



**TOWN COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING  
APRIL 17, 2023  
APPROVED 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.



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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.



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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.



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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



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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



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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



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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.



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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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.



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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