



**TOWN COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING  
APRIL 19, 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) DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

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

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

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

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

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



Town Council Special meeting  
April 19, 2023

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Town Council Special meeting  
April 19, 2023

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

### **3) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

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

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



Town Council Special meeting  
April 19, 2023

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

Councilor Walker thanked Town Manager Souza for the information.



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

Mayor Trinks thanked them for all their work.

#### **4) ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

##### Finance Department

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

##### Human Resources

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

##### Information Technology

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

##### Risk Management

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

##### Assessor's office

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

##### Tax Collector

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

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

Each Department Head presented their proposed FY 24 budget.

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



Town Council Special meeting  
April 19, 2023

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

The Mayor and Council thanked everyone for all they do.

## **5) GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

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

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

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





Town Council Special meeting  
April 19, 2023

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Councilor Bress thanked them for their presentation.

## **6) GENERAL SERVICES/CAPITAL SPENDING**

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

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



Town Council Special meeting  
April 19, 2023

---

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

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



Town Council Special meeting  
April 19, 2023

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Town Council Special meeting  
April 19, 2023

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

Town Manager Souza added that it was getting too distorted.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## **7) INSURANCE INTERNAL SERVICE FUND**

### *Health Insurance Fund*

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

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

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

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

### *Liability Insurance and Worker Compensation Insurance*

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **8) TOWN SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION**

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

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



Town Council Special meeting  
April 19, 2023

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**9) ADJOURNMENT**

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

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea D. Marcavitch  
Recording Secretary