



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

APPROVED 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 (Skitchewaug 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