



TOWN COUNCIL

HYBRID MEETING – VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON

April 17, 2024

Special Town Council Meeting

Council Chambers

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Black-Burke called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Nuchette Black-Burke, Deputy Mayor Darleen Klase, Councilor Mary Armstrong, Councilor Ronald Eleveld, Councilor Kristin Gluck Hoffman, Councilor William Pelkey, Councilor Leroy Smith, and Councilor Walker

Absent: Councilor Ojala Naeem,

2) DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Todd Sealy, Assistant Town Planner, representing Development Services, Fire Marshal, Lauri Volkert; Building Official, David Langworthy; Town Engineer Suzanne Choate, and from Economic Development, Patrick McMahon gave an overview of the budget.

For the Fiscal Year 24 year-end budget forecast, overall expenditures are expected to come in over budget by \$14,500 or 0.9% primarily due to the use of American Rescue Funds for the Small Business Incubator Program. The General Fund expenditures are expected to be under budget by \$15,500 or 1.0%. (Mostly due to savings for partial year vacancies)

The FY25 budget reflects an increase of 39.6% or around \$640,000 compared to the FY24 budget. This is primarily due to moving Engineering Design from Public Works to Development services. The FY25 General Fund proposed budget reflects an increase of 2.7% or \$60,000 as compared to the FY 24 budget primarily due to personnel costs (with Engineering Services reflected).

Some achievements over the past year include:

- Building Safety has focused on rolling out a new online permitting system and inspection portal which has allowed the Building Department to go 'paperless'.
- The Fire Marshal's office welcomed a new part-time fire inspector, this increased staffing has allowed the office to work towards improved compliance with required inspection schedules.
- Engineering coordinated the milling and paving of approximately 6 miles of roadway and several parking lots at town facilities and oversaw the cleaning of catch basins

on 1/3 of the town roads. They oversaw the construction of the L.P. Wilson tennis and pickleball courts. Improvements to the northbound side of International Drive Construction were completed and construction has begun on Baker Hollow Road. Staff inspected the construction of public roadways and infrastructure for phase 2 of the Great Pond Development. Engineering also oversaw the development of Design documents for Wilson Gateway Park and are currently overseeing the design development for Clover Street School field improvements.

- Several major projects were approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission. These projects include a public park on Windsor Avenue, a commercial development at 29 Windsor Ave, 201 apartments at 60 Dunfey Lane and 8 units at 120 High St., There were several amendments to the zoning regulations, one of which was to create a new Development District near the highway interchanges on Bloomfield Avenue, an amendment to allow group daycare homes by right and a new regulation to permit self-storage facilities in restricted commercial zones by special use.
- Economic Development received town council approval for the use of \$100,000 in American Rescue Funds for the establishment of the business incubators: Windsor Worx and Collective Space. They facilitated the repositioning of the former Stanadyne property on Deerfield Road coming out of bankruptcy and secured a \$4M dollar grant from the State of Connecticut for the Wilson Park which was approved by voters at referendum.

Councilor Eleveld stated that the unit has a \$500,000 increase and that is because they are bringing another department into Development Services. What was their prior budget? Ms. Choate asked if it was for Engineering alone? Councilor Eleveld stated that she is now in Development Services but what was their budget last year just for reference purposes? Ms. Choate stated it was \$518,050.

Councilor Eleveld said that we are looking at this year with a \$50,000 overall increase in the budget. Is that for Development Services? He stated he was taking Engineering and giving it a small increase. Ms. Choate stated she gave Councilor Eleveld the wrong number. Town Manager Souza said there is about \$60,000 more in FY 25 in Development Services without Engineering.

Councilor Pelkey asked if the addition of the 4 FTEs is probably due to the transition of the Engineering person that is being placed into the Development Services budget. Ms. Choate stated that was correct.

Councilor Pelkey asked about the funding for Windsor Worx and the Collective Space. He believes that Council had approved \$50,000 last year for each one in two tranches at \$25,000 each year. When does that come back for re-approval or is that automatic. Mr. McMahon stated he was correct and it was \$50,000 for each of the co-worker spaces with two tranches of \$25,000 each. The first tranche was given after they signed the agreement and the second tranche would be provided after we approve the 6 month report from each

of them. So far, they've received the 6 month report from the Collective Space and we are waiting for the 6 month report from Windsor Worx.

Councilor Pelkey stated that this is just projected in here for a likely expenditure but we still need to approve it correct? Mr. McMahon replied yes.

Councilor Walker stated on page K-14 'total construction value of building permits issued'. In comparison of FY 2021 to FY 2025 there is a significant drop in building permits. Do you have a reason for that drop? Ms. Volkert replied that the values they project for the coming fiscal year for building permits fees is based on a five year average over the past five years. They remove any of the large projects or any project that totals \$5 million in construction costs and they take out of the average because they can't rely on big projects coming in every year and they want to make sure that the number they're projecting for revenue is reliable. They take the five year average of both of those numbers and that's what they put in. They've seen a lot of great economic growth in Windsor so the last few years they have come in over that amount, but that five year average is what they use. Town Manager Souza said that he thinks that in FY 2021 the large warehouse development may have been part of finishing off the Amazon facility on Kenney Road and then Great Pond apartments probably fell in close to that time line as well.

Councilor Walker said there is a new system for applying for permits. Does that include having an inspector visit the site? How do you monitor who's not applying for a permit. Mr. Langworthy said the easiest way of finding out who is not applying for a permit is by staff driving around town and seeing if any work is being done throughout town. If they see someone doing work they usually check it on our ipads to see if that particular property has applied for a permit. If not, they will address it at the time it is discovered. They would call the property owner and ask why they don't have a permit. They usually comply right away.

Councilor Walker asked what is the follow up? Mr. Langworthy said for the larger projects, they follow very closely. It starts with a building permit and then if they see additional items that would require a permit, they would approach them and ask if they have permits in place. 99% of the time, the contractors do have a permit and an approved building permit in place. Ms. Volkert added that at the end of those jobs, they sign an affidavit of any cost changes. That way if there is a significant change in the value of the construction costs, the town will collect additional permit fees on the additional construction costs.

Councilor Armstrong stated on page K-14 can you explain or give her input on public outreach efforts including mailings and direct mailings. What does that entail? Town Manager Souza said that has been traditionally when they do a project such as Prospect Hill reconstruction. When they do reconstruction on a road such as Prospect Hill, as we enter into the planning stage of that project, we'll send out notifications to the neighbors. At times we'll have informational meetings with the neighborhood. Sometimes they are smaller projects that might have some impacts but they are mainly related to engineering projects listed on page K-14.

Councilor Pelkey stated looking at page K-9 and K-11, he knows for example with Inland and Wetlands we don't take in millions of fines but when we do fine, he doesn't see anything in the book about the funding source. Where does it go? Where would it be reflected in the budget? Town Manager Souza said there are very few fines as their goal is compliance. However, when they do fine someone, they would be seen in the general fund budget under Charges for Services.

Councilor Pelkey said on page K-9 and K-11, on both pages part of it is has to do with the GIS system. He's looking at \$60,750 on K-11 and then \$60,000 on K-9. Is that the same for each department? Is it \$120,000 total? Ms. Choate stated that yes, GIS services get utilized in both departments so it would be \$120,000 total for the budget.

Councilor Pelkey asked about page K-14, the top chart and the fourth one from the bottom says, "equivalent number of household energy needs met by solar installations". What does that entail? Mr. Sealy said that is the number of residential solar permits that were applied for in that fiscal year. Any permit that comes in with a solar to be installed is tracked.

Councilor Smith asked regarding when major construction projects are going up some neighbors are having an issue with the noise, etc. during the project. Who do they contact and how does that work? Is there a process? Town Manager Souza replied they can call the Planning Department and/or the Building Department about a noise issue because the Building Department also has the responsibility for zoning enforcement. You can tell anyone in Development Services as they all work together collaboratively, including the Health Department. If it's a traffic concern, it should be sent to Ms. Choate as she is assigned as the local traffic authority for the town. She will be able to triage that situation in getting it addressed and resolved.

Councilor Eleveld asked on page K-14 in the upper chart we see pavement management and he presumes that the \$5.5 million for this year has to do with all American Rescue funds we spent this past year correct? Ms. Choate said that it's due to the major reconstruction projects that happened. Town Manager Souza added that it was for the reconstruction of International Drive project and Baker Hollow Road. They are the primary drivers for the \$5.5 million.

Councilor Eleveld asked about 'Dwelling units approved by TP&Z'. We had a number of 216 in FY 24 and a projected 6 for FY 25. Why? Is this due to some of these numbers being a part of an apartment building? Mr. Sealy said that was correct. Most of them are multi-family apartments for those larger numbers.

Councilor Eleveld said there is some development in some of the open lots in the center that we're familiar with. Does the 213 include Founder's Square? Mr. Sealy said yes that is right.

Councilor Eleveld said if someone is looking to develop property in Windsor one of the town's positive approaches is where they have a meeting with all of the development staff

and other staff such as Health, Fire and Safety in which they get together in one room to discuss the request. This makes it very easy for the developer's plans to be reviewed by everyone all at once. He gave kudos to the staff for doing that.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked about the GIS system. Is the cost for licensing? Is there an annual fee? Ms. Choate said there is a licensing fee included in that price along with personnel services.

Councilor Eleveld asked if the \$60,000 for the GIS system is just covered in Development Services or are there other departments that pick up some of that cost? Town Manager Souza replied the vast majority is in Development Services.

Mayor Black-Burke thanked the development team in helping the town to have a good economic development year.

3) ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Jim Bourke, Finance Director, stated the FY 24 overall budget for the service unit is expected to come in under budget by \$42,470 or 1.4% mostly due savings in Personnel costs due to partial-year vacancies. The FY 25 General Fund proposed budget reflects an increase of \$114,300 or 3.9% mostly due to Personnel costs offset by various reductions. The overall FY 25 proposed budget reflects an increase of \$141,210 or 4.7% as compared to the FY 24 budget due to the same reason, as well as the increased use of Special Revenue Funds for the planned April 2025 delinquent property tax sale.

Human Resources worked with the town's benefits consultants to replace an expensive Medicare supplement plan offered to retirees with a less expensive Medicare Advantage plan that also provides enhanced benefits to retirees. The department also partnered with a new pharmacy benefits provider in order to negotiate better prescription drug pricing for the town's active employee PPO plan. HR also conducted Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging training to all full-time employees.

The Information Technology department continues their efforts with evaluating system security through engagements with national organizations to identify and take advantage of free tools, services and in-person security assessments. The department continues to manage the town's network, hardware and systems, maximizing every dollar invested in technology. This includes initiatives such as fortifying cybersecurity measures and streamlining operational workflows.

Risk management is responsible for the acquisition of property/casualty insurance for the Town, the Board of Education and the two Fire Districts, managing all claims & lawsuits as well as managing the risk of loss associated with all operations of the town. FY 25 goals include reinforcing various safety trainings with Public Works employees to minimize injuries and reduce hazards, and implementing a town-wide online safety training program.

The Assessor's office completed the October 1, 2023 revaluation and is currently underway with the Board of Assessment Appeals process. The department has also completed another round of personal property audits of prior year assessments, and over the last five years these audits resulted in over \$280,000 in tax revenues. For FY 25, the staff will conduct personal property visual field reviews, as well as conduct field work to verify construction activity from building permits and verification of property sales.

The Tax Collector office is in the process of identifying and notifying certain property owners that may be at risk for inclusion in the next delinquent property tax sale to be held in April of 2025. The tax collector works with delinquent taxpayers to set up payment arrangements to bring their accounts current within a mutually acceptable time frame, and to avoid having their property included in the tax sale. The previous tax sale took place in April of 2023, and resulted in collecting nearly \$700,000 in delinquent taxes, interest, and fees due to the Town.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked in regards to the number of staff and desk tops supported do you put in a buffer in there for any increases in employees or having desk tops and other equipment available. Mr. Angelillo said that there are always a few floaters. Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked what the cost is for that. Mr. Angelillo said they purchase used equipment and new hard drives. Probably with the operating system wise it's about \$300.

Councilor Eleveld said on page O-3 we have a Service at \$404,000, it came in at \$384,800 and for next year we have it for \$203,080. Why is there such a large drop? Linda Collins, Assistant Finance Director, said it's mainly due to a change in accounting. We were accounting for some annual maintenance contracts and services in some of our departments but we're moving that down a line. So you can actually see the maintenance and repair line has gone up.

Councilor Pelkey said he's looking at page O-17 under Performance Measures and the 'time to hire from job posting closing date to job offer' line item. Does that time reflect any internal transfers or job changes? Or is that strictly a new hire to the system? Ms. Amelia Bliss, Human Relations Director, stated it was strictly the new hires for external openings.

Mayor Black-Burke said at the bottom of page O-6, under budget commentary we are saying, "The FY 25 General Fund proposed budget reflects an increase of \$15,930 or 2.8% as compared to the FY 24 budget due to Personnel costs and increased costs of applicant tracking and onboarding software." Are we looking to do something different? Is it licensing? Her assumption is that we are using the same software. Ms. Bliss said that was correct. We had an agreement for three years and we're going into our fourth year and they are increasing the charges for the licensing fees.

Mayor Black-Burke asked have we looked at other comparative programming that can assist with the applicant tracking? Ms. Bliss said they did that when they made a change to the company they're using now. They did a thorough review of what else was out there.

This is actually inexpensive. It's just a bigger jump to what we've been paying. We're still getting a good price.

Councilor Pelkey said he's looking at the average investment yield and we're looking at 4%. Is that conservative? Mr. Bourke asked if it was for the FY 25 target? Councilor Pelkey said yes. Mr. Bourke stated that was correct.

Councilor Pelkey said he's glad to see we have AED training and that we have the wireless devices. How many people have been trained to use those and how often do they get used? Is there training on those? Where is there one on this level of the town hall? Marty Maynard, Risk Manager, pointed to the AED device in the Council Chambers. He stated they have been providing AED and CPR training classes two times per year. It's open to all employees. They are generally full classes. The AED in the Council Chambers is one of the 24 new ones that they've replaced over the past 1-1/2 to 2 years. All other town buildings and the Board of Education have them as well. Councilor Pelkey asked if they are reusable? Mr. Maynard said yes they are.

Councilor Pelkey said the total worker compensation claims he's happy to see that we are going from 240 to 162 and then back down to 90. He's curious why we're not targeting a decrease for FY 25? Mr. Maynard stated as we came into Covid, our number of accidents went down but what ended up happening is that you can see in FY 21 that it's 240. 240 is because there was a number of Covid exposure reports. Between FY 20 and FY 21, we had over 300 of them. He explained that we've gone down substantially in claims during Covid and we seem to be keeping that trend.

Councilor Pelkey asked if there is something we need to do for our town employees to make sure they are better protected? Mr. Maynard replied that one of the items they are looking at doing is some online safety training that will record and document the different training individuals are taking with all the different departments. By using this system, that should allow us to do more frequent training which would hopefully draw down some of the numbers. Town Manager Souza added that as an example, several years ago Marty and our Safety Employee team identified slips and falls as a growing concern. Marty developed a program which was educational but also helped mitigate some of the issue by purchasing cleats for officers and individuals that are outside on a regular basis. They are analyzing the type of claims that come in. There isn't anything that he's heard from Marty stating that 75% of the claims are a certain type so let's invest in this area. They are spread out in a wide array of different areas. This includes the Board of Education as well.

Councilor Pelkey asked if Marty can talk about the multi-factor authentication and communication with that towards the Board of Education. He knows that would represent a cost savings overall to the tax payers. Mr. Maynard said he has been working with the Board of Education to have it as a mandatory item. They have been working towards that. They're not sure if they will have it done by the deadline of May 5th. He doesn't believe they'll be able to make it until July 1st at least. They will have to go back to the incumbent carrier that they have and see if we can go a couple more months with that and match it

with the town come July 1st. If we can do that, the town could save about \$15-\$20,000 in premiums.

Mayor Black-Burke said these are new claims. These are not active claims but new claims being reported correct? Mr. Maynard said on page O-17 that is all new claims.

Deputy Mayor Klase had a question on cyber security training. Is that something that we do? Does this fall under the Human Resources budget? Mr. Angelillo, Information Technology Director, said that we do self-paced online cyber security training for employees. When we first start, you get the invitation to do it and that is done once per year. They also do a lot of testing where they'll have an emailing campaign where they will go out to the users and tell them about it.

Mayor Black-Burke asked about the training and employee development found on page O-7. Is that done online or do we have someone come in person to do that? Is that representative of the entire town and all town employees? Is that just for town hall? Ms. Bliss replied regarding training and development, the number there is derived from calculating how much we spend on training and how we split out employee staff time spent on the subject of training. It's not reflective of actual training costs for the training program. This encompasses town wide training. Any specific training for someone's career development or something they need for a certification for their department is budgeted in their department. This is more like supervisory training, DEI training and other training that comes from the Human Resources budget. Town Manager Souza asked Ms. Bliss if she has \$30,000 set aside in her budget for organization wide training. Ms. Bliss said that it was about \$37,000.

Mayor Black-Burke asked about training overall. Is it always on the computer or is there someone coming in to do the training. Ms. Bliss said it was a combination of the two.

Councilor Eleveld said on page O-17 'debt as a percent of total budget'. That is the Debt Service correct? Mr. Bourke said yes it is. Councilor Eleveld said if it is, the sentence should probably be corrected for next year.

Councilor Eleveld said on page O-17 'mobile devices accessing town applications' you have 300. Is that per individuals that are employees using mobile devices? Mr. Angelillo said it was.

Councilor Eleveld stated that he doesn't believe that security systems should be discussed out in the open but rather in Executive Session or with the TV shut off. He feels there are too many people out there that would love to have some of the information that we may want to ask. Why give a criminal enough information to cause problems?

Councilor Eleveld asked if we have any control over what happens in the schools. Mr. Angelillo stated that we do not. Councilor Eleveld asked if the two systems for the Board of Education and town government connected in any way. Mr. Angelillo said there is no

relationship between the two systems. Mr. Maynard, Risk Manager, added the Board of Education has monthly training sessions with their employees on their computer system, similar to what Information Technology is doing at the town.

Councilor Eleveld said congratulations to Cathy Elliott, Tax Collector, for collecting 98.8% of the taxes due. That is one of the reasons we can help to keep our taxes low.

Councilor Armstrong said on page O-8 there seems to be an increase in the maintenance and repair line. Mr. Angelillo responded that they used to have our contractual type pricing in Services but Finance had us switch everything that was in Services to the Maintenance and Repair line. This makes it easier for the Finance Department to run reports and determine how much we're spending on computer related licensing. So it's actually a shift from one line to another.

Councilor Armstrong asked on page O-12 Property Valuation it says that they 'appropriate tax relief by administering various exemption and benefits to qualified taxpayers.' Can you tell me some of those benefits? Josh Gaston, Town Assessor, stated the main benefit is the homeowners program. Homeowners who are 65 years or older and have income under a certain level can call or come into the Assessor's office and they can walk them through that process. There's also the Veteran's Exemption. You do have to have your DD214 or equivalent honorable discharge filed with the Town Clerk prior to October 1st to get this benefit.

Councilor Armstrong thanked Ms. Elliott for her good work.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman said just in a follow up to what Councilor Eleveld is saying. She hears what he is saying about cyber security and having discussions. She feels it's important for the public to hear just how hard Information Technology works in keeping everything locked down and secure. She commended and thanked the Information Technology team for doing that and for everything else they do to keep the town secure.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked about the licensing in Information Technology (IT). Do you carry in the Information Technology budget all the licenses and software for the town? Mr. Angelillo said if it is department specific applications that will be in that department's budget such as the Police system, Finance system, etc. Information Technology maintains the security licensing, network backbone licensing, and the hardware licenses to name a few.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked how IT is managing all the licenses and if they are checking all licenses are actually being used. Mr. Angelillo said they have a spreadsheet and check it.

Councilor Eleveld asked Mr. Maynard if there will be some softening in the property casualty insurance area or will it continue to be a challenge. Mr. Maynard said they are looking at 12-18 months at least before the municipal sector will start softening up. Right now it's still a hard market. Insurers are getting as much bang for the buck as they can

with the premium. Cyber seems to be stabilizing a bit at this point. It's not like it was a year ago but it still has a ways to go.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman stated Mr. Angelillo said folks come on as they are on-boarded and current employees do these tests. What's the percentage they have to pass the test with? Mr. Angelillo stated if you answer it wrong the first time, you get to answer it again. You don't get a score at the end of the training.

4) GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Linda Collins, Assistant Finance Director, stated the FY 2024 General Fund expenditures are estimated to come in over budget by \$19,000. This is mostly due an increase in the Counsel & Legal Advice budget for workers compensation litigation.

The fiscal 2025 General Fund proposed budget reflects an increase of \$41,000 as compared to the Fiscal 2024 budget. This is mainly due to an increase in Elections due to Early Voting costs, as well as a presidential election and is offset in part by a reduction in Community Services and the Independent Audit.

Town Manager Souza said that in the Community Services part of the budget. Community Services are funds that the town provides to not-for-profit organizations that serve the Town of Windsor. They may be Windsor based or in the surrounding community. There are two or three agencies that requested funds this year. They are valid organizations to consider, but given the overall budget condition and climate this year, he is not recommending that General Fund dollars be used for those new projects. The Town Council has the opportunity to include General Fund dollars for those, but there's also the opportunity, knowing it is one-time funding, to use American Federal fund dollars that have not yet been fully allocated. The three groups are the Windsor Fife and Drums Corps., Windsor Arts Center, and a group that is involved in senior transportation on a regional basis. Those are the three that requested funds. It is a policy question that the Council can address either through additional General Fund dollars or using American Rescue funds.

Mayor Black-Burke asked about the process of a non-profit that requests money and they don't receive the full request or will not be receiving any money at all. What is the rationale? Town Manager Souza said in years past what they've used is if we don't think that we could meet that full request, we'll have a conversation with the representatives of that entity and see if they have possibly other resources they can use and what are their needs. There's been a few of those over the years. With any one of these groups that do submit a request, we sit down with them and ask could it possibly be the full \$7,500 that they need or could it be less. It could be they need the full request.

Mayor Black-Burke then asked if it's just a conversation that happens? Town Manager Souza said yes.

Mayor Black-Burke said these organizations need to submit a report and how the funds are allocated. Is that correct? Town Manager Souza said that they do that when they submit their application in the January-February time frame. They outline, if they are a returning entity, what they've done (usually in narrative form), how they served the Windsor community, how many programs they provided and then they explain what the money will be used for in the upcoming fiscal year.

Mayor Black-Burke said it would be great to see reflected in the budget book if possible, how the funds are being used within the explanation of who they are. She gave an example of Celebrate Windsor. Something outlining what their accomplishments have been as well such as 'touched 240 individuals', 'was utilized by a certain amount of individuals, or something to that effect.

Councilor Walker said he is going to speak on behalf of the Windsor Fife and Drum Corps. He understands everybody else has a need, but the Windsor Fife and Drum Corps is not sustainable as it is today. The Windsor Fife and Drum Corps wrote a letter to the town and went into details. They have a bus that they use but because of the insurance rates they cannot use it because they cannot insure it. This is an immediate need they have. They put in a request for \$10,000. Their bus insurance went from \$3,000 to \$10,000. So it's not sustainable for them. They are doing some fundraising efforts. Before we think of having a second or third conversation, these folks are waiting and need an answer from us. He asked his colleagues what they can do this evening to provide the Town Manager with direction to help the Windsor Fife and Drum Corps? Town Manager Souza suggested that once the Council adopts the budget on Wednesday evening, they can consider adding General Fund dollars to the Community Services section of the budget. Or, as part of the budget adoption, if you wanted to have a motion to use American Rescue fund dollars that could be a motion for Wednesday night as well so it can be incorporated into the FY 25 budget.

Councilor Pelkey asked how does any group know how to ask for funds? Town Manager Souza stated the town does not do a large publicity or campaign. As organizations come looking for money during the course of the year, we would see if there is an opportunity there, according to the adopted policy by the Town Council from 15 years ago that outlines an application process. We would supply that application to the organizations. If there are emergent type requests for money, we guide them to this program.

Councilor Pelkey asked the Town Manager, if an organization needed a new soft serve ice cream maker at \$20,000, the Town Manager would say that's not anywhere near what we could provide. We couldn't fund that all at once but we might be able to fund some less expensive items they may need.

Councilor Pelkey asked how much American Rescue funds are available that would qualify for these groups? Town Manager Souza stated there is approximately \$20,000 left over from the Small Neighborhood Enhancement grants.

Deputy Mayor Klase said if we gave the Windsor Fife and Drum Corps \$10,000 for their insurance needs out of the American Rescue funds, it seems to her that they will need \$10,000 ongoing, correct? Town Manager Souza stated that is his understanding as well. American Rescue funds would be a one-time deal.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked about the senior volunteer program that is looking for \$1,500. That also can be allocated through the American Rescue funds or the General Fund correct? Town Manager Souza said that was correct.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked about the 'Journey Home' program. They are asking for \$20,000. How helpful are they to our Windsor residents? Town Manager Souza stated we are seeing a growing demand in this area from individuals that are at risk of being homeless or those that are already unsheltered or homeless. We spoke a little about this during the Social Services piece of the budget at the last meeting. Journey Home does have case managers and field workers. They will come out to the community when we help identify where individuals might be. They will be able to do that case work and try and assist those individuals to go to a shelter or other emergency housing outlet. It is growing in Windsor. It's a valuable service on a regional basis that the town should consider to participate in.

Deputy Mayor Klase thanked all the Finance Department for what they do.

Councilor Eleveld said he sees a reduction in the Town Council expenditures from last year. Was there a reduction? Ms. Collins said the Town Council expenses are level funded from budget to budget. \$19,500 was budgeted for last year and it is the same for FY 25.

Councilor Eleveld then asked why is the FY 24 estimate at \$25,060? Town Manager Souza said we had some new Councilors, which incurred some 'start up' costs. Then we had the celebration and acknowledgment for Mayor Trinks.

Councilor Eleveld asked about boards and commissions. He's heard some comments about the boards/commissions spending money. Does the budget include money for events for the Human Relations Commission (HRC)? Does it fall under this budget? If so, how does it get approved? Town Manager Souza said using the HRC as an example, those funds are there in the boards/commissions budget. The committee develops what their program is for the year and what they may need for funding and they submit that for consideration. As a budget team, the requests are reviewed and they are then reflected in the budget if they are reasonable expenditures, which they are. Throughout the year as those events come along, the liaison (town staff person) for that board/commission helps with the procurement of the funds and does the administrative work so the members on the board/commission don't have to do any of that handling of the vendor money or processing of the invoices.

Councilor Eleveld said that we have an expenditure for probate but that is basically to cover the office space he presumes in South Windsor. South Windsor houses the probate

offices. Ms. Collins said the probate court is shared with South Windsor, East Windsor and Windsor. Windsor pays a pro-rated amount which is mainly for supplies for some of their annual maintenance contracts. No salaries are included in the budget.

Councilor Eleveld spoke of the community service issue. He asked Town Manager Souza if he is recommending that everything on pages P-13 and P-14 be zeroed out or is he saying they will go forward with those numbers? Town Manager Souza said that he is proposing that the \$114,000 be approved as using the General Fund. The three that he was speaking about were the three new requests of Windsor Fife and Drums Corps, Journey Home, and the retired Senior volunteer program for transportation. Those were the three that he was noting that he did not propose General Fund dollars be used because of the overall climate. That would be a policy decision that the Town Council would have to make.

Councilor Eleveld said that we could bring that up at the regular meeting in May. Town Manager Souza said that it could also be incorporated, if there is a consensus by the Council, as an action on adoption of the budget using American Rescue Funds or you can wait until the May 6th meeting.

Councilor Smith said that in the budget summary it states that expenditures are coming over budget by \$18,870 which is due to Counsel and Legal Advice for worker's compensation litigation. Earlier we had talked about how worker's compensation claims have decreased. So you have a decrease in claims but an increase in counsel fees. What's going on? Ms. Collins explained that worker's compensation litigation is ongoing litigation and it relates to previous claims which could be from several years ago. It's not just the current claims. When Mr. Maynard was referring to how many claims are targeted, those are new claims. So this is ongoing litigation for ongoing claims.

Councilor Armstrong asked about page P-13. For the Archer Memorial request, is this a part of the historical freedom trail or does it go to the church? Town Manager Souza said the church is the primary lead on the freedom trail activities. These are the funds that do not go to the church. The church acts as the agent. There are no funds that the church retains. It's all for publicity, program and to support freedom trail activities in the fall.

Councilor Armstrong asked about page P-14 and if the Hartford Interval House and the Network Against Domestic Abuse are the same? Town Manager Souza stated they are separate entities.

Councilor Walker said under Human Relations there's a scholarship fund for the upcoming year. Is that the Kevin Washington scholarship? If so, who manages that money? Ms. Collins stated that most of the donations are from Kevin Washington donations that they received for his memorial. They did receive some donations prior to that when they have campaigned for them or when they had events. Both Flavia in the Community Development office and Patrick McMahon from the Economic Development department oversees those monies.

Councilor Armstrong said on page P-13 under Celebrate Windsor, there was nothing to be allocated for the events in the Wilson side of town? Town Manager Souza said those events are now being sponsored through the Wilson/Deerfield Commission which has some monies in the boards and commission budget or the Recreation Department.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman said she knows there were donations for Mr. Washington. How do you handle that financially? Is it a separate account? Town Manager Souza said it was a separate account. Ms. Collins stated it is a Special Revenue Fund and you can see it on page P-15 and the number is \$5,257.

5) GENERAL SERVICES/CAPITAL SPENDING

Jim Bourke, Finance Director stated FY 24 expenditures are expected to come in over budget by approximately \$28,000. The FY 25 budget reflects an increase of approximately \$302K over the FY 24 adopted budget, or about 1.5%.

- The property tax transfer payment to Great Pond Improvement District is increasing \$772,000 for a total payment of \$1,395,700. This amount represents 50% of the taxes that will be collected from the parcels located there. This increase 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.
- Funding for the Town's defined benefit retirement plan is increasing \$430K. For those of you who weren't here last year, or as a reminder if you were; defined benefit retirement costs associated with our retirees were moved to this section of the budget for FY 24. Amounts budgeted in department budgets represent contributions to the pension trust fund for actively employed plan participants. Prior to FY 24, all of the cost was budgeted in department budgets. Removing the retiree costs from department budgets and budgeting for them separately in General Services is a better representation of the true retirement cost to the department budget's for active plan participants. The increase in funding for FY 25 is a result of our recent actuarially determined contribution as well as an increase in our retiree population.
- The annual payment to MDC for sewer services will increase approx. \$51,000 for FY 25; this is based on the MDC 2024 calendar-year budget.
- Funding for worker's compensation and liability Insurance is proposed to increase \$80K. This increase is driven by incurred and anticipated claims, and also changes in the nationwide insurance market.
- The FY 25 funding for costs associated with property revaluation is proposed at \$30,000. These funds will accumulate in a special revenue account each year over the next five years to pay costs associated with the next revaluation for the October 2028 grand list and will be effective for the FY 30 budget.

Several efforts are being made towards mitigating the FY 25 general fund expenditure increase in this section of the budget, in order to ease the effect of revaluation on tax payers such as....

- A 2.3% increase is proposed for debt service. In past years, we have adhered to the town council's policy target of a 3% increase in general fund debt service. The 2.3% increase represents a savings of approx. \$55K to the general fund expenditures, as compared to a 3% increase.
- The FY 25 budget for the town's contribution to long-term retiree health costs (OPEB) reflects a decrease of \$25,000 (\$17,500 GS & \$7,500 TSE). FY 25 will be the eleventh year the town has contributed towards funding the town's long-term other post-employment obligations.
- General fund capital spending is proposed to decrease \$700K. Several of the projects that were scheduled during FY 24 are one-time in nature and those funds are not being budgeted for FY 25.

6) INSURANCE INTERNAL SERVICE FUND

Marty Maynard, Risk Manager, stated 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 10 -30%, there are hopes that the public sector market will stabilize during the next twelve months. We are doing a bid among the four programs and carriers insuring municipalities in the State of CT. We are recommending a 12.6 % increase this coming year for the liability, auto, property insurance policies.

Within our worker compensation program, we expect the excess premium to increase only by 1% 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.

Amelia Bliss, Director of Human Resources, stated the FY 24 employee and retiree total benefit costs are expected to come in under budget by 0.5%. This is due to improved claims experience for health and dental and the decision to change one of the fully insured Medicare Supplement plans the town offers to a less expensive Medicare Advantage plan effective January 1, 2024. This new plan has enhanced benefits and decreases the premium cost shared by the town and retirees. These savings are offset by increased costs for prescription drug claims. The FY 24 employee and retiree General Fund costs, after deducting employee and retiree copays and enterprise fund contributions, are expected to be \$27,400 or 1.8% under budget.

The FY 25 total benefit costs are increasing \$472,700 or 9.0% based on medical, prescription and disability claims trend and expected claims projections. The FY 25

General Fund contribution is increasing \$180,950 or 4.8% as compared to the FY 24 budget after deducting employee and retiree copays, enterprise fund contributions and anticipated prescription drug rebates. Due to the increasing cost of prescription drugs and specialty medications, the town partnered with a pharmacy benefits advisor to negotiate better pricing and rebates with our vendor. This helps mitigate the increases to prescription drug costs.

Councilor Eleveld stated we are self-insured for our health insurance, prescription, dental, and disability insurance. Ms. Bliss said the under 65 retiree insurance plan is self-insured. The Medicare supplemental plans are fully insured. The short-term disability plan is self-insured but if we have individuals going onto long-term disability, that would be premium paid plan.

Councilor Eleveld asked if we are self-insuring for our worker's compensation insurance. Mr. Maynard said we are self-insured for the worker's compensation up to \$600,000 per employee and \$750,000 for public safety employees. The first \$600,000 is on us which is why we have a service fund for that purpose.

Councilor Pelkey asked who are the folks that offer insurance for property and liability insurance? Mr. Maynard stated the Traveler's Insurance Company is the largest carrier at this time. There is the municipal league which is CIRMA which is a non-rated carrier. Mr. Maynard named a couple more companies.

Councilor Pelkey said part of the lack of competition is also part of the reason that we don't have much of a choice when it comes to picking a company. Mr. Maynard added that very few carriers want municipalities not just in Connecticut but all throughout New England.

7) TOWN SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

Linda Collins, Assistant Finance Director, stated the FY 24 expenditures are expected to come in under budget by \$11,000 mostly due to retirement plan savings in Youth Protection Services and savings for the audit fee for a newly appointed firm.

The FY 25 proposed budget reflects an increase of approximately \$606,000 as compared to the FY 24 budget mostly due to an increase in debt service costs and costs associated with risk management. This increase is partially offset by a decrease in costs associated with Board of Education retirees shifting to the General Services budget.

Councilor Eleveld said going through this budget, we provide for private education at St. Gabriel's, Trinity Christian, Medina Academy and Loomis. That is for nursing services. 50% of the Town Aid for Education of \$6.2 million is debt service for the schools. That's when we put on a new roof or do an expansion per se, it comes from this budget. It does not come out of the Board of Education budget.

Councilor Eleveld stated that Risk Management is 25% of the \$6.2 million and that is for all the various policies, the school board admissions insurance, cyber liability, nursing insurance, etc. That's all included, even though we see it in other parts of the budget, correct? Mr. Maynard said that's correct. Councilor Eleveld then said in the insurance fund it shows up as part of the overall, but it's actually built out of the Town Support for Education. Mr. Maynard said that is correct, it's part of the total package.

Councilor Eleveld said regarding retirement services, we've switched in the town hall and Board of Education to a 401(a) program which has a 5% match or did we increase that to 6%? Mr. Bourke stated this line item refers specifically to the defined benefit plan.

Councilor Eleveld said that when we switched to a 401(a) plan, the Board of Education started picking up their costs for their retirement benefits for the new employees. Mr. Bourke said that was correct.

Councilor Eleveld stated that we still have some OPEB costs related to past employees from the Board of Education? Mr. Bourke stated he was correct.

Councilor Eleveld stated we are spending about \$300,000 for Police Support services for our various schools.

Councilor Armstrong noticed there is an increase for Medina Academy compared to the rest. Is there a reason for that? Ms. Collins said they had an increase in their enrollment and they've also had a shortage in the nursing market and the salaries have become very competitive. This is based on the current nurse they have staffed there.

Councilor Walker said most of the public is not aware that we do this for our private schools. He talked about the Loomis Chaffee school. He said it's a large entity sitting on a huge endowment like in the millions. Where is the equity? Town residents and everybody else is chipping in and paying their fair share. This is just another thing that people aren't aware of. We all share in the tax burden.

Councilor Eleveld said that we are required by state law to do this. Ms. Collins said that is correct and by state statute, the Town of Windsor is required to provide the same nursing services to the students at the non-profit schools that we provide in the public schools. Councilor Eleveld said we don't have a choice but to do it. He agrees with what Councilor Walker is saying, but we simply have no choice on this issue.

8) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by, Councilor Pelkey seconded by Councilor Walker to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0



Special Town Council meeting
April 17, 2024

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Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary