become eligible for retirement. That bodes well for us in maintaining and developing our staff a little bit longer. Currently, 60%-70% of our department has less than 10 years of experience.

Councilor Naeem asked a question about Communications. She sees that we're bringing on additional dispatchers. Have we considered any additional training for dispatchers overall? I know there's been a lot of discussion on how calls are handled in high stress times. Chief Melanson stated that over the past year, the department has implemented a new dispatch system. It's a CAD interfaced system that provides queues and questions, depending on the type of call you have. It gives dispatchers a script to guide them and go by. It also allows them to deviate, based on their training experience, how they deem it should be going and if someone provides information, they can move forward and back in that call and add things. The system also provides ongoing refresher training.

Councilor Naeem asked if that system also incorporates mental guidance and how does the dispatcher balance that response? Chief Melanson stated that the system does provide for that. It also has a Q/A module that the dispatch supervisor goes into and starts coding the calls and provides immediate feedback to those dispatchers on calls and evaluates how they did on the call.

Councilor Naeem asked if we are seeing an increase in the need and demand in the number of individuals that we need to have out or is that just to balance the expected turnover? Chief Melanson stated it is not necessarily for turnover. It is for calls for service and the amount of time it takes for the service. Just because of the increase in demands and the office wanting to do it right, they are spending a little more time on calls. De-escalating takes a lot longer to make sure we are providing the proper services and making sure everyone is good when we leave so we don't have to go back. We are seeing an increase in that. Also the amount of time it takes for training. We are all required to wear body cameras when interacting with law enforcement. The new mandate now is that every year we need to provide an hour's worth of training on body cameras and how to use them.

Deputy Mayor Bress asked about trying to attract more experienced police officers. She heard Chief Melanson talking about the obstacle of the physical requirements. What other obstacles do you feel the department is facing in regards to attracting experienced officers? What have you done to try and reach out to that group of individuals? Chief Melanson stated that they do have an on-going application process for certified officers in Connecticut. One of the things they try to do is to send that out and let them know that we're hiring. The biggest challenge we have



is dealing with our collective bargaining agreement with our union. When we have officers coming in, their years of service in another department don't count towards their seniority within the police department. So an officer that might have 4-5 years in another department, may have, depending on the scheduling structure, the ability to either rotate on a different shift or work a certain shift. The way the Police Department's schedule works, they are going to come in as the most junior person and they will have a lot less flexibility as to where they may end up.

Chief Melanson said what the department has done for certified officers coming to our town is to start them at a higher level on the pay scale because of their experience. That's what we do to try and attract more senior officers. This will start them at a higher level than an entry level officer. However, there is nothing that he can do about the schedule.

Deputy Mayor Bress asked about crisis intervention officers. She said that it has been discussed in the past that sometimes, there are not enough officers to cover all the normal hours and that crisis intervention training requires a significant amount of hours out of the office to be trained. Do you think with the newly hired officers we might be able to have a goal to have more of them trained? How many do we now have that are trained, specifically in crisis intervention? Chief Melanson replied that all the officers are trained during basic academy on crisis intervention as it is part of the basic recruiting process. However, it's not the full, one week, 40 hour program that we continue to send our officers to. About 70% of the department's officers are trained at the full one week level. As soon as that course becomes available, we try to send 1-2 officers at a time to take that class. They are not offered frequently, but when they are offered, we send our officers to it.

Deputy Mayor Bress stated we had some citizens come forward a few times about information posted on the website in terms of statistics and data. Is there anything in this budget that would allow us to add additional information there? Is there anything the Police Department is seeking to put up there that maybe some of our citizens are missing? What are your thoughts about the data on the website in what is and what isn't posted? Chief Melanson stated we post data on a monthly basis to the website and then we do an overall annual statistic. We do overall categories. It's not what many other agencies post. That is something that we've been working on with the Health & Safety Committee as far as what data should be coming forward. There continues to be ongoing conversations with the Town Manager and the Health & Safety Committee regarding this subject.

Councilor Black-Burke asked how are we going to maintain and sustain that position? Town Manager Souza stated that the plan is to request general funds which will be built into the budget on an annual basis.

Councilor Eleveld asked how long it takes someone to go through the process from zero to full time. Is that about a year and a half? Chief Melanson responded that is about right. The actual training is about 11 months to one year. From the time they apply, to the time they get to the



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academy, it takes 4-6 months. That includes the background check, polygraph, psychological, and medical exams.

Councilor Eleveld said that a comment was made about the physicality of the candidate. Do you let potential applicants know of that physicality aspect of the job before they start the process? Chief Melanson said yes. It's also a requirement in order to enter any police academy in Connecticut.

Councilor Eleveld asked what is the approximate cost to bring someone on board. Chief Melanson stated that recently they had an officer that made it through the academy but did not go all the way through. Just getting him through the academy was \$52,000. That doesn't include the polygraph, psychological exams, time spent with our officers on interviews and then back on investigation. It would be about \$70,000 prior to another 3-4 months of training.

Councilor Eleveld asked about private duty. He explained that private pay jobs are actually paid for by the vendor hiring the police officers. Does that cost include all the costs related to having an officer sitting on the side of the road? Chief Melanson said yes it does.

Councilor Eleveld asked if the officers are paid overtime. Chief Melanson stated that they get paid a different rate for that. It's an overtime rate but it's calculated differently than regular department overtime.

Councilor Smith asked what fully staffed dispatch is. Is that two people on? Chief Melanson said that fully staffed is two people on day and night.

Councilor Smith stated we as councilors get the question about speeding in town all the time. The traffic stops in 2020 were somewhere around 2,000 and then in 2022 were 500. Why the dramatic decrease in the traffic stops? Chief Melanson replied that staffing levels has to do with it. We've had losses in our patrol division. We've pulled back many officers to cover our loss. We still have two losses in our field training. We just put three officers on about two weeks ago. Therefore our traffic staffing numbers are now increasing. There was a very big slow down with COVID. Officers being motivated to make motor vehicle stops and getting them back into that realm has also been a push. Our stops have historically been very high and even with our reduced numbers, we are still high in the state for most municipalities. It's something that we are working on with our shift sergeants, captains and command staff who are working on how to get an overall game plan on how to better perform this.

Fire Services

Bill Lewis, Fire Chief, and Paul Goldberg, Fire Department Administrator, gave the following presentation on the proposed FY 24 budget.

Chief Lewis stated that he'd like to begin by giving statistics on our responses to emergencies in town. Thanks to cooperative efforts of the fire department fire marshal's office actual fire structure have declined in the town. This coincides with national statistics that have seen a



decline of 22% for structure fires during the past 10 years. Our department responses coincide with national statistics. Although, fire structures have declined, the department is even busier with other types of emergency responses. We do many responses on the interstate highways in town. Many times, we get a call from the dispatcher that they don't know where to send it so they call the fire department and we solve it for them. We continue to give an immediate response to calls with the support of the Council as evidenced the quality of the department's equipment. We hope to provide an all-volunteer fire department for many more years.

We continue to monitor day time man power responses and we do have a decline. We will keep a close eye on any other decline. Our department also belongs to a task force of eight other towns that respond when needed. We've had a very aggressive recruitment and retention committee in the department, and through their efforts we have seen some additional applicants. This has resulted in members staying with the department. The committee is doing a great job of proposing various ideas on the retention of the existing members. The junior volunteers continue to be very active with thanks to a great leadership that actively recruits and trains our youngest members.

Our overall FY 2023 expenditures are expected to come in under budget by 1.3% due to less energy and utility costs. The FY 2023 General Fund Budget is expected to come in under by 1.4% for the same reason. We have completed specifications for a replacement multi-purpose Forestry Vehicle that has the ability to convert to other uses at certain times of the year. Our apparatus maintenance budget has prevented major problems by discovering them very early. We have most of the town with fire hydrants, we have trained on in-line pumping that would be need for longer than usual hose lays and we have mutual aid tankers at Bradley, East Granby and Bloomfield.

Our FY24 proposed budget reflects an increase of 7.4% as compared to the FY 23 budget due to increased utility costs, funding for firefighter recruitment and retention efforts and maintenance costs as our firehouse become older. We continue to upgrade our fire fighters turnout gear and are still attempting to get each firefighter a second set of gear so that contaminants are periodically cleaned off the gear, prolonging the life of the gear and being proactive in preventing future illness to our firefighters. When their primary gear is being washed the firefighter has a set of gear to continue to respond to calls. We continue to replace outdated and worn equipment from our budget.

Deputy Mayor Bress said she noticed sometimes when driving around town that there are many houses that don't have their house numbers on their mailboxes. Do you find this to be an issue when you're responding to a call? Is this something that we should be worried about? Chief Lewis stated that many times if the number is not displayed, it can prolong the department in trying to find that house and getting there quickly to take care of the emergency.

Councilor Walker said the fire department does a fantastic job. He's always said the Windsor volunteer firefighters save the taxpayers lots of money. It helps keep our taxes down to a lower level. Councilor Walker stated that he does not have his house number on his mailbox. He does



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have a number on the house itself. The last time he needed to use emergency services, they were there at his house in seconds.

Councilor Dobler asked from a supply standpoint, over the last twelve months or 18 months has it been a large challenge for the department to get supplies and from an inflationary standpoint have you seen a large uptick in the cost of supplies? Chief Lewis responded that there has been a huge uptick on supplies. We have seen it due to COVID and due to inflation.

Councilor Dobler asked him if it has kept them from getting supplies. Chief Lewis said it has not.

Councilor Dobler asked for the number of volunteer firemen the department has in comparison to last year this time. Is it less, more or the same? Chief Lewis stated it is very close to being the same.

Councilor Eleveld thanked this department for their services to the town. He said he recalls that there was a Fire Explorer program developed when he was on the Board of Education. How is that program working and has that helped in recruitment? Assistant Fire Chief, Steve Bianchi, stated that two individuals came forward because of that program. The class has gone from 10 last year to 16 this year. Councilor Eleveld asked if there is some interest in the high school. Assistant Fire Chief Bianchi stated there is.

Councilor Smith said on page F-16, looking at Personal Services, the FY 23 budget is \$337,430 and it has been bumped to \$338,210 for FY 24. He feels that is not a reasonable increase for Mr. Goldberg. Town Manager Souza stated the dynamic that's occurring there is that we've taken out part of our pension costs and reallocated those to General Services. Mr. Goldberg is getting a little more of an increase than what is reflected there. Also, the stipend amount for volunteers is also increasing 3% year over year. This number is mainly due to the reallocation of the pension costs.

Mayor Trinks asked about the proposed state bill that they had talked about regarding reimbursing the volunteer fire companies for working on the highway. Did it ever go anywhere? Chief Lewis responded he had not heard an update on the bill, but knows that it was not in the budget. Town Manager Souza added that there is money appropriated on a state-wide basis for fiscal year 2023. We have received reimbursements for calls, but as the Chief mentioned, in the Governor's proposed budget for FY 24, there is no money allocated towards this. There's been advocacy efforts to have the General Assembly include those funds. If anyone is talking to General Assembly members, that would certainly be something to keep in the forefront of their mind.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked what is the average age of a volunteer firefighter? Mr. Goldberg stated that for day responders, the average age is 60 years old. The average age of all the members is about 47 years old.



Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked how many volunteer firefighters do we have in Windsor. Mr. Goldberg replied we have 82 on the list. Of the 82, 60 are considered 'active'. The definition of 'active' is anyone that goes to 10% or more of the calls.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked what incentive does the department give for firefighters to join? Mr. Goldberg stated that we give a tax incentive. If you meet the requirements for attendance of drills, fires and years of service, you can get up to \$2,000 off of your property tax. That would go first towards your house and then your car. You also get a pension that will pay you up to \$400/month after the age of 65. Included with that is life insurance that if you pass before 65, you'll get \$10,000. There are a couple of insurance policies with our VIFIS (Volunteer Fire Insurance program). There is a stipend. You get clothes once per year and there is a service awards banquet that is given annually with cash cards being given to the volunteers as a thank you.

Councilor Smith clarified that the kid living with his mom and dad who is a volunteer firefighter doesn't benefit from the abatement program. Mr. Goldberg said he does if he has a vehicle in his/her name.

Councilor Eleveld stated we see a greater number of electrical vehicles out there. When they catch fire, they are quite a problem. Has the fire department looked at those sorts of issues, should they arise? Chief Lewis stated that they recently had a course on it. They are still trying to find the best way to do it.

Ambulance Services

Dan Moylan, President/Chief of the Windsor EMS Association, gave the following presentation on the proposed FY 24 budget.

Mr. Moylan as discussed in previous meetings, EMS system in CT and nationally is having a problem with staffing and recruitment along with reimbursement rates which has created the need of municipalities to contribute money to ensure the delivery of these vital services. This year's budget (FY 23) request overcomes our shortfall of the previous years and stabilizes our financial situation. The request for FY 24 is a \$595,000 which will allow for the following:

- Increased staff hourly pay to meet the mid point of salary for our region. This will allow for not only stabilization for our current staff but also to entice new staff to join our organization.
- Addition of a third ambulance on a daily basis
- Help stabilize our cash flow to be able to pay our vendors in a timely basis and ensure we get the best pricing on medical supplies available.

Moving forward, we look forward to working with the Holdsworth group, which the town has hired to help assist and plan the town's future need for EMS services.



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Town Manager Souza added that the Council has essentially contributed \$70,000 in FY 23 towards EMS and approximately \$35,000 of that goes directly to an organization called CMED which is a regional communication system which links the field medics to the hospitals. Windsor EMS will basically get \$35,000 of that \$70,000. For FY 24, he is proposing a significant increase of approximately \$225,000 which will buy 90 hours of additional coverage per week. That could be a combination of paramedics and EMTs. Also, most of this covers the salary adjustments for recruitment and retention. It will help to meet that additional coverage as concerns have been raised by residents over the course of the last two months.

Councilor Walker said that he thinks it's unanimous that the entire Council realized the seriousness of some of the stories they have heard about a lack of response to emergencies and ambulance services in Windsor not being available. The Council went out of its way and the Chair of the Health & Safety Committee invited all the councilors to come in and listen to some of the concerns and personal stories that our residents had to say. We're putting this money going forward to alleviate and immediately address some of the concerns that people have. It is a life and death situation. We are waiting on the consultant to see how to improve and make things better.

Councilor Dobler dittoed what Councilor Walker had said.

Mayor Trinks said the good news from the legislature is that the bill to increase Medicaid reimbursement passed the committee. Whether it sees itself to the floor is up in the air at this point. One thing that he did not realize is that this also applies to physicians. Now there are physicians who will not take people with Medicare. He finds that to be appalling. It's already hard enough to find a physician, then you have to deal with that. Hopefully, that part of it will help move this bill forward if we will have some doctors lobbying it.

Councilor Eleveld said \$225,000 of the \$370,000 is to add the 90 hours of coverage per week. Correct? Town Manager said it was approximately \$225,000. Councilor Eleveld said if he understood correctly that would be \$370,000 minus \$225,000 which would leave us \$145,000 and there is \$35,000 for the CMED system? Is that correct? Town Manager Souza stated the total increase year over year is \$525,000. Councilor Eleveld stated he was looking over the estimate for FY 23 and the number for FY 24. Town Manager Souza stated there are American Rescue Funds built into the FY 23 contributions. The General Fund portion is approximately a \$525,000 increase over FY 23. That breakdown for the \$525,000 is \$225,000 for the additional 90 hours per week coverage and then \$300,000 for the salary adjustments.

Councilor Eleveld stated that we have heard there is a possibility of the ambulance services receiving greater reimbursements for Medicaid. He asked do the insurance companies follow what Medicare/Medicaid do? Mr. Moylan said they do to an extent. Councilor Eleveld then said that every time Medicare/Medicaid tries to cut the bill, the insurance companies follow shortly within a year and they reduce the costs. That's becoming a problem.



8) RECREATION SERVICES

Paul Norris, Recreation and Leisure Services Director and Rich Henderson, Assistant Recreation Manager, gave the following presentation on the proposed FY 24 budget.

Due to increased program offerings, such as the Be Well Windsor initiative, and enhancements programming at Northwest Park and the Youth Services Bureau, the FY 23 overall recreation and Leisure Services expenditures will be over budget by approximately \$70,390 or 2.1%. The cost associated with these programs is offset with the allocation from the American Rescue Fund and other grants. The FY23 General Fund expenditures are expected to be over budget by \$10,540 or .5%

The past year saw a resurgence in programming and program registrations. For example, Northwest Park has increased outreach efforts to both Windsor residents and non-Windsor school districts, the Youth Services Bureau staff has incorporated more restorative justice programs within the Juvenile Review Board, and the senior center has increased evening and weekend programs to attract a larger targeted population.

As we gear up and move through FY 24, we will continue to connect with our 55+ age group, enhance connections with our youth and families, enhance outdoor and environmental programming, and offer a dynamic wellness program.

The overall FY 24 Budget reflects an increase of \$233,690 7.0%, primarily due to the use of grants such as the American Rescue Fund and the Culture grant awarded to Northwest Park. The General Fund Budget is expected to increase by \$137,280. This is a reflection of an increase in Personal Services, and Energy and Utilities.

In FY 24, we look to maintain a strong presence in the community by providing more than 500 hours of summer aquatics, enhance community bonding via our special events, continue to explore micro-transportation services, and seek new partnerships and alliances.

Town Manager Souza added that \$37,000 of the General Fund increase for FY 24 is related to market place conditions to hire part-time individuals. They are in three particular areas: one is life guard compensation and the other is drivers for our Dial-a-Ride programs and our senior programs. Overall, this department runs on regular part-time positions. If we didn't have the part-time positions, this budget would be much more expensive. The issue of being able to recruit and retain creates an issue of wage compression. About \$37,000 or so of this increase is related to those part-time wages. This has been an ongoing challenge for this department for the last several years with the market place and the state minimum wage increasing as well.

Councilor Naeem stated there is a decrease in the personal line for the Youth Services Bureau. Will that impact the type of support or level of programs that we will be providing the public? Mr. Norris said that what they received was a grant from the Hartford Foundation which helped increase the number of participants in our Youth and Action program, which is their after school



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program for youth and teenagers in the high school. Unfortunately that grant ends this coming June. We will continue to run the program as we always do next year. However, due to the reduction in the grant, we will have less participants, therefore, less staff.

Councilor Naeem asked that is the only program that is being impacted by the reduction, correct? Mr. Norris responded that was correct.

Councilor Dobler asked compared to pre-COVID, how has enrollment been for the summer programs. Are we back to those levels yet? Mr. Norris said that they are close to those numbers. We have seen increases over the past year or two. Summer programs, Northwest Park, senior center programs are increasing but we're still not back to pre-COVID numbers. To give an example, pre-COVID, the Recreation after school program was averaging about 62 participants. This year we are averaging about 35.

Councilor Dobler asked about the first annual pickleball tournament. Is that filled up yet? Mr. Norris said it is not yet filled up.

Councilor Smith said he was driving up Poquonock Avenue and he saw a Greater Hartford bus picking up a client. How does Greater Hartford Transit and our transportation system interact with them? Mr. Headley stated that the Greater Hartford transportation is an ADA provider and we are a Dial-a-Ride provider. They go through the door on some of their pickups where we are a door to door service. Some other towns are curb to curb service. That's where the difference comes in. Also, they have a lot more funding to provide weekend service as we are not there yet.

Councilor Eleveld stated that he has received complaints about the treatment of some of the facilities and animals at Northwest Park. Are those sorts of issues being addressed? Have we taken care of the animals properly? Mr. Norris stated that we do have inspections by various state organizations that have given their stamp of approval in the way we are treating the animals. We have regular vet checkups. We do have furriers that take care of hooves and nails of the animals. We have multiple volunteers that help out. We will step up a little bit now that COVID is over. We are rehashing and updating our volunteer manual on how to do animal care, how to make reports to the staff if they recognize something, as well as every 6 months having a volunteer meeting just so they can ask questions and get them answered. We try to communicate as much as we can. Our meetings and training with volunteers help quite a bit. Town Manager Souza added that without the Friends of Northwest Park volunteers along with other volunteers, it would not be as robust as it is. They help the staff out quite a bit.

Councilor Black-Burke stated in regards to the performance measures, you intend to potentially add six more programs. What is the process in coming up with which programs will be added? Mr. Norris stated it comes from multiple sources. One is the staff through networking with their colleagues in various towns, casual conversations, word-to-word mouth and through our survey. We are struggling in finding instructors that want to step forward, but we do advertise in social media, through word-of-mouth and all our programs that we are looking for instructors.



Councilor Black-Burke asked about the statistics and is wondering if Mr. Norris has the information where the statistics can be seen by areas in town and who is utilizing the services through our Recreation and Leisure Services. She thinks this would be good information to have. Mr. Norris said he will check with other town departments to figure out how he can get that done.

9) CHILD AND ADULT DAY CARE ENTERPRISE FUNDS

Child Day Care

Laura Casey, Discovery Center & Montessori School Director, gave the following presentation on the proposed FY 24 budget.

Our school has been providing extraordinary child care and a Montessori Education to our community for more than 40 years.

What a difference a year has made. Our little school is resilient, the past few years due to the pandemic have been difficult on our financial structure but not on our spirit. We have been 100% enrolled for the entire 2022-2023 academic year.

As we look forward into this next fiscal year, we are excited to be preparing for an expansion in our Primary Montessori program. Due to a recent up-tick in student inquiries, we plan to open a 4th primary classroom to accommodate the many families waiting to join our school. In addition we will add 10 students to our Primary summer program.

We are implementing a slight tuition increase for the coming school year (3%). This revenue, and revenue from the additional classroom together with remaining Office of Early Childhood "Ready Set Rebuild" funds we received during the early stages of COVID, situate us in a more stable financial position for FY 24. The Ready, Set, Rebuild grant funds provided us the opportunity to support teacher education, training, salary bonuses and the necessary funds to purchase materials for the expansion.

Councilor Black-Burke thanked Ms. Casey for her intuitiveness and perseverance during difficult financial times at the Montessori program. She is happy to hear that she has students for the new program.

Councilor Naeem asked if the school has dedicated personnel supporting some of its communications and/or web updates? She noticed that it's something that hasn't been updated in quite some time. Mr. Casey stated they do work independently but also with Information Technology (IT) and with Enita and Patrick. They help push out items for the center. Internally at Milo Peck, they do not have anybody designated for just that.

Councilor Naeem asked if the website is maintained internally, externally or through the town. Ms. Casey said it is in partnership with IT.



Councilor Eleveld saw there was a reduction in the infant/toddler programs. Are we anticipating less kids? He's looking at the estimates and the proposal is \$383,000 for Personal Services for FY 24 where last year it was \$488,000. Ms. Casey stated that is not a reduction in services. It's because we reallocated the administrative salaries to the fiscal management page. The reason for that was so she could see the actual cost of the programs without the administrative salaries.

Councilor Eleveld asked about the increase in tuition. Ms. Casey said there will be a slight increase in tuition. Councilor Eleveld asked if that is across the board? Ms. Casey said yes.

Councilor Eleveld asked if he is correct in stating that you have not acquired any funds directly from the Town of Windsor in the way of the General Fund in the last several years. Ms. Casey stated that they did get some help from the town in 2021. Councilor Eleveld said not in 2022 or 2023 though? Town Manager Souza said that was basically when they got the State Early Childhood stabilization funds.

Councilor Gluck-Hoffman asked how much tuition is? Ms. Casey said it is different for each age group. An infant would be \$1,510 per month, and a 3 year old would be \$1,310 per month and then it's weekly in the summer time.

Councilor Naeem stated she'd love to get an understanding of how we're able to support helping some of the public facing on the website. Town Manager Souza stated that we'll work on that over the course of the coming weeks.

Adult Day Care

Cheryl Rosenbaum, Caring Connection Manager, gave the following presentation on the proposed FY 24 budget.

Ms. Rosenbaum stated that FY23 has been at an all-time high for inquiries and admissions in a three month period looking back over the last three years. This has translated into increases in the average daily census in January, February and March and an approximate increase to revenues of \$8,830.00. The average daily census climbed from 11 in December to 16 in March.

Currently State of Connecticut House Bill 6677 which directly addresses Adult Day Centers will hopefully bring some needed financial assistance in the next fiscal year to help alleviate budget increases to costs for fuel, food and supplies, and staffing, as well as losses to revenue during the pandemic.

Client inquiries to the program have been notably increasing. As a result client admissions to the program since January are also notably increased, an all-time high for a 3+ month time frame in the last three years. This has translated into increases in the average daily census in January, February and March.

Our marketing efforts continue to focus on referral sources, care givers and an increased targeted social media presence.



Councilor Eleveld stated there is \$100,000 in the General Fund category in this budget. If the Caring Connection was not there would it be greater than the \$100,000 to rent out the building or have someone else use it? Town Manager Souza stated that it wouldn't be \$100,000. We allocate \$65,000 from the Caring Connection for rent, which is essentially set aside in the revenue account to pay for utilities and minor repairs to the building. This is similar to what Recreation does. We charge Recreation a carrying charge as well. We also make transfer payments to transportation. That's not a dollar for dollar as some of that is shared services. But we probably are close to \$100,000, probably at \$85,000 or so. Councilor Eleveld said that the bulk of that money would be spent regardless just in a different category. Town Manager Souza responded yes that's right.

Councilor Smith asked how many clients are from Windsor as compared to out of town? Ms. Rosenbaum stated 45% of the clientele is from Windsor.

Councilor Eleveld said whether you do live in Windsor or are coming from out of town, the cost is the same? Ms. Rosenbaum said the cost is the same, but we don't transport all of our clients who do not live in Windsor. If they are out of the catchment area, then those individuals pay the same but do not get the perk of transportation services.

10) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilor Black-Burke and seconded by Councilor Naeem to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary

Draft Minutes

4/19/23

Special Meeting



**TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING
APRIL 19, 2023
UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trinks called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 Ojala Naeem and Councilor Len Walker

2) DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Eric Barz, Town Planner, Lauri Volkert, Fire Inspector, David Langworthy, Building Official and Patrick McMahon, Economic Development Director, were present to answer questions on the proposed FY 24 budget.

Mr. Barz gave an overview of the proposed FY 24 budget. He said the overall FY 23 expenditures are expected to come in over budget by \$51,480 or 3.4% primarily due to the use of American Rescue Funds (ARF) for a Small Business Incubator program. The General Fund expenditures for FY 23 are expected to be under budget by \$4,250 or 0.3%.

Mr. Barz stated that the overall FY 24 proposed budget reflects an increase of \$163,410 or 10.9% as compared to the FY 23 budget mostly due to the continued use of ARF for a Small Business Incubator program and Personal Services. The FY 24 General Fund proposed budget reflects an increase of \$93,410 or 6.2% as compared to the FY 23 budget primarily due to Personal Services for increased part-time hours related to fire inspection and zoning enforcement, as well as maintenance costs associated with a new online permitting software system in the Building Safety Department.

Mayor Trinks asked Mr. McMahon about where we are with the business incubator. Mr. McMahon said Windsor Worx has worked very hard over the last year gathering financial resources but has not reached the required match. In the interim, they have entered into a one-year lease at a fully renovated space at 41 Mechanic Street. He said it was to be determined if this would be their permanent location or temporary before moving into the original space at 208 Broad Street. He stated the great news is that we have a co-work space launching with programming and activity. They have eight private offices and they are naming them after a different park in town. He said to expect more information on social media.

Councilor Naeem asked about economic development support for retail and small businesses and if there were any plans in the coming fiscal year. Mr. McMahon said the creation of the business incubator was to offer programming to provide assistance. The operator of Windsor Worx has plans to provide some services and working with entities, like the Connecticut Small



Business Development Center. He said as they learn more, they will keep the Council informed. He added in general, that they post quite aggressively about the various opportunities that the State has put forward, like the Boost Fund. Mr. McMahon said they get the word out to business owners.

Councilor Dobler asked about the status of the Day Hill Dome and the Dudley Town Brewery. Mr. McMahon said he spoke with the owner of Dudley Town Brewery last week and they are looking at June 1st for an opening date. He said the Day Hill Dome has been started, with work on the foundation, however they are lining up the financing for the rest of the project. He said he didn't have an ETA for the next steps on that project.

Councilor Eleveld asked if the Target warehouse is moving forward and Mr. Barz nodded, yes. Councilor Eleveld asked if we knew if Blueprint is coming into Windsor. Mr. McMahon said they have made an announcement and Mr. Barz said that the Planning Department has received site plans this week.

Councilor Eleveld said he heard about a warehouse in Bloomfield on Dudley Town Road and asked if we could expect any impacts in Windsor. Mr. Barz said that it depended on the direction of traffic and thought it would be shared between Day Hill Road and Bloomfield Avenue. Councilor Eleveld said he hoped it wasn't likely to go on Dudley Town Road. Mr. Barz agreed and that they will keep an eye on that.

Councilor Eleveld asked if there were any places in Windsor that would be able to accommodate that project as he has heard about opposition in Bloomfield. Mr. McMahon said that they could explore that opportunity. Town Manager Souza added that the project has about 500,000 square feet and that it would require a property with 45-50 acres. He explained that there are new town regulations on any warehouse facility over 200,000 square feet with a certain number of parking spaces requiring a special use permit.

Councilor Eleveld asked if the objective is to reduce those types of facilities. Mr. Barz said not necessarily to reduce the number but when they were previously allowed by right, the Commission didn't have a lot of discretion to determine whether or not the site was appropriate. Through the special use now, they have the ability to decide based on traffic and other considerations whether a site is appropriate for a facility larger than 200,000 square feet.

Council Eleveld asked if First Town Downtown or Chamber of Commerce provided some business development. Mr. McMahon said he sees it as a cooperative approach. He said First Town Downtown certainly reaches out to the businesses in the downtown area and the Chamber of Commerce also provides some educational programming, but what Windsor Worx offers is much more drilled down on financing and marketing.

Deputy Mayor Bress thanked everyone for their work and asked about how the community can give input for changes in the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Mr. Barz said that they would very much like the community to be involved. He said it is required by law that the



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culmination of the process goes to the Town Council to give feedback, if Council chooses, and in the past, Council has not. It will go before the Planning and Zoning Commission and there will be a public hearing. He said the town goes beyond what is required and in the past there has been a kick-off meeting, where the public at large is invited to come in and then it is broken down into a series of workshops for an 18-month period, where people are invited to come in and speak to certain issues. Mr. Barz said they will be going out with an RFP looking for a consultant.

Deputy Mayor Bress thanked Mr. Barz and commented on all the work he did on the housing plan and is pleased to see more work will be done on this project.

Town Manager Souza added that the proposed FY 24 budget does not have any money allocated for the consulting services. They plan to come back to the Council to find a funding source, most likely the General Fund unassigned reserves, once they get cost proposals over the next 90 days or so. This is a large project that only happens every 10 years and he believed that it would include a sizable set of consultants. He would estimate that it will cost about \$100,000 but it depends on citizen input, as it is usually the most costly component.

Deputy Mayor Bress asked if senior and work force housing and other concepts would be discussed during this process. Mr. Barz said, yes.

Councilor Walker asked how they determine when we collaborate about economic development with First Town Downtown or the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. McMahon said he sees it as a partnership. First Town Downtown focuses on the main street/downtown area and the Chamber has the more business to business networking aspect to it.

Councilor Walker asked about the plans for 208 Broad Street now that Windsor Worx has moved to Mechanic Street. Mr. McMahon said they are not sure if the location at Mechanic Street will be permanent or temporary. They are in communication with the CFO and Lance Hall at Loomis and the operator of Windsor Worx. He hoped we would have more information in the coming days.

Councilor Smith asked if the seven people included in the Building Department included the Fire Marshal. Town Manager Souza said, yes, the Fire Marshal's Office is within the Building and Fire Safety Department.

Councilor Smith asked if there was overlap with the Fire Marshal's budget and Fire Safety. Town Manger Souza said there are shared administrative positions and in the field but he wasn't sure he understood his question. Councilor Smith clarified and Town Manager Souza asked Ms. Volkert and Mr. Langworthy to address his question.

Ms. Volkert said that the Fire Marshal's Office does not have a separate budget from the Building Safety budget. Building Safety is the joint budget of the Fire Marshal's Office and the Building Official's office. The Fire Marshal's Office does construction inspections jointly with the building department who also does construction inspections but they also do residential construction



inspections, which the Fire Marshal's Office does not get involved in. She said they do joint inspections for commercial projects and the Fire Marshal's Office also inspects existing buildings for any building with more than two family homes to large warehouses, like Amazon according to the State's inspection schedule.

Ms. Volkert said they are enforcing two separate codes – the State Fire Safety Code and the State Fire Prevention Code. She said Mr. Langworthy enforces the State Building Code and that whole family of codes. She said there is some overlap and the State works very hard at the legislative level to make sure they match up. She gave examples of what they look at when they go out on an inspection together.

Town Manager Souza mentioned that there are additional part-time hours included in this budget for a part-time Fire Inspector and a part-time Zoning Enforcement Officer.

Councilor Smith asked if Windsor Worx would still need the level of funding from the town with the changes in location. Mr. McMahon said that we will need to explore with Loomis Chaffee and Windsor Worx on what the status is over the next couple of weeks and if there are significant changes, we will come back to Council. Town Manager Souza added that he and Mr. McMahon are looking to shift the initial plan by adding more programs and business assistance now and if they do pursue the Loomis Chaffee property, then the capital items can be introduced a little later on in the two to three year window.

3) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Patrick McMahon, Director of Economic Development Director and Flavia Rey De Castro, Community Development Specialist were present and Ms. Rey De Castro gave an overview of the proposed FY 24 budget.

Ms. Rey De Castro reported for the current fiscal year, overall expenditures are expected to come under budget by \$6,800 or 1.9% with an increase of \$80 to the General Fund portion. This expenditure decrease is mainly due to decreased loans as a result of staff disability leave, offset by an increase in Personal Services by \$8,390 due to hiring a temporary part-time intern.

For FY 24, Ms. Rey De Castro said the proposed budget shows an overall expenditure increase of \$540,220. The General Fund (GF) portion is expected to increase by \$430,730 mainly due to a transfer of \$350,000 to the housing rehab program and an increase of \$75,000 in Services for the creation of a Senior & Workforce Housing Planning Initiative. The non-GF budget increase is associated with the allocation of ARF (American Rescue Funds) for the Multifamily Rehabilitation Grant Program and the Community and Neighborhood Enhancement Program. The \$350,000 fund transfer is expected to be spent in FY 24 and FY 25.

The primary goal of Community Development is neighborhood preservation. This is normally done through our housing rehabilitation program, which is funded primarily with grants and program income (or repayment of loans). For FY 23 and FY 24, the office will also achieve this



goal through the Multifamily Rehabilitation Grant Program and the Neighborhood Enhancement Grant Program.

Councilor Black-Burke commended Ms. Rey De Castro and the team and asked if there are plans to expand the department. Town Manager Souza said there had been consideration of using some of the ARP money to continue efforts by adding part-time or full-time person as we go later into FY 24 and FY 25.

Councilor Naeem asked to hear more about the senior and workforce housing planning initiative. Mr. McMahon said they plan to hire people who will provide technical services, such as feasibility, to help identify land opportunities and find buildings that could be converted into housing. Town Manager Souza added that there is potential for zoning amendments and to bring in technical expertise to help in this area.

Councilor Naeem asked about the loan fund and what the on time re-payment rate looked like. Mr. McMahon said they only have about \$120,000 in loans and they get pretty much 100% back or close to it. He added that it only brings in about \$14,000 a year. He said the deferred loans are long term, 15 plus years, and when in the cycle we'd potentially get funding back but it is hard to put a number on that.

Councilor Walker commented that he was looking at a similar housing rehab program in Hartford and they don't have to pay back a dime. He asked if there was any assistance offered to walk landlords through the process. Ms. Rey Del Castro said, yes and recommended that landlords call the office to make an appointment and they will review the process as best they can.

Town Manager Souza provided additional information on the town's housing rehab loan program. He said this program has always been funded through the Community Development Block Grant funds, which are federal funds administered through the State's Department of Housing to the local community. He said it is competitive grant program. Many years ago, the town created a revolving loan fund so those monies get repaid either on an amortization basis or on a deferred loan basis and those monies get returned to housing rehabilitation projects. He said this is different than what other communities have set up depending on their sources of funding. The city of Hartford is what they call a Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Community, any community with a population over 50,000 gets an automatic allocation of Block grant money and unfortunately, we do not receive that. He said this is why they may have set up their program differently than Windsor. The money requested this year in the General Fund is because the State has shifted their priorities from a single-family rehabilitation program and they are putting their block grant monies more towards public housing efforts and that is why we are requesting an "infusion" of General Fund money, which will be spent over FY 24 and FY 25. He said hopefully by then, the town will be able to access grant money at the State level.

Councilor Walker thanked Town Manager Souza for the information.



Deputy Mayor Bress highlighted and recognized the Department's work with the Human Relations Commission and the Wilson Deerfield Advisory Commission.

Mayor Trinks thanked them for all their work.

4) ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Finance Department

Jim Bourke, Finance Director and Linda Collins, Assistant Finance Director were available to answer questions raised by the Town Council.

Human Resources

Amelia Bliss, Human Resources Director, was available to answer questions raised by the Town Council.

Information Technology

Frank Angelillo, Information Technology Director, was available to answer questions raised by the Town Council.

Risk Management

Marty Maynard, Risk Manager, was available to answer questions raised by the Town Council.

Assessor's office

Larry Labarbera, Town Assessor, was available to answer questions raised by the Town Council.

Tax Collector

Cathy Elliot, Tax Collector, was available to answer questions raised by the Town Council.

Mr. Bourke briefly presented and said the FY 23 overall budget is expected to come in over budget by \$36,410 or 1.2% mostly due to Personal Services for vacation payouts as a result of two retirements and Services for increased contractual costs. The overall FY 24 proposed budget is expected to increase \$77,280 or 2.6% primarily due to Services as a result of increased costs for software programs and is offset in part by a decrease in Special Revenue Fund expenditures for a delinquent property tax sale not included in the FY 24 budget. The FY 24 General Fund proposed budget reflects an increase of \$104,650 or 3.7% due to increased costs for software programs and is offset in part by decreases seen in Personal Services as a result of the reallocation of defined benefit employer pension costs to the General Services budget.

Each Department Head presented their proposed FY 24 budget.

Deputy Mayor Bress thanked Ms. Bliss for her work with interns and asked if there were any plans on expanding the program. Ms. Bliss said the interns that Deputy Mayor Bress was thinking of were coming from the Town Manager's Office for students pursuing a masters in public administration. Ms. Bliss mentioned that the town has had interns in the Health Department as



well but that Human Resources was not involved with the selection process but does help with the onboarding once they are selected.

Deputy Mayor Bress supported the expansion of the program and thought it had been very valuable to the town.

Councilor Naeem asked if the town uses any software to help sort through job applications. Ms. Bliss said yes, they have an automated applicant tracking system.

Councilor Naeem asked if it had a component to do initial vetting based on qualifications. Ms. Bliss said that it can. They can pick certain questions or certifications that are required for a job, they can add a question for applicants to answer and then Human Resources can filter them out.

Councilor Naeem asked if they were looking at all 100 applicants or so that comes in. Ms. Bliss said, no.

Councilor Naeem asked if we were only backed up on premise for the two locations or if we had cloud backups of our data. Mr. Angelillo said our on premise data backs up just to the two facilities. For 60 terabytes of cloud back up, it would get very expensive.

Councilor Naeem said it is great that we do have two locations for back up but she had concerns if something were to happen to both locations. She asked if we would be looking into cloud back up in the future. Mr. Angelillo said that we could but it would be an ongoing expense and he offered to look into the cost. Councilor Naeem said that it would be helpful to know what the cost range would be.

Town Manager Souza asked Mr. Angelillo to speak to the applications that the town uses that we are not using. Mr. Angelillo said anything that takes a transaction or is accessible in the field is specifically moved to cloud based solutions, where the application vendor hosts the service. He said this is done because they have multiple data stars and security, where they'll be responsible for the data.

Councilor Eleveld asked about online transactions and if there were any gaps where nothing could come back to us. Mr. Angelillo said the vendor is responsible for the security.

Councilor Eleveld asked if both town back up sites have generators. Mr. Angelillo said, yes. Councilor Eleveld said he understood the expense to using a cloud back up.

Councilor Eleveld asked if the town has seen an increase with threats. Mr. Angelillo said, yes, it is constant. Councilor Eleveld said obviously we have been successful in keeping them out. Mr. Angelillo said it is very similar to healthcare. He said first there is an outbreak and then vendors come up with ways for prevention. He said the biggest vulnerabilities are users and they have online yearly training and testing.



Town Manager Souza asked Mr. Angelillo to speak about the recent assessment the town had with the National Guard. Mr. Angelillo said periodically the town has different types of surveys or inspections with the police systems. He said they had one recently specifically for elections. They received a low threat risk rating and they provided a couple ways they could improve the system. He also discussed how difficult it is to have a perfect safety rating.

Councilor Eleveld asked about property re-evaluations and if residents should respond back to the Assessor's office as quickly as they can. Mr. Labarbera said, that is correct. Councilor Eleveld asked what happens if they do not respond. Mr. Labarbera said they would look at the properties that do not come back and see what could possibly be changed. If they have questions about it, they will go visit.

Councilor Eleveld commented that some in Europe are using drones and he asked if we were doing anything like that. Mr. Labarbera said we are not using drones but we are using Near Map and Google Street View.

Councilor Eleveld asked Ms. Elliot about the decrease of \$22,300 in the budget having to do with delinquent properties and asked her to please explain more about it. Ms. Elliot said the decrease is because there is a tax sale every other year. In FY 23, there was a tax sale and in FY 24, there will be no tax sale, so that money is removed from the budget. She said the cost from the tax sale is usually recouped as part of the tax sale process.

Councilor Eleveld asked about the costs incurred. Ms. Elliot said the biggest part of the cost is advertising and legal notices in the Hartford Courant and the Journal. They also have to do a title service on each property, there are postage expenses and they have to pay for an officer to be present on the day of the sale.

Councilor Walker thanked Mr. Angelillo and his staff and everyone for their good work.

The Mayor and Council thanked everyone for all they do.

5) GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Linda Collins, Assistant Finance Director gave the following presentation on General Government for the proposed FY 24 budget.

Ms. Collins said the General Fund's Fiscal 2023 expenditures are estimated to come in over budget by \$75,000. This is mostly due an increase in the Counsel & Legal Advice budget for workers compensation litigation.

The FY 24 General Fund proposed budget is \$1.3 million and reflects an increase of approximately \$40,000 as compared to the Fiscal Year 2023 budget. This increase is mainly due to Community Contributions as a result of several organizations requesting additional funding and for the independent audit based off of an estimate from our existing audit firm.



Councilor Eleveld asked if the budgeted amount of the audit would be less. Ms. Collins said, correct.

Councilor Eleveld said the Town Council is budgeted \$19,650 but he does not see where those funds go.

Councilor Eleveld asked about elections and commented that there isn't much of an increase in the budget with the talk of there being 10-18 extra days of elections. He asked if it would be appropriate to increase the budget. Town Manager Souza said they include \$4,000 in the budget for additional poll workers, and given that the legislature will not have adopted any changes, they would keep the amount in the budget and do a year-end transfer of available funds to accommodate any changes. Then in FY 25, once we have seen what FY 24 looks like, we could appropriately increase the budget.

Councilor Eleveld asked if we knew if the new rule would apply to our referendums. Town Manager Souza believed it does but he said he would have to take a look into it and get back to him.

Councilor Eleveld asked if there had been any word if the State would be giving the town money for the new changes. Town Manager Souza said there have been conversations but he was not sure if anything had been included in the State's budget.

Councilor Eleveld asked about community services and if the amounts that are given to organizations is a requested amount and not arbitrarily giving an increase. Ms. Collins said, correct.

Councilor Naeem asked if we should increase the counsel and legal advice line as they have come in over budget in the past few years. Town Manager Souza replied that the last several years there has been a concerted effort to settle worker's compensation cases, which has required additional, outside legal counsel. He said they are hopeful that they have covered most of those over the last three years. In FY 25, he could see the town adding additional funds to this line as outside firms have experienced inflationary pressure as well.

Councilor Bress thanked them for their presentation.

6) GENERAL SERVICES/CAPITAL SPENDING

Jim Bourke, Finance Director, gave the following presentation on General Services/Capital Spending for the proposed FY 24 budget.

Mr. Bourke said the FY 23 expenditures are expected to come in over budget by approximately \$11,000. The FY 24 budget reflects an increase of approximately \$3.1M over the FY 23 adopted budget, or about 19%. He outlined the increases in the bullets below:



- One of the main reasons for this increase is additional funding for capital projects. The total contribution from the general fund is proposed at \$3.5M, which is an increase of \$1.1M. Several of the projects scheduled for FY 24 are one-time in nature. This increase in budget capacity will allow for additional projects to be completed in FY 24 as well as potentially assist with mitigating the financial impact of property revaluation on the FY 25 budget.
- The other main cause of the FY 24 increase is due to defined benefit retirement costs that are now being reflected in this section of the budget. Approximately \$1.9M of the actuarially determined employer contribution to the defined benefit plan has been reallocated from department budgets to a new section in the General Services budget. This amount is what we will contribute to the pension trust fund in support of retired plan participants. Amounts remaining in department budgets are what will be contributed to the pension trust fund in support of actively employed plan participants. Removing those costs from department budgets and budgeting for them separately in General Services is a better representation of the true cost to the department budget's for active plan participants.
- A 3% increase is proposed for debt service. This is consistent with the town council's policy target and long-term strategy over the past several years.
- The annual payment to MDC for sewer services will decrease by approx. \$52,000 for FY 24; this is based on the MDC 2023 calendar-year budget. (They budgeted decreases for the pension & OPEB contributions; personnel costs are stable; using general fund reserves in their budget also)
- The FY 24 budget for the transfer payment to Great Pond Improvement District is increasing \$135,000 for a total of \$623,500. This amount represents 50% of the taxes that will be collected from the parcels located there. The increase for FY 24 is a result of increased assessed value coming on the grand list from projects underway within the improvement district, such as the new Target warehouse on Groton Road.
- Funding for worker's compensation and liability Insurance is proposed to increase \$103K. This increase is driven by incurred claims and anticipated claims, and also increases in the insurance markets nationwide.
- The FY 24 funding for costs associated with property revaluation is proposed at \$25,000. The October 1, 2023 revaluation process is currently underway, and will be applicable for the FY 25 budget.
- The FY 24 budget for the town's contribution to long-term retiree health costs (OPEB) reflects an increase of \$50,000 (\$35K in general services; 15K in TSE). FY 24 will be the tenth year the town has contributed towards funding the town's long-term other post-employment obligations. The balance in the OPEB trust fund is projected to be approximately \$6M on June 30, 2023. This amount consists of the town contributions and accumulated investment earnings.
- A transfer of \$100,000 is proposed from the General fund operating budget to the Caring Connection, to address the projected operating loss in the upcoming fiscal year.

Councilor Dobler referenced page Q7, Defined Benefit Retirement Planned Cost, and asked how we are doing. Mr. Bourke said we are approximately 70% funded.



Councilor Dobler asked if there had been any changes from the actuarial calculations at all in the last couple of years. Mr. Bourke said they continue to decrease the investment rate assumption that is used on the assets and they implemented new mortality tables a few years ago that reflect greater longevity.

Councilor Dobler referenced page Q15, Open Space, and asked for an overview on this line. Town Manager Souza said the open space contribution funds are set aside and put into a segregated account so when opportunities come up to preserve agricultural or other open spaces, as part of our long term preservation plan, those funds are available to purchase those properties and/or pay for due diligence on potential parcels. He said this allows for cash financing to mitigate long-term borrowing.

Councilor Eleveld inquired about the Great Pond District transfers and asked if half of the increased value of the real estate money goes back to the District. Town Manager Souza said that is correct. Half of the money is to help retire debt from the public infrastructure and the other half remains with the General Fund. Mr. Bourke stated that is the agreement to split the tax collections 50/50. Councilor Eleveld said that it has to be above a certain amount. Town Manager Souza said, yes, we have a base amount of \$80,000 per year that we get that is fixed. Mr. Bourke said a big driver of that is they reapportioned parcels in Great Pond and the 500 Groton Road project and there has been a big rise in the assessment value. Town Manager Souza added that other than the land that has been subdivided, it is just the land value that has increased. There is no value related to the building that is being constructed now. He said that will hit the Grand List in a future year.

Councilor Eleveld asked where the benefit retirement plan money was coming from and asked if it included school employees. Mr. Bourke said, yes.

Councilor Eleveld asked if they knew what was spent last year. Mr. Bourke said the total amount that we are spending this year is \$2.8M, so \$1.9M is reflected in general services and the rest of the amounts are spread through the Departments and in the town support for education section.

Councilor Eleveld asked what the incremental increase was from last year. Mr. Bourke said approximately \$300,000.

Councilor Eleveld asked if it was due to actuarial numbers between the returns and the number of people collecting. Mr. Bourke said, that is exactly right. The investment returns is the biggest driver.

Councilor Eleveld asked if a town employee retires and they are on the defined benefit plan, do we continue to fund into that plan on behalf of the employee or are we supposed to be actuarially good on that. Mr. Bourke said the \$2.8M is the actuarially required employer contribution that the town makes and a portion of that is allocated to retired employees to go into the trust fund to add to the amount that is already there to pay retiree benefits. He said it is the new amount



being generated, that's being called on to put into the trust fund to continue to pay retiree benefits. Town Manager Souza added that it will also put money aside for the future for those that are still working.

Councilor Eleveld asked if the town would consider looking at negotiating away the risk to an insurance company that would then provide the benefits. Town Manager Souza said that the town has not taken a detailed look at that and that we would have to look at the trust that was initially set up and take into consideration various collective bargaining agreements.

Councilor Eleveld said it is becoming really popular in corporate America to get rid of the liability related to pensions.

Town Manager Souza noted that the town has closed its defined benefit pension plan. He said that was done between 2011 and 2013. The only ones on a defined benefit pension plan are the police officers and that is a program that is solely funded by municipalities but it is administered by the State of Connecticut. He said the faculty at the schools are on the pension plan as well. All new hires are under defined contribution (401K).

Councilor Eleveld asked if those dollars are dispersed into personal services in the other budgets. Town Manager Souza said correct.

Councilor Eleveld asked why the retirement number was put in separate. Mr. Bourke said in the past they would allocate the full amount of this ADC to all the active employees in the Department budgets as a percentage of payroll and over time as less and less people are there to allocate to, we started seeing a big expenditure increase in department budgets just because of this one line item. He said it really misrepresented what was going on and so they made the shift so they are only reflecting active costs to the active employees and the retiree costs were being allocated to this part.

Town Manager Souza added that it was getting too distorted.

Councilor Eleveld said we are increasing capital improvements by \$1 million and asked if that is predominantly for capacity purposes. Town Manager Souza said, yes. Councilor Eleveld added that we would be taking advantage of the lower costs for the future. Town Manager Souza said, yes and noted that overall capital is going up by \$1 million. There is approximately \$680,000 here that he considered to be one-time in nature and he listed the different projects. The other monies are increases spread across pavement management, sidewalk and curb replacement and fleet equipment replacement.

Councilor Hoffman inquired about the \$420,000 for the Millbrook Space and asked if anything is to be discussed in regards to the building. Town Manager Souza said that is not part of the cost, although they have done some minor repairs over the years with funds from the operating budget. He listed projects that will be done there.



Councilor Dobler asked if we knew the percentage that is taken up by the police in the defined benefit plan. Mr. Bourke said that the police are not in this plan but rather on the State plan. Town Manager Souza said that it is growing and asked Ms. Collins if she had a cost to share with Council. Ms. Collins said the town is contributing \$1.8 million for FY 24 towards the police retirement.

Councilor Eleveld asked if OPEB was funded at 70%. Town Manager Souza said, no and that we wished it were. He said the defined benefit plan is funded at 70%.

Councilor Eleveld asked where the town stood with OPEB. Town Manager Souza said we just started down that path in terms of setting aside money and we might be at 7-10%. Mr. Bourke said it is less than 10%.

Councilor Eleveld asked what post employee benefits covered. Town Manager Souza said it primarily covers health insurance.

Mayor Trinks asked if retirees come off the program for health insurance once they turn 65. Town Manager Souza said that we do have some supplemental that the town participates in but we would no longer be the primary.

7) INSURANCE INTERNAL SERVICE FUND

Health Insurance Fund

Amelia Bliss, Human Resources Director, gave the following presentation regarding the Health Insurance fund's FY 24 budget.

Ms. Bliss said the FY 23 employee and retiree general fund costs, after employee and retiree copays and Enterprise Fund contributions are deducted, are expected to be \$405,000 or 32% over budget.

Ms. Bliss reported that the total FY 24 employee and retiree benefits budget is increasing \$776,100 or 20% based on medical, prescription and disability claims trend and anticipated claims experience. The general fund increase for FY 24 is \$543,390 or 17% over the FY 23 budget after deducting employee and retiree copays and enterprise fund contributions.

The town continually seeks ways to mitigate increasing costs of employee and retiree benefits. We work closely with our consultant and benefit providers to control costs and ensure we are up-to-date on trends and plan changes to maximize cost effectiveness.

Liability Insurance and Worker Compensation Insurance

Marty Maynard, Risk Manager, gave an overview of the FY 24 budget for the Liability Insurance and the Worker Compensation Insurance sections of the Insurance Internal Service Fund.



Mr. Maynard said the forecast nationwide for municipalities for this coming fiscal year is that we are continuing to be in a hard market where insurance carriers are increasing premiums in some areas as high as 70%, there are hopes that the public sector market will stabilize during the next eighteen months. We are doing a bid among the four programs and carriers insuring municipalities in the State of CT. We are recommending \$93,000 increase this coming year for the liability, auto, property insurance policies.

Mr. Maynard said that within our worker compensation program, we expect the excess premium to increase by 7% due to national trends offset by our good experience with the carrier for the past two years and our history overall while we believe that the worker compensation program itself will remain flat, no increase needed this coming fiscal year.

Councilor Eleveld asked what is meant by “hard market”. Mr. Maynard said it means that prices are going up in part because of claim experience, catastrophes on a nationwide basis and more rigid underwriting.

Councilor Eleveld asked if we were properly insured for claims. Mr. Maynard said we are properly insured. He said we have law enforcement liability for our officers, public official’s liability, as well as school leader’s liability.

Councilor Eleveld asked if employees and police officers are protected. Mr. Maynard said, yes they are.

Councilor Eleveld asked if there was any commonality with any of the insurance claims. Ms. Bliss said we had an increase in our high cost claims which the insurance company considers those anything over \$50,000 for an individual. The town saw a 40% increase in those and an increase in hospitalizations and prescription drug utilization. She said it is a combination of prescription and our health insurance claims.

Councilor Dobler referred to page R4, Liability Insurance, and asked if there was anything he would expect to be a lot higher in cost in the next couple of years. Mr. Maynard said a lot of this is driven by the insurance companies and what is happening nationwide. He stated that CT does not have tort caps and there is not a lot of insurance industry that is willing to insure municipalities within the State of CT. He said there are only four or five programs within the State.

8) TOWN SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

Linda Collins, Assistant Finance Director, gave the following presentation regarding the proposed FY 24 budget for Town Support for Education.

Ms. Collins said the FY 23 expenditures are expected to come in over budget by \$22,000 due to the State mandated Aid to Private Education mostly as a result of increased costs for the private schools to provide nursing services to their students. The state reimburses the Town for



a portion of the funding provided to the schools which can be seen in the Revenues section of the budget document. \$70,000 will be expected for FY 23 and FY 24.

Ms. Collins reported that the FY 24 proposed budget reflects a decrease of approximately \$254,000 as compared to the FY 23 budget mostly due to the re-allocation of defined benefit employer pension costs to the General Services budget. She said this decrease is offset in part by an increase in debt financing, for costs associated with risk management and the continued increase in nursing services for Aid to Private Education.

Deputy Mayor Bress asked about where we are with the Youth Protection Services within the Windsor buildings. Town Manager Souza said that we have a police officer assigned to the high school as a school Resource Officer. He said depending on staffing levels during the course of the year, we have another officer who works at the elementary school as well as Sage Park. They are not in the schools on a daily basis.

Deputy Mayor Bress asked what was included in the Youth Protection Services line item. Town Manager Souza said it was primarily for onsite services of School Resource Officers. Deputy Mayor Bress was glad to hear they were still in the schools.

Councilor Eleveld asked if \$250,000 in the budget is now sitting over in the general government's pension line. Mr. Bourke said, that is correct.

Councilor Eleveld asked about school retirement and the decrease in the budget by almost \$700,000. Ms. Collins said the \$250,000 was the overall amount for the entire town support for education budget but it was larger than that for the school retirement. She said it is a net amount.

Councilor Eleveld asked about the debt service amount and if that was for costs related to school buildings only. Ms. Collins said, yes. Mr. Bourke said, school projects and buildings.

Councilor Walker said that he 100% agrees with Deputy Mayor Bress on the importance of having a School Resource Officer in the schools.

9) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Bress and seconded by Councilor Hoffman to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea D. Marcavitch
Recording Secretary

Draft Minutes

4/24/23

Special Meeting



**TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
Virtual Meeting
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 24, 2023
UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trinks called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 Ojala Naeem, and Councilor Len Walker

1) PUBLIC COMMENT

David Furie, 37 Lighthouse Hill Road, stated he knows what an important but difficult task the budget is. It's one of the most important things that is done both on the Board of Education side and town side. He is in support of the proposed budget. He added that the Board of Education budget is 4.8% which is well below the rate of inflation and it is a maintenance budget without any new programs. It was approved by a bi-partisan vote. They are still relying on a small amount of federal funds. On the town side, this budget preserves what we have and makes some necessary investments in Safety Services as well as community investments. Although inflation has made this a difficult year, he believes any proposed tax increase can be rather small, especially with our growth in the grand list.

George Slate, 74 Ethan Drive, stated the town has the opportunity to accomplish what all of us would dream of. Back to back budgets, where one you can have a zero property tax increase followed by one with zero spending increase and still maintain services over that two year period. He believes that with the commentary on capacity, you realize you are looking at a two year time frame, not a one year time frame. He has come to the conclusion that one of the key decisions they are to make for FY 25 is to have zero opening cash, as that is the year that we don't have a spending increase. So this year, you build a capacity. He was surprised that the projected surplus for this year was \$6.3 million with \$3.2 million of it being from extra fees and licenses. He stated that we should increase OPEB (Other Post Employee Benefits) spending by another \$50,000.

2) PRELIMINARY DELIBERATIONS

Councilor Dobler stated that the Town Manager's proposed FY 24 budget came in with a 1% increase. He asked the Town Manager what it would mean moving forward if it went to a 1.95% increase. He asked that the Town Manager go over what the difference would be if we went from a 1% to a 2% increase. Town Manager Souza stated for FY 24, if you added \$1 million to the General Fund for one-time type of expenditures, that would bring the mill rate increase up to 1.95%. If you look to FY 25, that essentially provides up to \$2 million in capacity or flexibility for



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the Council as they look to prepare and adopt a budget a year from now during revaluation. Speaking off a scenario that would be for a home in the 2018 revaluation, which had a fair market value of \$200,000, we are expecting on average single value homes to increase approximately 30% from 2018 to the Fall of 2023 for revaluation. There are a host of assumptions as we look at a year from now, but the assumption would be a 5% expenditure increase overall for FY 25. That would combine both the Board of Education and town and would equate to a 5% increase. As we've done in years past with revaluation, we separate out what the tax increase could be based upon the budget increase. Then we try to break out the cost for revaluation only because that will vary depending on what individual properties values are. If we have a 2% increase in the FY 24 proposed budget and took a 5% expenditure increase for FY 25, that home that is currently at \$200,000 fair market value went up to \$260,000, they would potentially see an increase of \$96 for the FY 25 budget. If the Council chose not to increase the proposed budget and remained at a 1% mill increase, then the budgetary increase would be approximately \$44 more or \$140 for FY 25. That's the budgetary component, not speaking to revaluation, which would be consistent no matter what happens on the budgetary side.

Councilor Dobler stated that for the typical household in 2018 that had a market value of \$200,000 with the assumption of a 30% increase, we are looking at somewhere at about a \$40-\$50 savings. Town Manager Souza stated yes on a budgetary level that is correct.

Councilor Eleveld stated based on the base number, he is looking at a 16% tax increase using the Town Manager's base number out of the total FY 25 increase of \$763 on \$140,000. You said you used about \$4,600 as the current tax bill, correct? Town Manager Souza stated that was correct. Councilor Eleveld then stated that person will go to \$5,300 next year. Town Manager Souza stated yes with revaluation incorporated in that number. Councilor Eleveld asked if that includes an increase of 5% of the operating budget? Town Manager Souza said yes.

Councilor Eleveld stated it doesn't seem to matter much if we were to increase the budget by using Councilor Dobler's idea by an additional 1%. It doesn't appear that would be much of a savings based upon these numbers. Town Manager Souza stated that based upon the host of assumptions, that would be correct. Councilor Eleveld said he feels the additional 1% doesn't make any sense at this point.

Councilor Eleveld stated the Town Manager has offered another scenario for revaluation in which there would be a 5 year phase in. He asked when was the last time that we did a phase in? Town Manager Souza said he believed it was with the revaluation of 2008. Councilor Eleveld asked if that was a 5 year or 3 year phase in. Town Manager Souza said it was the full five years. Councilor Eleveld then said it looks like you'll be hit with a 2%-3% increase along with the budgetary increase. It spreads the payment out over five years making it a greater challenge over a longer period to manage the town's business. Town Manager Souza said yes, that we've experienced that when we did the phase in. Five years is a long period to try and forecast what the local economy is going to do, not to mention what the service demands are going to be and to have that built in tax increase because of the phase in of revaluation certainly did constrain us in a number of ways.



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Councilor Eleveld stated that no matter how you look at it, this will be a challenging couple of years coming up in respect to spending and taxes. Some individuals do pay their taxes via check, but most individuals have it built into their mortgages. So they will just see a \$50-\$75 increase on a monthly basis. To those people, it might not be a material change.

Deputy Mayor Bress asked if this scenario takes into account the increase that we'll be receiving from Amazon and others. Is that all in the next year? Town Manager Souza said they have looked at FY 25 at grand list growth for projects that we know are in the pipeline that are under construction or expect to be under construction in the next several months. There would be some value by October. It does include the declining abatement at Amazon.

Councilor Smith stated the abatements deliver some revenue, but will it balance out with the lost revenue from office buildings? Town Manager Souza replied right now as we look out to this coming fall, what we are expecting is the industrial component of the grand list will see an increase, but our office and smaller commercial buildings will not see an increase.

Deputy Mayor Bress said regarding the scenario, what was the feedback from citizens for a phase in like that? Did you get input from individuals on if that was more manageable for them over time? Have you ever had it where the revaluation was done in just one shot? Town Manager Souza replied that his recollection was a mix up of feedback. Some individuals appreciated that it was spread out. However, the further you went away from the revaluation period, the harder it was for individuals to recall why they were seeing an increase in their bills while they were seeing a level funded budget or in some cases, even services declining or at best holding their own.

Deputy Mayor Bress asked what kind of factors could impact us in a favorable way. Is there anything that the Town Manager foresees in the next few years that could impact us favorably to balance out the revaluation? Town Manager Souza said new economic development creates new growth. It certainly will help in future years. He pointed out that with the town's grand list being as large as it will be (over \$4 billion in total value), to be able to move the dial with Economic Development now in order to have a meaningful decrease or mitigation, it's getting harder and harder. This current grand list growth is absolutely exceptional at 7%. Traditionally, we've been in the 1.5%-2% range when you take away the larger projects. Economic growth is important and critical. We are 80%-85% dependent on local property tax. There isn't much other revenue sources we can avail ourselves to as a local government in Connecticut. We do have an opportunity to grow. There are plenty of our communities in the Hartford metro area that do not have that same growth. It is a challenge that all of us are facing.

Councilor Smith stated on the Town Manager's FY 24 and FY 25 scenarios, the fair market value is at \$260 and the assessed value at \$182. That's at 70%? Town Manager Souza said yes, the \$182 is at the 70%. Councilor Smith then asked if the proposal in the State is to go up to 75%. Town Manager Souza said if the assessed value goes up, potentially revenues for the town, depending on how a future Town Council acted on that, could reduce the mill rate. He does not think that would be noticeable. However, it will be noticeable potentially to a property owner to



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go from 70% to 75%. The more concerning part for him is if the legislature forced upon municipalities to have a differential tax rate. One for commercial/industrial and one for residential. Part of that bill is that it will put a cap on the mill rate for commercial and industrial. He doesn't believe it's a provision that is a local option. It's a provision that would be a mandate. So for the town, that would be an automatic loss of revenue which would then be shifted to residential properties.

Councilor Elevled asked about the state looking at the differential between commercial and residential rates. He asked the Town Manager to expound on that a little bit more. Town Manager Souza said out of one of the committees that just reported out, there is a component in there that would make a different mill rate for commercial and industrial versus 1-4 unit homes. The shift in taxes for us, between \$2.5 million – \$3 million, was an early calculation that was shift from commercial to residential if it were to be adopted. He does not feel there are enough political legs to move forward with this, because the State said they would reimburse the towns. At \$2.5 million for just Windsor out of the 169 communities, he's not sure that even if the State had the best of intentions, they could sustain that type of assistance in the long run.

Mayor Trinks read the Governor's budget. He asked how they will be aiding municipalities. Town Manager Souza replied that from the town's analysis of that and getting information from Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, local aid is pretty much whole. There are some increases in certain categories. Unlike past years when he was more nervous at this stage of the budget process, he is very confident with what the town has in its revenue section that will follow through with the General Assembly's deliberations and negotiations with the Governor's office.

Mayor Trinks stated that he is in agreement with several of the councilors that it's probably not worth our time and effort for this budget to add a component and to try and mitigate revaluation. There doesn't seem to be enough value to that. The question is what do we want to do this year? Some of the concerns are over revaluation. He is hesitant to reduce the budget but is also hesitant to add to it. He's very satisfied with the Town Manager's budget as it has been presented.

Councilor Elevled stated the estimated rate of collection is at 99% for FY 24 but he thought that last year we were at 98.75. Mr. Bourke explained when they taxed the car separately at a separate mill rate, it gives you a higher collection rate for real estate. Vehicles are a drain on the collection rate. The collection rate for motor vehicles themselves is about 97%.

Councilor Dobler tends to agree with the Mayor with the 1% with one caveat. When you go by gas, it's not \$4.00, it's \$3.95. If you go and buy a jersey, it's not \$200, it's \$195. Just from a psychological standpoint, he'd be more comfortable if it wasn't 1% but rather a 0.95% increase.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman stated that she doesn't think it will make that much of a difference to the taxpayer whether it is 1% or 0.95%. She is not interested in losing anything in this proposed budget. She agrees with the Mayor that 1% is reasonable.



Councilor Eleveld asked the Town Manager about the Veteran's Tax exemption benefit and how that would impact this. Town Manager Souza replied if the Council wanted to provide a benefit that is similar in scope to the Senior/Disabled tax relief benefit, it would be an increased cost of \$19,000. He does not believe that touches the mill rate. Councilor Eleveld stated we could take that out of reserves if need be. Town Manager Souza said the thought is to make sure it's visible. If you go to page B-4, it can be incorporated into the formula there where you see Senior Tax Relief. If we do incorporate it into there and future councilors want to change it, it can be reflected there.

Councilor Eleveld stated the mill rate for automobiles is at 33.6 because that is a state mandate correct? Town Manager Souza said yes. Councilor Eleveld asked if they sent us money for that? Town Manager Souza stated they are projected for FY 24 to meet their target.

Councilor Smith stated the FY 24 proposed budget has more FTEs than the FY 23 budget. Do you know how many those are? Town Manager Souza said there is a total of 6.8 FTEs and that is a combination of full-time and part-time positions. Those are primarily General Fund positions. Councilor Smith then asked if that is through each department. Town Manager Souza stated yes they looked across all the departments.

Councilor Smith noted that he is coming up with a different total. Town Manager Souza stated that the 6.8 FTEs are coming from the General Fund only. There may be other positions that are using a grant for funding that are not in that figure.

Councilor Dobler asked about the Veteran's tax relief. Is that something that the Town Council just puts into the budget? Is it automatically added to the budget? Is it something that the Council has to agree upon before Wednesday or how does that work logistically? Town Manager Souza said that would be an action that he would recommend that the Town Council take on Wednesday evening. Then procedurally, that gets built into the budget and then in May they can act on amending the ordinance, which establishes the exemption amount.

4) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilor Dobler and seconded by Councilor Gluck Hoffman to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary