



**TOWN OF WINDSOR
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING
April 1, 2024
PUBLIC HEARING**

APPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Black-Burke.

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

Mayor Black-Burke read aloud the notice of the public hearing to hear public comment on:

- THE FY 2024-2025 BUDGET AS PROPOSED BY THE TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Souza gave an overview of the budget. He stated as we go into the FY 25 budget, we have to deal with our 2023 grand list. Our 2023 grand list reflects our state mandated property revaluation. As we all know, our home values have increased significantly at 51%, Class A office values have decreased dramatically and our motor vehicles have also decreased at 6% after seeing an increase in them for the last several years. He explained the charts regarding the grand lists. In 2022, Residential was at 38% of the pie chart whereas after revaluation it is at 46% of the pie chart. Non-residential has decreased from 30% to 25%. We show this simply to try to acknowledge the fact that Residential values have increased dramatically compared to Non-residential values and now have a greater burden of the overall tax liability here in Windsor.

Looking at the General Government overview, this budget attempts to maintain service levels with no new General Fund full-time positions. It continues investments and reinvestments in street repaving, sidewalk repairs and fleet replacement. Attempting to factor in the impacts of property revaluation, there were a few reductions. The most notable ones include:

- a reduction to capital expenditures of \$680,000 which are largely one time expenditures that the previous Town Council had placed into the budget to build 'capacity' for FY 25.
- the elimination of senior and workforce housing fund of \$75,000
- the elimination of a General Fund contribution to our housing rehabilitation program of \$305,000.

Town Manager Souza explained the proposed FY 25 General Expenditures chart. The overall General Fund is shown as the Board of Education being at 58.57% of the overall expenditures and the Town Support for Education which includes the school's portion of property liability insurance, worker's compensation insurance is at 4.23%. The next largest segment of the budget that is dedicated to a department specifically is Safety Services at 9% of the chart. The General Services category at 13.96% handles debt service for the town side projects. It also includes items such as our worker's compensation and liability insurance as well as our pay as you go capital.

Depicted on a spreadsheet was the proposed FY 25 Expenditure Summary. Town Manager Souza explained that the Board of Education's proposed budget is showing an increase of approximately \$5.1 million or 6.4% and the Town Operating Budget is showing an increase of approximately \$1.1 million or 2.62%. Other services are also shown on the spreadsheet.

Key drivers for the General Government budget range from liability and worker's compensation insurance, retirement, health insurance, to salaries. The General Fund reductions are shown at the bottom of the chart in red which includes General Fund capital spending, senior and workforce housing and housing rehabilitation.

Looking at how this budget and revaluation impacts a single family home, which in 2022 the average was \$213,000 in fair market value, with a significant increase in appreciation that home now as of October 2023 is valued at \$321,000 from a market value perspective. When you apply the potential mill rate of 28.26 mills, you will have an overall increase on a percentage basis of 27% or \$1,352. Approximately 3.2% of that is related to budgetary tax increase or changes in the budget with 24% of it being due to revaluation.

In summary, the overall expenditure increase to the budget is 4.64% or approximately \$6.5 million, it resets the mill rate at 28.26 mills with the average residential tax increase of 27% largely due to revaluation and the tax rate for motor vehicles which will decrease by 13%. He explained two proposed tax scenarios that the Town Council could take.

Town Manager Souza added there are many resources that residents have regarding the budget on the town's webpage at www.townofwindsorct.com such as the online tax calculator (to calculate your new taxes and see the difference from last year to the upcoming year), build a budget program (where you can take a stab at building the budget yourself and seeing the impacts it will have for the town), the proposed FY 25 Board of Education and Town of Windsor budgets and the FY 25 budget calendar.

The next steps are there will be department budget reviews during the month of April, formal public comment will be on April 23 and April 24 and the Council will take a vote on the budget on April 24th with a tentative referendum date of May 14th.

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

Coralee Jones, 1171 Matianuck Avenue said she attended a couple of meetings regarding the revaluation. Her home went up by 70% in market value. As things stand

today, her taxes would go up by \$1,500. Even if you change the mill rate or the budget increase as proposed, it would still be \$1,500. The Board of Education is requesting an almost 7% increase in their FY 25 proposed budget. She feels they are out of touch with what is going on with families in Windsor. They threaten parents that they'll have to cut the strings program if they aren't able to get funds for it, which is one of the favorite programs at the school. She was able to purchase groceries for \$75 before but now it costs \$110. She always hears that our taxes are lower than towns surrounding us. The reason for that is because the residents have the opportunity to vote on the budget and over the years, the residents have kept the cost down. She is not looking for a zero percent increase but with the Board of Education at a 7% increase that is definitely out of line.

Linda Alexander, 155 Fieldstone Drive, stated for those of you who think this is a wonderful budget in these difficult economic times, she is wondering how they expect the taxpayers to handle these increases. Where do you think that people that are not highly paid will get the money? All the solutions to economize had adverse effects on people's health. Some people have to resort to eating canned food instead of fresh food. She can remember when she had to do that but she didn't have a family to support. We still walk around the house with layers of clothes because of the cost of heat and electricity. How will people react to these tax increases? In 2016, the people spoke up and voted the budget down four times. She is hopeful that the people on this Council will be wiser and that it won't be necessary to have multiple budget referendums. We will see.

3) ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Black-Burke declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary