



Council Agenda

Council Chambers
Windsor Town Hall
June 3, 2024



Zoom Instructions

Dialing in by Phone Only:

Please call: **305 224 1968 or 309 205 3325**

1. When prompted for participant or meeting ID enter: **848 4694 1489** and then press #
2. You will then enter the meeting muted. During 'Public Comment' if you wish to speak press *9 to raise your hand. Please give your name and address prior to voicing your comments.

Joining in by Computer:

Please go to the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84846941489> When prompted for participant or meeting ID enter: **848 4694 1489**

1. Only if your computer has a microphone for two way communication, then during Public Comment if you wish to speak press **Raise Hand** in the webinar control. If you do not have a microphone you will need to call in on a phone in order to speak.
2. During 'Public Comment' if you do not wish to speak you may type your comments into the Q&A feature.

7:20 PM Public Hearing

To hear public comment on the following:

- Applications for participation in the Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit program
- Proposed change to Plan of Conservation and Development's future land use plan related to 5T and 105 Birchwood Road

7:30 PM Regular Council Meeting

1. ROLL CALL
2. PRAYER OR REFLECTION – Councilor Eleveld
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Councilor Eleveld
4. PROCLAMATIONS/AWARDS
5. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS
(Three minute limit per speaker)
6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS
7. REPORT OF APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
 - a) Board of Education
8. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT



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9. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES
 10. ORDINANCES
 11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - a) *Consider proposed amendment to the Plan of Conservation and Development relative to 5T and 105 Birchwood Road. (Town Manager)
 12. NEW BUSINESS
 - a) *Approve Resolution for Neighborhood Assistance Act (Town Manager)
 - b) *Approve acceptance of donation of 400 Deerfield Road open space parcel (Town Manager)
 - c) *Approve an appropriation of \$70,000 from the Capital Projects Fund for design of the Prospect Hill Road pavement rehabilitation project (Town Manager)
 - d) *Approve an appropriation of \$80,000 from the Capital Projects Fund for design of the Marshall Phelps Road pavement rehabilitation project (Town Manager)
 - e) *Introduce an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XVII, PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR ELDERLY AND/OR DISABLED HOMEOWNERS." (Town Manager)
 - f) *Set a Public Hearing for June 17, 2024 at 7:20 p.m. for an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XVII, PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR ELDERLY AND/OR DISABLED HOMEOWNERS." (Town Manager)
 - g) *Introduce an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS' EXEMPTION." (Town Manager)
 - h) *Set a Public Hearing for June 17, 2024 at 7:20 p.m. for an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS' EXEMPTION." (Town Manager)
 - i) Consider settlement of Wolak vs Town of Windsor (Town Manager)
 13. *RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS
 14. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS
 - a) *Minutes of the April 23, 2024 Special Town Council meeting (budget)
 - b) *Minutes of the April 24, 2024 Special Town Council meeting (budget)
 - c) *Minutes of the May 6, 2024 Public Hearing (CDGB grant application & CDBG income to town's Housing Rehabilitation)
 - d) *Minutes of the May 6, 2024 Regular Town Council Meeting
 - e) *Minutes of the May 20, 2024 Regular Town Council Meeting



15. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

(Three minute limit per speaker)

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a) Strategy and Negotiations in respect to pending claims and litigation (Wolak vs Town of Windsor)
- b) Strategy and Negotiations in respect to collective bargaining (Windsor Police Employee Association)


17. ADJOURNMENT

*Back-up included

Agenda Item Summary

Date: June 3, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council

Prepared by: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: Proposed change to future land use plan – Birchwood Drive

Background

The Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) provides the town with a long-range planning tool to help guide community decisions in a range of areas related to land use, natural and historic resources, transportation, and community facilities. Amendments to the POCD can be initiated by residents, property owners, town staff or the Town Planning and Zoning Commission (TPZC). The Planning and Zoning Commission is the final decision-making body and they are required to conduct a public hearing before acting.

Owners of two vacant parcels of land off of Birchwood Road, on which they grow Christmas trees, have requested the Planning and Zoning Commission to amend the POCD's Future Land Use Plan to reflect the properties as agricultural versus open space and low density residential.

Before the Town Planning and Zoning Commission (TPZC) can complete their public hearing process and consider a POCD change, Connecticut General Statutes calls for any change to a POCD be referred to the Town Council for review. The Town Council elected to set a public hearing on the proposed amendment for June 3rd.

The Town Council is respectively asked to recommend or reject the proposed POCD amendment this evening to although the Town Planning and Zoning Commission to complete their action on June 11th.

Discussion/Analysis

The owners of 5T and 105 Birchwood Road, would like to preserve these parcels for agricultural use through the potential future sale of development rights. These parcels are currently a Christmas tree farm. The owners would like the Plan of Conservation and Development's Future Land Use Plan to reflect these properties as agricultural. The intent of the Future Land Use Plan is to depict the most desirable future use of each parcel of land, which is typically the current land use but can vary for vacant land, depending on its zoning and other characteristics such as abutting properties and features.

5T Birchwood is 7 acres and currently zoned agriculture and 105 Birchwood is 9 acres and zoned residential. The Future Land Use Plan shows 5T Birchwood as Open Space and 105 Birchwood as low density residential. As noted above, the property owner would like these properties to be reflected as agricultural on the POCD's Future Land Use Plan. This Future Land Use Plan designation has the potential to improve the competitiveness for preservation grants if the property owner wishes to sell the property development rights to the state or other conservation related entity.

Planning Department staff concurs with the proposed amendment to the Future Land Use Plan as agriculture is a less intensive development designation than the current low density residential designation for 105 Birchwood. Low density residential would be considered our ‘AA’ and ‘A’ land use zones. These zones allow between 1.3 to 1.6 dwelling units per acre of developable land. In comparison the agriculture zoned allows 1 unit per 3 acres.

Financial Impact

None

Other Board Action

The TPZC held a public hearing on May 21, 2024 and continued the Public Hearing until after the Town Council meeting of June 3. Residents spoke in favor of the proposed amendments. There were no dissenting views from the public at the TPZC hearing.

Recommendations

If the Town Council is in agreement, the following motion is recommended for approval.

“MOVE to recommend the Town Planning and Zoning Commission amend the Plan of Conservation and Development’s Future Land Use Plan by reflecting 5T and 105 Birchwood Road as agricultural.”

Attachments

Adopted Future Land Use Plan – Birchwood Road area




Agenda Item Summary

Date: June 3, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council

Prepared By: Flavia Rey de Castro, Community Development Specialist

Reviewed By: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: 2024 Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program

Background

The Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit program, established by the Connecticut General Assembly, offers non-profit and municipal organizations an opportunity to enhance their fundraising capabilities by offering tax credits to eligible corporations. Corporate donors receive a tax credit against their state corporate tax liability in an amount equal to 60% of their contributions or, in the event the proposed activity is an eligible energy conservation project, equal to 100% of their contribution. Per state law, all applications are subject to approval by the local governing body, subsequent to a requisite public hearing to allow for public comment. Applications are ultimately reviewed by the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services as well.

The program has several statutory limitations, including the following:

- Businesses are limited to a tax credit of \$150,000 annually
- Non-profits may receive up to \$150,000 in contributions annually
- The minimum contribution on which a tax credit may be granted is \$250
- The program has a \$5,000,000 overall cap, which if exceeded, results in proration of approved corporate donations

Discussion/Analysis

The Office of Community Development issued media releases, utilized the town's website and sent email notices to non-profit organizations in an effort to ensure that eligible organizations are aware of the NAA program. Organizations submit the state application form indicating the expected or desired corporate donation amounts. Town staff confirms non-profit status and the application is fully completed. The applications received this year include the following:

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Windsor Police Cadets, Inc.	\$ 7,500	Program Sponsorship
Madina Academy	\$150,000	Replacement windows & doors
Oliver Benoit Foundation	\$ 30,000	Distribution of personal care packages for Homeless and Shelter Residents

Financial Impact

The dollar amounts listed above for each applicant are essentially fundraising goals for participating organizations. It is up to the applicants to secure donations from corporate sponsors using the NAA Tax Credit program as a financial inducement. The cost for the town to participate is minimal, essentially limited to promotion of the program, publication of a legal notice for the public hearing, and staff time.

Other Board Action

None

Recommendation

If the Town Council is in agreement the following motion is recommended for approval:

“MOVE that the attached resolution approving applications for participation in the 2024 Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit program administered by the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services be approved.”

Attachments

Resolution

WINDSOR TOWN COUNCIL

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE ACT (NAA) TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut, acting through its Department of Revenue Services, administers a program authorized by the state legislature entitled the Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit Program which provides corporations with tax liability in the State of Connecticut an opportunity to receive tax credits for donations made to participating municipal and tax-exempt organizations; and

WHEREAS, in order to utilize the NAA Program eligible municipal and non-profit organizations must first secure the approval of the local governing body in a town served by the applicant; and

WHEREAS, the organizations listed below have submitted applications for assistance in the NAA Program and the Town Council believes that the proposed activities are in the best interests of Windsor's residents;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE WINDSOR TOWN COUNCIL that the following applications for participation in the 2024 Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program are hereby approved:


<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Windsor Police Cadets, Inc.	\$ 7,500	Program Sponsorship
Madina Academy	\$ 150,000	Energy Efficiency
Oliver Benoit Foundation	\$ 30,000	Homeless and Shelter Resident support

Agenda Item Summary

Date: June 3, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council

Prepared By: Suzanne Choate, P.E., Town Engineer

Reviewed By: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: Property Acquisition – 400 Deerfield Road

Background

As part of the design for Windsor River Trail from East Barber Street to Windsor Town Center, the town's design consultant for the project, East-West Engineering, identified properties that are not owned by the Town of Windsor, which would require an easement from the property owner in order to build the trail. 400 Deerfield Road is one of three privately owned parcels that would require an easement. The owner of 400 Deerfield Road, Ms. Janet Cohen, has expressed interest in donating the parcel to the town. The Town Council is respectfully requested to accept the parcel to support future construction of the multi-use trail along the Connecticut River.

Discussion/Analysis

400 Deerfield Road is approximately 1.5 acres in size. There are no structures or other improvements on the parcel. The parcel is in the floodplain and is unbuildable per current regulations. The owner has indicated a desire to donate the property to the Town of Windsor at no cost, in support of the future construction of a multi-use trail.

The property abuts state-owned park land to the south and to the north by property controlled by Eversource. North of the Eversource property are parcels owned by the town as well as additional state-owned properties.

Financial Impact

There is no cost for the acquisition of the property, therefore, a Special Town meeting is not required. The property assessment is \$7,910 with the appraised value of \$11,300. Current taxes are approximately \$266.

Other Board Action

The Town Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of the project to the Windsor Town Council in accordance with CGS Section 8-24 on March 19, 2024.

Recommendations

If the Town Council is in agreement, the following motion is recommended for approval:

“MOVE to accept the donation from Ms. Janet Cohen, of property known as 400 Deerfield Road in the Town Assessor’s records, as shown on map entitled “Property of Marguerite E. Mills and The Hartford Electric Light Co.”, dated March 1967, by W.M. Alford, which is on file in the Town Clerk’s Office in the Town of Windsor, Connecticut as Map Volume 11, Map Number 1066 and authorize the Town Manager to execute associated forms related to the property transfer.”

Attachment

Area Map



Town of Windsor, CT


400 DEERFIELD ROAD

Agenda Item Summary

Date: June 3, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council

Prepared By: Suzanne Choate, P.E., Town Engineer

Reviewed By: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: Prospect Hill Road Rehabilitation

Background

In February engineering staff submitted an application for state funding through the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) for the pavement rehabilitation of Prospect Hill Road between Lang Road and Day Hill Road. The town was recently notified by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) that Prospect Hill Road had been selected for funding under this program.

At this time, the Town Council is respectively requested to approve funding to initiate project design. This will allow the project to be designed and submitted to CRCOG and the Connecticut Department of Transportation for review and approval in 2025.

Discussion/Analysis

Prospect Hill Road is a major collector roadway with an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of approximately 3,200 vehicles per day. The town's most recent pavement evaluations indicates the pavement condition spanning from Day Hill Road to Lang Road is within the fair to poor range with a pavement condition index (PCI) as low as 56 on the roadway. This section of the roadway exhibits significant distressing, with block cracking, transverse and long cracking, potholes and non-utility patches.

The project limits begin at the intersection of Day Hill Road and end at the rotary at the intersection of Lang Road. The project length is approximately 5,200'.

The proposed rehabilitation project includes milling several inches of existing pavement and repaving. We also intend to replace bituminous curbing, catch basin tops, and sidewalk ramps along the roadway. The proposed rehabilitation also includes restriping of the roadway with 11' lanes for consistency with other similar roads and to maximize the shoulder width. The current cost estimate for the construction phase is \$825,000.

At this time, staff is seeking funding to initiate the design phase of this project. Town staff estimates that \$70,000 is needed to complete the design of the project.

Financial Impact

The LOTCIP program is structured such that the town is financially responsible for the design of the work. The state then funds 100% of the construction phase of the project which is currently estimated to be \$825,000. The Town Council will be asked to formally accept and authorize expending the grant funding through a Project Agreement Letter once design is fully completed and approved by CT DOT in 2025.

Design funds in the amount of \$70,000 are being requested from the Capital Projects Fund. The available fund balance is approximately \$450,000 in the Capital Projects Fund.

Other Board Action

None

Recommendations

If the Town Council is in agreement, the following motion is recommended for approval:

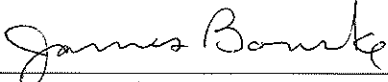
“MOVE to approve \$70,000 from the Capital Projects Fund for design services related to the Prospect Hill Road Pavement Rehabilitation Project.”

Attachments

None

Certification

I hereby certify that \$70,000 is available in the Capital Projects Fund to meet the above appropriation.




James Bourke
Finance Director

Agenda Item Summary

Date: June 3, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council

Prepared By: Suzanne Choate, P.E., Town Engineer

Reviewed By: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: Marshall Phelps Road Rehabilitation

Background

In February, engineering staff submitted an application for state funding through the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) for the pavement rehabilitation of Marshall Phelps Road between Bloomfield Avenue and Day Hill Road. The town was recently notified by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) that Marshall Phelps Road had been selected for funding under this program.

At this time, the Town Council is respectively requested to approve funding to initiate project design. This will allow the project to be designed and submitted to CRCOG and the Connecticut Department of Transportation for review and approval in 2025.

Discussion/Analysis

Marshall Phelps Road is an arterial roadway with an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of approximately 5,500 vehicles per day. The town's most recent pavement evaluations indicates the pavement condition spanning from Day Hill Road to Bloomfield Avenue is within the fair range with a pavement condition index (PCI) as low as 70 on the roadway. The pavement exhibits significant linear and block cracking as well as areas of alligator cracking and potholes.

The project limits begin at the intersection of Day Hill Road and end at the intersection of Bloomfield Avenue. The project length is approximately 5,900'.

The proposed rehabilitation project includes milling several inches of existing pavement and repaving. We also intend to replace bituminous curbing, catch basin tops, and sidewalk ramps along the roadway. The proposed project scope includes restriping of the roadway to accommodate 5' wide designated bike lanes on both sides of the roadway. The current cost estimate for the construction phase is \$1,175,000.

At this time, staff is seeking funding to initiate the design phase of this project. Town staff estimates \$80,000 is needed to complete the design of the project.

Financial Impact

The LOTICIP program is structured such that the town is financially responsible for the design of the work. The state then funds 100% of the construction phase of the project which is currently

estimated to be \$1,175,000. The Town Council will be asked to formally accept and authorize expending the grant funding through a Project Agreement Letter once design is fully completed and approved by CT DOT in 2025.

Design funds in the amount of \$80,000 are being requested from the Capital Projects Fund. There is an available assigned fund balance of approximately \$450,000 in the Capital Projects Fund.

Other Board Action

None

Recommendations

If the Town Council is in agreement, the following motion is recommended for approval:

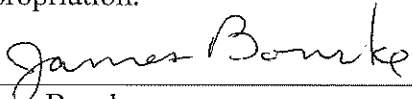
“MOVE to approve \$80,000 from the Capital Projects Fund for design services related to the Marshall Phelps Road Pavement Rehabilitation Project.”

Attachments

None

Certification

I hereby certify that \$80,000 is available in the Capital Projects Fund to meet the above appropriation.




James Bourke
Finance Director

Agenda Item Summary

Date: June 3, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council

Prepared by: Scott W. Colby Jr, Assistant Town Manager

Reviewed by: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: Property Tax Relief for Elderly and/or Disabled Homeowners Ordinance

Background

State law provides a property tax credit for Connecticut homeowners who are elderly or totally disabled and whose incomes do not exceed certain limits. In 2006, the Town Council adopted an ordinance that provides additional tax relief via a local tax credit for Windsor homeowners who are elderly or totally disabled, and whose incomes do not exceed certain limits.

Over the years, the Town Council has made adjustments to the ordinance. These changes include increasing the eligible income levels and increasing the benefit amounts, with the last change in 2023 when the local benefit amount was adjusted upward from a match of 40% to 50% and the dollar amount for the flat benefit was increased.

Discussion/Analysis

Property tax credits under the state program can be up to \$1,250 for married couples and \$1,000 for single individuals. Credits are based on a graduated income scale. The town provides an additional benefit with a current match of 50% of this credit for those households eligible under the state program. The town's ordinance also provides for a flat benefit of either \$308 or \$425, dependent on marital status for eligible households with incomes between \$43,800 and \$60,300.

Currently there are 337 participants under the state program and the local match benefit. There are 86 participants in the flat benefit program.

There was discussion at the May 20th Town Council meeting to explore the cost of the program if the additional local benefit were to double for participants.

Below are a set of tables that show the current local benefit dollar amount and match at 50% as well as the proposed local benefit dollar amount and match at 100%. This would provide an increased benefit for local program participants. This would double the local match as well as increase the flat benefit dependent on marital status for eligible households with incomes between \$43,800 and \$60,300.

50% Match

Income Limit		Married				Unmarried			
Over	Under	State	Local: 50%	Local > \$53,400	Total	State	Local: 50%	Local > \$43,800	Total
\$0	\$22,000	\$ 1,250	\$ 625		\$ 1,875	\$ 1,000	\$ 500		\$ 1,500
\$22,000	\$29,500	\$ 1,000	\$ 500		\$ 1,500	\$ 750	\$ 375		\$ 1,125
\$29,500	\$36,700	\$ 750	\$ 375		\$ 1,125	\$ 500	\$ 250		\$ 750
\$36,700	\$43,800	\$ 500	\$ 250		\$ 750	\$ 250	\$ 225		\$ 475
\$43,800	\$53,400	* \$ 250	\$ 225		\$ 475	* \$ 250		\$ 308	\$ 308
\$53,400	\$60,300	* \$ 250		\$ 425	\$ 425	* \$ 250		\$ 308	\$ 308

100% Match

Income Limit		Married				Unmarried			
Over	Under	State	Local: 100%	Local > \$53,400	Total	State	Local: 100%	Local > \$43,800	Total
\$0	\$22,000	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250		\$ 2,500	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000		\$ 2,000
\$22,000	\$29,500	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000		\$ 2,000	\$ 750	\$ 750		\$ 1,500
\$29,500	\$36,700	\$ 750	\$ 750		\$ 1,500	\$ 500	\$ 500		\$ 1,000
\$36,700	\$43,800	\$ 500	\$ 500		\$ 1,000	\$ 250	\$ 350		\$ 600
\$43,800	\$53,400	* \$ 250	\$ 350		\$ 600	* \$ 250		\$ 415	\$ 415
\$53,400	\$60,300	* \$ 250		\$ 550	\$ 550	* \$ 250		\$ 415	\$ 415

* The local match does not reflect the percentage of the state benefit for these income limits to allow for increased benefit for the local program participants

Financial Impact

The State of Connecticut no longer reimburses municipalities for the state program. The program as a whole has a current cost of \$305,000.

Based on the same number of participants as in FY 24, the estimated cost of the additional benefits related to this proposed amendment is \$129,475 in FY 25. Total program benefits would then be approximately \$434,475.

Other Board Action

None

Recommendation

If the Town Council is in agreement, the following motions are recommended for approval:

- 1) Waiving of the reading

“RESOLVED, that the reading into the minutes of the text of the ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XVII, PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR ELDERLY AND/OR DISABLED HOMEOWNERS” is hereby waived, the full text of the ordinance having been distributed to each member of the Council and copies being made available to those persons attending this meeting; and the full text of the ordinance be recorded with the minutes of this meeting.”

- 2) Introduce an Ordinance

“MOVE to introduce an ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XVII, PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR ELDERLY AND/OR DISABLED HOMEOWNERS.”

3) Set a Public Hearing

“RESOLVED, that a Public Hearing be set for Monday, June 17, 2024 at 7:20 p.m. (prevailing time) in the Council Chambers of the Windsor Town Hall, to hear an ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XVII, PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR ELDERLY AND/OR DISABLED HOMEOWNERS.”

And

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is authorized and directed to post and publish notice of said Public Hearing.”

Attachments

Proposed amended ordinance

Red-lined version of current ordinance

Ordinance Amending
Property Tax Relief for
Elderly and/or Disabled
Homeowners

**CHAPTER 5
ARTICLE XVII**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XVII, PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR ELDERLY AND/OR DISABLED HOMEOWNERS.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WINDSOR:

Chapter 5, Article XVII, of the *Windsor Code* is amended to read as follows:

Section 1. Property tax relief for elderly and/or disabled homeowners.

Section 5-17 (b)(2)(i) is amended to read as follows:

For the October 1, 2023 Grand List, local tax credits shall be provided by the town in accordance with the following income and credit guidelines:

Qualifying Income		Marital Status	Local Tax Credit = % of State Benefit
Over	To		
\$0	\$22,000	Married	100%
\$0	\$22,000	Single	100%
\$22,000	\$29,500	Married	100%
\$22,000	\$29,500	Single	100%
\$29,500	\$36,700	Married	100%
\$29,500	\$36,700	Single	100%
\$36,700	\$43,800	Married	100%
\$36,700	\$43,800	Single	100% + \$100*
\$43,800	\$53,400	Married	100% + \$100*
\$43,800	\$53,400	Single	\$415
\$53,400	\$60,300	Married	\$550
\$53,400	\$60,300	Single	\$415

*Supplement to local match to allow increased benefit for local program participants

Section 5-17 (7) is amended to read as follows:

This article shall be applicable to the Grand List of October 1, 2023 and all subsequent Grand Lists thereafter.

Section 2. Savings Clause. The enactment of this Ordinance shall not operate as an abatement of any action or proceeding previously taken, now pending, or taken prior to the effective date of this Ordinance. All said actions and proceedings are hereby ratified to be continued.

Section 3. Severability. All provisions of the Town Code in conflict herewith are hereby repealed and that if for any reason, any word, clause, paragraph, or section of this Ordinance shall be held to make the same unconstitutional, this Ordinance shall not hereby be invalidated and the remainder of the Ordinance shall continue in effect. Any provision herein which is in conflict with the Connecticut General Statutes is hereby repealed, it being understood that said statute shall take precedence over this Ordinance.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Town Attorney

ATTEST:

Town Clerk

Distributed to Town Council _____

Public Hearing Advertised _____

Public Hearing _____

Adopted _____

Advertised _____

Effective Date _____

Red-Lined Version

Property Tax Relief for
Elderly and/or
Disabled Homeowners
ordinance

**CHAPTER 5
ARTICLE XV11**

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES SECTION 12-129n TO PROVIDE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR ELDERLY AND/OR DISABLED HOMEOWNERS.

Sec. 5-17. Property tax relief for elderly and/or disabled homeowners.

(a) Pursuant to the authority granted under Connecticut General Statutes section 12-129n, as amended, the tax relief for elderly and/or disabled homeowners provided under said statute is hereby adopted, extended and supplemented by the town council as follows.

(b) The qualifications for the property tax relief provided by this section shall be as follows:

(1) Applicants must be a resident of the town who are:

(i) Sixty-five years of age or over or whose spouse, living with them, is 65 years of age or over, or 50 years of age and the surviving spouse of a taxpayer who has qualified under this section at the time of their death, and with respect to real property in which such resident or their spouse is liable for taxes under Connecticut General Statutes section 12-48.

(ii) Applicants under age 65 must be eligible in accordance with applicable federal regulations to receive permanent total disability benefits under Social Security, or have not been engaged in employment covered by Social Security and accordingly have not qualified for benefits thereunder, but have become qualified for permanent total disability benefits under any federal, state or local government retirement or disability plan, including the Railroad Retirement Act and any government-related teacher's retirement plan, in which requirements with respect to qualifications for such permanent total disability benefits are comparable to such requirement under Social Security.

(iii) Applicants must have been a taxpayer of the town for one year immediately preceding their receipt of tax benefits under this section.

(iv) Applicants must own and occupy the dwelling of the property subject to tax relief for at least 183 days per year for the property to qualify as the taxpayer's principal residence.

(v) Applicants and/or their spouses shall have individually, if unmarried, or jointly, if married, adjusted gross income, as shown on Internal Revenue Service Form 1040, (if filed) Social Security benefits, and all other forms of income including but not limited to interest, dividends, annuities, pensions, retirement allowances hereinafter called "qualifying income", during the calendar year preceding the filing of their application in accordance with the guidelines set forth below.

(vi) Such other conditions, qualifications, standards and procedures as set forth in the Connecticut General Statutes, as may be amended and this section.

(2) (i) For the October 1, ~~2022-2023~~ Grand List, local tax credits shall be provided by the Town in accordance with the following income and credit guidelines:

<i>Qualifying Income</i>		Marital Status	Local Tax Credit = % of State Benefit
<i>Over</i>	<i>To</i>		
\$0	\$20,200 <u>22,000</u>	Married	50 <u>100</u> %
\$0	\$20,200 <u>22,000</u>	Single	50 <u>100</u> %
\$20,200 <u>22,000</u>	\$27,100 <u>29,500</u>	Married	50 <u>100</u> %
\$20,200 <u>22,000</u>	\$27,100 <u>29,500</u>	Single	50 <u>100</u> %
\$27,100 <u>29,500</u>	\$33,800 <u>36,700</u>	Married	50 <u>100</u> %
\$27,100 <u>29,500</u>	\$33,800 <u>36,700</u>	Single	50 <u>100</u> %
\$33,800 <u>36,700</u>	\$40,300 <u>43,800</u>	Married	50 <u>100</u> %
\$33,800 <u>36,700</u>	\$40,300 <u>43,800</u>	Single	50 <u>100</u> % + \$100*
\$40,300 <u>43,800</u>	\$49,100 <u>53,400</u>	Married	50 <u>100</u> % + \$100*
\$40,300 <u>43,800</u>	\$49,100 <u>53,400</u>	Single	\$308 <u>415</u>
\$49,100 <u>53,400</u>	\$55,400 <u>60,300</u>	Married	\$425 <u>550</u>
\$49,100 <u>53,400</u>	\$55,400 <u>60,300</u>	Single	\$308 <u>415</u>

**Supplement to local match to allow increased benefit for local program participants*

(ii) The qualifying income levels described in paragraph (2)(i) above shall be as set forth therein or equal to the qualifying income for the Elderly and Totally Disabled Tax Relief program as published annually by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy & Management, whichever is greater.

(iii) The local property tax credits provided by this article shall be in addition to and not dependent upon those benefits available to qualified taxpayers under any Connecticut General Statute, Sections 12-129b to 12-129d, inclusive, Sections 12-129h and 12-170aa, provided that the Town and state benefits in any one year shall not exceed

75% of the normal tax which would have been imposed on a qualified taxpayer in the absence of such state statute and this article.

(3) Except for the "qualifying income" standard as set forth in this article, if the state denies the eligibility of an applicant for the portion of tax relief granted under one of the state programs, the Assessor must deny the applicant the local share of tax relief, remove the applicant from the benefit records and bill them for the full real estate tax due.

(4) Upon the transfer of the property, the benefit is not transferable to the new owner and the new owner shall lose the benefit. Additionally, the Assessor shall prorate the increased tax liability from the date of transfer and notify the tax collector of such increase who will bill the new owner within a reasonable time period.

(5) The assessor and the tax collector shall prescribe, with regard to their respective duties under this article, such forms and procedures as may be necessary to implement this article. The Assessor shall, in addition, satisfy himself or herself as to the qualifying income of an applicant for benefits under this article by requesting and reviewing such evidence of qualifying income as may be pertinent. All applications, federal income tax returns, and any additional evidence of qualifying income which the Assessor may require shall be kept confidential and not open to public inspection to the extent permitted under the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act.

(6) Applications for benefits under this article shall be filed bi-annually with the assessor between February 1 and May 15.

(7) This article shall be applicable to the Grand List of October 1, ~~2022~~ 2023 and all subsequent Grand Lists thereafter.

(8) All provisions of the town code in conflict herewith are hereby repealed and that if for any reason, any word, clause, paragraph, or section of this article shall be held to make the same unconstitutional, this article shall not hereby be invalidated and the remainder of the article shall continue in effect. Any provision herein which is in conflict with the *Connecticut General Statutes* is hereby repealed, it being understood that said statutes shall take precedence over this article. In the event of any conflict between this article and *Connecticut General Statutes* Section 12-129n as it may be amended, the provisions of the statute shall control.

(9) The local tax credits available pursuant to this article shall be reduced if the total cost of the program exceeds the annual amount appropriated by the Town Council. The re-adjusted tax credits shall be calculated by reducing the tax credit in a pro rata amount until the total cost of the annual appropriation is reached. If in any year the Town Council fails to appropriate any funds for this program, the tax credits will be suspended for that fiscal year only.

(Ord. No. 06-01, 6-5-06)

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Town Attorney

ATTEST:

Town Clerk

Distributed to Town Council

Public Hearing Advertised


Public Hearing

Adopted

Advertised

Effective Date

Agenda Item Summary

Date: June 3, 2024
To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council
Prepared by: Joshua Gaston, Town Assessor
Scott W. Colby Jr, Assistant Town Manager
Reviewed by: Peter Souza, Town Manager 
Subject: Municipal Option to Provide Additional Exemption for Veterans

Background

Connecticut State law provides a property tax exemption to US Veterans whose military service meet certain eligibility requirements. The law also provides an additional Veteran Exemption to those already qualified veterans whose income meets certain eligibility requirements. In addition to these statewide veteran exemptions, the law allows for the municipal option to provide a local veteran exemption. In 1998 the Windsor Town Council adopted an ordinance that provided this local exemption to income qualified veterans. In 2015 the Windsor Town Council amended the ordinance to also allow for a specific additional local option providing an exemption to veterans who have received VA assistance for specially adapted housing.

Discussion/Analysis

Currently there are 867 individuals who participate in or receive the state benefit. Veterans who qualify for the state benefit receive an exemption on their property assessment ranging from \$3,000 to \$21,000 depending upon varying factors (i.e level of disability, age, income).

Below is a table that outlines the state program benefit schedule.

State Benefit Schedule		
Description	Veteran Exemption	Veteran Exemption for Income Qualified (* under \$43,800 if they are unmarried or \$53,400 if they are married)
Vet Regular	3,000	6,000
Vet Disability 10-25%	6,000	12,000
Vet Disability 26-50%	7,500	15,000
Vet Disability 51-75%	9,000	18,000
Vet Disability 76-100%	10,500	21,000
Vet Disability 65+ Yrs.	10,500	21,000
Vet Surviving Spouse	3,000	6,000
Vet Act Duty Death	9,000	18,000

Based upon the income limits, 63 individuals out of the total 867 currently participating receive the additional local benefit. The so called local option benefit is presently an \$11,000 exemption on their assessment if their income is under \$43,800, if they are unmarried or \$53,400 if they are married, regardless of VA qualifying status. The current local exemption amount offers a benefit of approximately \$334 and results in approximately \$23,100 of forgone tax revenue.

If the Town Council increases the local benefit to a \$20,000 exemption level this would provide an individual benefit of approximately \$607. By increasing the exemption, the total program cost would be approximately \$38,270 or an overall increase of \$15,170.

Since being initially adopted by the Town Council in 1998, the language of the relevant state statute 12-81f has changed from allowing only a \$2,000 exemption to allowing up to a \$20,000 exemption. However, the local option continues to require an income limit that must not be less than the maximum which is provided annually by the CT Office of Policy and Management for the statewide Additional Veteran Exemption (these limits are the same as the maximum income limits of the Elderly and Totally Disabled Tax Relief Program.)

We have also added a section reinstating the state’s enabling legislation which was not included in the spring of 2023 ordinance codification. This is the ordinance language that existed prior to the 2023 amendment. This has not had an impact on implementation of the program.

Financial Impact

Presently, with a total of 63 local veteran exemptions, each in the amount of \$11,000, this annually has a program cost of approximately \$23,100.

Below is a table showing the approximate total cost to the town of the local veteran option if the exemption amount was increased from \$11,000 to \$20,000.

Local Veteran Application Count	Local Veteran Exemption Amount	Individual Tax Benefit	Total Town Wide Local Veteran Exemptions	Total Program Cost	Total Town Cost Increase
63	11,000*	\$334.00	693,000	\$23,100	\$0*
63	20,000	\$607.00	1,260,000	\$38,270	\$15,170

*Current benefit amount

Based on the same number of FY 24 participants, if the local veteran exemption amount were increased to \$20,000 then this would provide an individual tax benefit of approximately \$607. The total program cost for the proposed budget would be approximately \$38,270 or an overall increase of \$15,170.

Recommendation

If the Town Council is in agreement, the following motions are recommended for approval:

- 1) Waiving of the Reading

“RESOLVED, that the reading into the minutes of the text of the ordinance entitled, ‘AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS’ EXEMPTION’ is hereby waived, the full text of the ordinance having been distributed to each member of the Council and copies being made available to those persons attending this meeting; and that the full text of the ordinance be recorded with the minutes of this meeting.”

- 2) Introduce an Ordinance

“MOVE to introduce an ordinance entitled, ‘AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS’ EXEMPTION.”

3) Set a Public Hearing

“RESOLVED, that a Public Hearing be set for Monday, June 17, 2024 at 7:20 p.m. (prevailing time) in the Council Chambers of the Windsor Town Hall, to hear an ordinance entitled, ‘AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS’ EXEMPTION.”

And

“FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is authorized and directed to post and publish notice of said Public Hearing.”

Attachments

Proposed amended ordinance

Red-lined version of current ordinance

Ordinance Amending Veterans' Exemption

**CHAPTER 5
ARTICLE XIV**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS'
EXEMPTION.**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WINDSOR:

Chapter 5, Article XIV, of the *Windsor Code* is amended as follows:

Section 1. Article is amended to read as follows:

The Town of Windsor adopts the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes sections 12-81(21)(C) and 12-81f to provide a total or an additional property tax exemption for veterans or spouses eligible under *Connecticut General Statutes* section 12-81. Such exemption per 12-81(21)(C) shall take effect upon qualification as determined by the Assessor and shall terminate at such time as the veteran ceases to make such house his or her principal residence or ceases to maintain an ownership interest therein.

For the October 1, 2023 Grand List and all subsequent Grand Lists thereafter, a local tax exemption shall be provided by the town in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes section 12-81f with the following income and exemption guidelines:

Qualifying Income	Marital Status	Local Veteran Exemption Amount
\$0 - \$43,800	Single	20,000
\$0 - \$53,400	Married	20,000

The qualifying income levels described above shall be set forth therein or equal to the qualifying income for the Additional Veterans' exemption as published annually by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy & Management, whichever is greater.

Section 2. Savings Clause. The enactment of this Ordinance shall not operate as an abatement of any action or proceeding previously taken, now pending, or taken prior to the effective date of this Ordinance. All said actions and proceedings are hereby ratified to be continued.

Section 3. Severability. All provisions of the *Town Code* in conflict herewith are hereby repealed and that if for any reason, any word, clause, paragraph, or section of this Ordinance shall be held to make the same unconstitutional, this Ordinance shall not hereby be invalidated and the remainder of the Ordinance shall continue in effect. Any provision herein which is in conflict with the *Connecticut General Statutes* is hereby repealed, it being understood that said statute shall take precedence over this Ordinance.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become effective ten (10) days after publication in a newspaper having a circulation in Windsor.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Town Attorney

ATTEST:

Town Clerk

Distributed to Town Council

Public Hearing Advertised

Public Hearing

Adopted

Advertised

Effective Date

Red-Lined Version

Veterans' Exemption
ordinance

RED-LINED VERSION

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE XIV, VETERANS' EXEMPTION.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WINDSOR:

The Town of Windsor adopts the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes sections 12-81(21)(C) and 12-81f to provide a total or an additional property tax exemption for veterans or spouses eligible under Connecticut General Statutes section 12-81. Such exemption per 12-81(21)(C) shall take effect upon qualification as determined by the Assessor and shall terminate at such time as the veteran ceases to make such house his or her principal residence or ceases to maintain an ownership interest therein.

For the October 1, ~~2022~~ 2023 Grand List and all subsequent Grand Lists thereafter, a local tax exemption shall be provided by the town in accordance with [Connecticut General Statutes section 12-81f](#) with the following income and exemption guidelines:

Qualifying Income	Marital Status	Local Veteran Exemption Amount
\$0 - \$38,100 <u>\$43,800</u>	Single	\$11,000 <u>\$20,000</u>
\$0 - \$46,400 <u>\$53,400</u>	Married	\$11,000 <u>\$20,000</u>

The qualifying income levels described above shall be set forth therein or equal to the qualifying income for the Additional Veterans' exemption as published annually by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy & Management, whichever is greater.



Town Council
Resignations/Appointments/Reappointments
June 3, 2024

Resignations

None

Appointments/Reappointments (to be acted upon at tonight's meeting)

None

Names submitted for consideration of appointment

A. One Republican Member

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

Four Year Term to expire March 31, 2028 or until a successor is appointed

(Carol Elkins - reappointment)

“MOVE to reappoint Carol Elkins as a Republican member to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission for a four year term to expire March 31, 2028 or until a successor is appointed.”

B. One Democratic Member

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

Four Year Unexpired Term to expire March 31, 2028 or until a successor is appointed

(Adam Schibley – resigned)

“MOVE to appoint Noel Osowiecki as a Democratic member to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission for a four year unexpired term to expire March 31, 2028 or until a successor is appointed.”

Names submitted for consideration of appointment

C. One *Republican Alternate* Member

Human Relations Commission

Three Year Unexpired Term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed

(Janice Fortunato – moved out of town)

“MOVE to appoint Sandra Result as a Republican Alternate member to the Human Relations Commission for a three year term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed.”

D. One *Democratic* Member

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

Four Year Term to expire March 31, 2028 or until a successor is appointed

(Keegan Elder - reappointment)

“MOVE to reappoint Keegan Elder as a Democratic member to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission for a four year term to expire March 31, 2028 or until a successor is appointed.”

E. One *Republican Alternate* Member

Public Building Commission

Three Year Term to expire November 30, 2026 or until a successor is appointed

(George Roebelen – resigned)

“MOVE to appoint Mark Purdue as a Republican member to the Public Building Commission for a three year term to expire November 30, 2026 or until a successor is appointed.”

F. One *Republican* Member

Town Planning and Zoning Commission

Five Year Unexpired Term to expire November 14, 2025 or until a successor is appointed

(Eric Kuintzle)

“MOVE to appoint Dominic DeCarlo as a Republican member to the Town Planning & Zoning Commission for a five year unexpired term to expire November 14, 2025 or until a successor is appointed.”

G. One *Republican* Member

Wilson/Deerfield Advisory Committee

Three Year Term to expire April 30, 2026 or until a successor is appointed

(Charles Jackson - reappointment)

“MOVE to appoint Victoria Virgo-Christie as a Republican member to the Wilson/Deerfield Advisory Committee for a three year term to expire April 30, 2026 or until a successor is appointed.”

Names submitted for consideration of appointment

- H. One Unaffiliated Alternate Member
Town Planning & Zoning Commission
Two Year Term to expire November 11, 2025 or until a successor is appointed
(Christian Rivas Plata – resigned)

“MOVE to appoint Sophia Tetteh as a Republican Alternate member to the Town Planning & Zoning Commission for a two year term to expire November 11, 2025 or until a successor is appointed.”

- I. One Republican Member
Wilson/Deerfield Advisory Committee
Three Year Term to expire April 30, 2026 or until a successor is appointed
(Charles Jackson - reappointment)

“MOVE to reappoint Charles Jackson as a Republican member to the Wilson/Deerfield Advisory Committee for a three year term to expire April 30, 2026 or until a successor is appointed.”

- J. One Democratic Member (Landlord)
Fair Rent Commission
Three Year Term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed
(Dawn Zukowski - reappointment)

“MOVE to reappoint Dawn Zukowski as a Democratic member (landlord) to the Fair Rent Commission for a three year term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed.”

- K. One Unaffiliated Member
Human Relations Commission
Three Year Term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed
(Castella Copeland - reappointment)

“MOVE to reappoint Castella Copeland as an Unaffiliated member to the Human Relations Commission for a three year term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed.”

- L. One Democratic Member
Human Relations Commission
Three Year Term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed
(Monika Nugent - reappointment)

“MOVE to reappoint Monika Nugent as a Democratic member to the Human Relations Commission for a three year term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed.”

Names submitted for consideration of appointment

M. One *Republican* Member

Human Relations Commission

Three Year Term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed

(Lisette LaTorre - reappointment)

“MOVE to reappoint Lisette LaTorre-Muszynski as a Republican member to the Human Relations Commission for a three year term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed.”

N. One *Democratic Alternate* Member

Human Relations Commission

Three Year Term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed

(Jody Denno - reappointment)

“MOVE to reappoint Jody Denno as a Democratic Alternate member to the Human Relations Commission for a three year term to expire March 31, 2027 or until a successor is appointed.”

O. One *Independent* Member

Library Advisory Board

Three Year Term to expire April 30, 2027 or until a successor is appointed

(Carol Sama - reappointment)

“MOVE to reappoint Carol Sama as an Unaffiliated member to the Library Advisory Board for a three year term to expire April 30, 2027 or until a successor is appointed.”

P. One *Republican* Member

Library Advisory Board

Three Year Term to expire April 30, 2027 or until a successor is appointed

(Denise Panos - reappointment)

“MOVE to reappoint Denise Panos as a Republican member to the Library Advisory Board for a three year term to expire April 30, 2027 or until a successor is appointed.”

Q. One *Democratic* Member

Wilson/Deerfield Advisory Committee

Three Year Term to expire April 30, 2026 or until a successor is appointed

(Alvin Bingham - reappointment)

“MOVE to reappoint Alvin Bingham as a Democratic member to the Wilson/Deerfield Advisory Committee for a three year term to expire April 30, 2026 or until a successor is appointed.”



TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING – VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON
April 23, 2024
Special Town Council Meeting
Council Chambers

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Klase called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Nuchette Black-Burke (arrived at 7:13 p.m.), Deputy Mayor Darleen Klase, Councilor Mary Armstrong, Councilor Ronald Eleveld, Councilor Kristin Gluck Hoffman (arrived at 8:15), Councilor Ojala Naeem, Councilor William Pelkey, Councilor Leroy Smith, and Councilor Walker

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

Neil Sachdev, 960 Kennedy Road, spoke on behalf of the Windsor Art's Center and thanked the Council for their support of the organization and asked the Council to consider giving any unencumbered funds, like excess ARPA funds, to the Art's Center. He invited the Council to their upcoming fundraiser on June 8th.

Leonard Lockhart, 57 Columbia Road, was present as a taxpayer and parent and stated that he did not support any cuts to the Board of Education or the town's budget. He said we should give more support to the town, like to the public works and to the education system. He questioned if there was an alternative way to tax senior citizens who are on a fixed income and have paid their dues to the town for 20, 30 or 40 years. He said he hoped there was a way to take care of everyone.

George Slate, 74 Ethan Drive, congratulated the staff on the budget in brief, which gave a clear picture. He questioned the increase for the Great Pond Improvement District and asked the Council to take a look into that. He said he researched state statues and read from Section 7-567, *Additional property tax to pay current year's expenses*. He questioned whether the budget process was the end of all this and was not sure if that is what they should look at two months from now.

Kay Permenter, 30 Wilton Road, shared that they received a tax assessment that their taxes are going up 63% and asked if this is something that has come up suddenly or has this been in the works and asked why such a big increase is occurring.

Jim McLoughlin, 168 Windbrook Drive, said he came to town hall to appeal the tax assessment. He said he reviewed the records and there was a mistake on the number of bathrooms that are in his home and an adjustment was made. He stated that the value of

his home went up about \$78,000. He shared that the highest tax increase he ever had was 6% from 2012-2013 and this year his increase is 36%. He stated that he would struggle with the increase without some adjustments being made by the Council and urged the Council to help.

Dr. Linda Alexander, 155 Fieldstone Drive, was present on behalf of those who could not attend the meeting. She shared tax increases from residents that ranged from \$1,300-\$2,300 and they did not know how they would be able to afford the increase.

Jennifer Delskey, 16 Penncross Drive, and John Scanlon were present as Co-presidents of the Windsor Education Association (WEA) and have taught in Windsor for 20+ years. They asked the Council to reject proposed cuts to the Board of Education (BOE) and to support a budget that supports our kids. She said they are already operating with less than our town residents deserve and that schools are already severely challenged with unmet needs and problems with staffing shortages.

Tracey Zotter, 28 Spring Street, said that she is a lifelong resident of Windsor and shared that her parents are still Windsor residents, as well as with her nine-year old daughter. She stated that where she lives her taxes only went up \$180 based on the increase from the Board of Education and the town budget. She stated that she could not stress enough that the bulk of the tax increase is from the assessment. She reported that they are struggling in their schools and that they cannot afford to lose critical resources. She said \$1.5M cut from the staff would be devastating. She asked the Council that if they are looking to cut the budget to send it to the town for a vote and asked the Council to give the residents the best opportunity to provide for our children.

3) PRELIMINARY DELIBERATIONS

Town Manager Souza provided an overview and stated that the proposed budget before the Council for consideration included the State mandated property re-evaluation and that significant appreciation of home values in the past several years is driving the majority of the impact for the budget. He said on average residential properties increased 51% over the last five years, since 2018. What has also occurred is that office buildings values have decreased approximately \$100M in assessed value due to the new or evolving remote work model. Motor vehicle values also decreased by approximately 6% or \$19M in assessed values. He explained that there has been a shift in the proportions of the overall Grand List and that several years ago when they did a re-evaluation property values went in the opposite direction, where commercial and industrial properties maintained or increased their overall share of the Grand List. He said currently, the residential portion of the Grand List is 52% versus one year ago when it was 43%. He explained that it has created a dynamic that all homeowners/property owners in Windsor are experiencing, which is a shift from commercial to residential in terms of the overall tax burden.

Town Manager Souza continued that on the expenditure side, the Board of Education budget proposed an increase of \$5.1M or 6.4% and the general government operating

budget increased \$1.3M or 2.26% for a combined proposal increase of \$6.5M or 4.6%. Taking into account the property re-evaluation, the proposed budget resets the tax rate to 28.26 mills, which is down from 33.6 mills that we had this year. Unfortunately, re-evaluation changes the assessed evaluation of all properties and there is still a significant increase. He said the overall average potential tax increase would be 27%. On the expenditure side, changes in non-tax revenues is approximately 3.2% and the rest of the percentage increase is related to the re-evaluation. He noted that each property is unique in how it has changed in its assessment, so re-evaluation will be unique. The tax rate for vehicles was decreased by approximately 13%, if the proposed budget were to be adopted at 28.26 mills.

Town Manager Souza said at this junction, the Council can begin discussing potential adjustments to the proposed budgets and consider phase in of property re-evaluation. He said the Council has the ability to adopt a multi-year phase in, which simply prorates out the re-evaluation portion of the assessed value increase. He brought the Council's attention to the calendar and reminded them that the budget needs to be adopted tomorrow evening, as well as setting a budget referendum date, which has traditionally been the second Tuesday in May. He said that he and staff are here and happy to answer any questions they might have and look to them for guidance to help prepare for tomorrow evening's meeting.

Deputy Mayor Klase thanked Town Manager Souza and asked the Council if anyone had any questions.

Councilor Naeem thanked everyone who came to the meeting to share their concerns. She said this is an unprecedented time here in Windsor and across the State, where a lot of difficult decisions and challenges are being faced on how do we balance making sure that we are not going backwards, maintaining services, quality of life and the needs that are here for our children while also making sure that our residents can continue to afford to live in Windsor. She said the Council has spent a lot of time together and have sent many questions to the Town Manager and his staff to really work together to understand what our options are. She shared that they have worked out a couple of different options and that she believed there would be some level of cuts that would be made but she was unsure of where they would land. She also believed they would need to bring forward a phase in solution so that we are trying our best to take the impact of the re-evaluation, which is the most significant part. She also hoped they would be discussing the use of opening cash. She said the town has worked hard to bring themselves up to a strong financial standing and that we have a wonderful bond rating and significant opening cash available to us to use for expenses, either as things come up or to apply towards the budget to help mitigate the tax rate, so our residents are paying less in taxes. She said, however, whatever they do decide to use for opening cash, they will need to make sure they have ways to fill that next year, so they are not passing that gap onto our residents. She took a moment to thank the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, the finance team and the entire staff.

Deputy Mayor Klase told the Council that Mayor Black-Burke was listening in on the meeting via Zoom and believed she was on her way and would be there soon. She also gave thanks to the Councilors who were also on the Finance Committee and she acknowledged Councilors Naeem, Smith and Eleveld.

Councilor Eleveld thanked Councilor Naeem for the items that she outlined and said as others have said, this is an unprecedented year and that this is happening all over the State for those who have done re-evaluations. He said on average the Councilors are looking at about a 45% property value increase and a 16-22% tax increase and said they are getting hit just as much as others. He also reminded residents that the Council does not receive any compensation for their work on the Council. He said the bottom line is that we have to absorb the increase in costs of higher taxes along with inflation that has hit our groceries, gas, electricity and the list goes on. Single moms and dads and seniors, he thought would be hit the hardest. He stated that when the Board of Education was before the Council last year, they commented that the ESSER funds were going to run out and they knew that and they anticipated that it would be a difficult year with the re-evaluation. He said the Board of Education requested a 6.4% increase and he thought if they had come in requesting 50% of that then they would be having a less difficult conversation. He said he and Councilor Naeem had multiple conversations on what may or may not be doable. He said their side has agreed that a two-year phase in might work and that the reality is that 2/3rd would hit the taxpayers in the first year. He said the other issue has to do with the rainy day fund and their position is that they are okay with using that fund but explained that the problem with using it is they are essentially using their savings account. He said they suggest if they do use the fund that they do it based upon the interest earned on the money that we have in the bank, which is approximately \$3.3M. He said they would like to use that as a guide for any future use of rainy day funds and that the objective is to wean themselves off of using those funds to balance the budget. He wanted to clarify that they are not looking to cut the Board of Education budget as they cannot do that legally but it is a reduction in what they are asking for. He said the Town Manager knew that it was going to be a difficult year and that he came in with a 2.35% increase and that there will be cuts proposed in that area too. He said he understood that parents would like to have a lot of money for their kids but what happens when the grandparents cannot afford to live in Windsor anymore.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked the Council if anyone had any questions for town staff or Town Manager Souza.

Councilor Walker said he had a reminder from the last meeting that they had and there was one area that was unfunded and he asked if it was appropriate for him to ask for a motion for funding for that one entity, the Windsor Fife and Drum Corps. He said they are asking for \$10,000 to purchase insurance so they can survive and help our kids. Town Manger Souza said that he thought that motion would be appropriate for tomorrow evening's meeting in final actions relative to the general government's section of the budget. He said he did not think there would be any motions made this evening but the Council would have discussions and provide guidance to prepare for tomorrow's meeting.

Councilor Eleveld asked if Councilor Walker was looking for those funds to be dispersed in the next 60 days or after July 1. Councilor Walker said no, not after July 1st and that there is an immediacy to the ask.

Deputy Mayor Klase shared concerns that this should have its own agenda item, since it is out of this year's budget. She said the published agenda for this evening's meeting said preliminary deliberations and public comment. The Council agreed that it would have to wait to the next regular Council meeting to be discussed.

Councilor Walker asked if the answer is to wait until tomorrow or the next Council meeting. Councilor Pelkey said the next Council meeting if you want action and Councilor Eleveld clarified that it would have to be the next regular meeting.

Deputy Mayor Klase restated and said that if funds are being requested for this fiscal year then Councilor Walker would bring his request to the next regular Council meeting and if he would like to make his request for funds for FY 25 then he could bring his request to tomorrow's meeting. Councilor Walker said that he would bring it up tomorrow night.

Mayor Black-Burke joined the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Councilor Smith said they are doing everything possible to address the potential financial impact the budget may cause. He said that he is not scared to use the rainy day fund because that is what it is for.

Mayor Black-Burke apologized for being late but she had a work commitment that could not be moved.

Councilor Armstrong said that she knows there are concerns with cuts and increases and said there should be an attempt not to cut town services.

Councilor Walker said there is no problem with using the rainy day fund for the different areas of the budget and that Councilor Naeem mentioned the town's AAA bond rating and he said we need to maintain that. He said his area of concern is the Board of Education and that every year the budget increases and does not see anything getting cut in their budget. He said the town side is making sacrifices and thought the sacrifices need to be spread around. He shared concerns for seniors who are on fixed incomes.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked Town Manager Souza if he could explain the use of opening cash (reserves and rainy day is all the same) and what the impact of using it is and what is needed to maintain the bond rating. Town Manager Souza said it is called the reserve fund or unassigned fund balance. He said traditionally the Council, except for the last 2-3 fiscal years, has used on an annual basis part of that fund balance to mitigate the tax impact to the property owners. He said sometimes they refer to that as opening cash, which is effectively taking money from our reserve fund and simply putting it into the operating budget as a revenue, which reduces the mill rate. He said that it helps to provide

that mitigation of the tax increase and also preserve service levels. He said town staff cannot use the unassigned fund balance without authorization from the town Council and that Council has been asked over the years to use those funds to be able to cash finance capital projects, which reduces our long-term debt liability. He said currently the bond reporting agencies, which assigns a rating just like our own credit score, are reporting that municipalities should have 15-20% of their annual operating budget set aside in a reserve or unassigned fund balance. He reported that the town does have more than 20%, as the Council knows, and town Councils for a number of years now have known that a re-evaluation was coming and there was a possibility of using judiciously over a multi-year period some of those reserve funds. He said he mentioned multi-year period because if you use an 'X' amount of dollars in year number one then the following year you need to recover those dollars in some way. He said he thought we were in the position that the Town Council can use some of that General Fund unassigned fund balance but urged the Council to look at this from a three to five year period in how we use that cash because we have additional capital projects. He said our capital projects or what they call our CIP projects use upwards of \$700,000 each year in 'pay as you go' capital projects that reduces our overall bonding debt service liability.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked what it would look like if we did a two year phase-in and used opening cash over five years. Town Manager Souza said that he was going to use arbitrary numbers to explain and that these were not his recommendations. He said if the town were to use \$3M in opening cash in FY 25, then in FY 26 they would want to step down the reliance on that cash, so that in five years you might be down to \$1M because we do not know what the future might bring to us in terms of excess funds in any given year or any unexpected events. He remembered the time with Storm Alfred where they needed over \$2M for the cleanup after the storm and they did not get reimbursed from FEMA for a number of months, so they needed to have the ability to meet unexpected expenditures and to pay for appropriate capital projects.

Deputy Mayor Klase said that it is her understanding that when they phase in that there are commercial properties that are going to receive their tax revaluation at a lower assessment in year one and asked if that was correct. Town Manager Souza replied that with any phase in, by state law, all revaluation increases get phased in, so that is for both residential and commercial. He said any decrease does not get phased in, so we had significant decreases in our office properties in town and so those folks will receive that drop in recessed value at 100% and all the other properties that saw increases would see it spread out over whatever timeframe the Council decides on.

Councilor Pelkey asked what the projected growth would be over the next few years, excluding different tax abatement properties and other things, as well as the Grand List growth for major projects that we feel likely will happen. Town Manager Souza stated that at this point in time, we only have one fixed assessment or tax abatement that is in place and that is for the Amazon facility on Kennedy Road and he believed that would end at the end of FY 25. He said that is approximately a \$45-\$50M increase in assessed value for FY 26. He said right now there other projects that are under construction that will have

some increase in the Grand List in October 2024 and when they do their modeling they will be looking at about ½ a percent of economic growth. He noted that personal property, which is a fairly large share of our overall Grand List depreciates, so those businesses, non-manufacturing, that have personal property, their properties depreciate at a set rate and we should also take that into consideration. He said thankfully many of our companies have reinvested but that is usually on a cyclical basis. He said historically we see two or three years of growth and then we see a dip for a year or two.

Councilor Smith asked if there were cuts to the budget would that automatically make cuts to the TIF districts. Town Manager Souza replied that the Town of Windsor receives all of the revenues that are paid from taxes within that district and the town, per their agreement, rebates back 50% of those revenues to the Great Pond Improvement District, which is used to pay for the public infrastructure, like roadways, water and public sewer systems. He said it does not pay for any improvements on private property. He did not believe there was any ability to reduce those payments because of their agreement that was put in place in 2011 or 2012. He said if the Council chose to set a mill rate that was less than 28.26, then that transfer becomes less because the property owners within that district will have paid less taxes. He said this is a little different than the town center tax increment financing (TIF) district, which the town will begin to receive revenue from this year. He said currently we do not have any obligations that are in place for this current fiscal year, so the Town Council has the ability to use the revenue from the town center TIF, as long as it meets the TIF policy for the town center. The proposal for the FY 25 budget, staff has taken all but \$20,000 that is being generated from the town center TIF and they have turned that all back to the general fund operating budget. He said the \$20,000 will be used to support the First Town Downtown effort. He clarified that this is not additional money that they are receiving but that the money is now coming out of the town center TIF district instead of the General Fund.

Councilor Armstrong asked what would happen if our rainy day fund is depleted. Town Manager Souza replied that we would be in trouble and noted that the Town Council has an adopted fund policy, which states that they will have 15-20% of our annual operating budget set aside in that General Fund unassigned fund balance. He said by policy, if we go below the 15%, the Council policy is to replenish that fund so it at least meets that floor of 15%. The credit rating agencies will not reduce our credit rating immediately and would give us a warning as we approach the 15% and may put us on a credit watch. He said if the fund balance does not get restored between 15% and 20%, then there is a potential for the credit agencies to drop that bond rating but prior to that there may be some investors that may not be as interested in buying our bonds and we may not have as many buyers interested in our bonds, which could possibly cause us to pay higher interest rates. He said it is multi-faceted.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman joined the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Councilor Armstrong asked what percentage from the rainy day fund would Mr. Souza recommend allocating to this budget. Town Manager Souza replied that it was a tough question to answer and that his preferred professional recommendation would be that we

are in the \$2.5-\$3M range and recognized that this is an unusual timeframe. He said it could be higher than that range but that it should be looked at in its totality and to look at what other impacts to reduce the expenditure levels are being made. He reminded the Council that this budget has about \$2.5M worth of 'pay as you go' capital projects and if that gets notably reduced those are things that still need to get done. As an example, he said we may be able to go one paving season without doing quite as many roads and that we normally only pave 6 miles of our 160 miles of roadway. He said there other items to look at that as one-time projects but that these are expenses we need to make to reinvest in the overall town infrastructure.

Councilor Eleveld asked if his understanding was correct about the credit enhancement agreement for Founder's Square which is within the TIF district but that it is not part of the TIF district. Town Manager Souza said that they have an agreement with the developer that we will rebate a portion of those taxes directly to him after he pays those to support that project but it is similar in some respects to the agreement that they have with the Great Pond Village. He added that the agreement has a set time.

Councilor Eleveld said that Town Manager Souza mentioned 160 miles of town roads and asked if that was all town roads that did not include state roads. Town Manager Souza said that is correct, it is all town roads.

Councilor Eleveld asked what the impact would be on the town if there was no increase given to the budget. Town Manager Souza asked if he was referring to the whole budget or just the general government side. Councilor Eleveld said just the general government side zeroing out. Town Manager Souza said that would be a reduction of \$1.3M (2.26%) and that he would look to preserve our staff levels to the extent possible and would look to reduce the pay as you go capital funding and would ask that the Town Council would replace that with the appropriate use of our cash reserves. He said they would be looking at things such as our annual contribution to other post-employment benefits (OPEB). He said past Councils have worked hard to keep that but this is a situation where we need to look at how we would address maintaining our services and mitigating taxes. He said it would potentially include elimination of some full-time and part-time positions to be able to achieve that.

Councilor Eleveld said would it include letting someone go or not hiring someone. Town Manager Souza said that it would depend on the department and said that we do have a few full-time vacancies at this point.

Councilor Eleveld said that they had received some communication from the Board of Education outlining what a reduction would look like on their side.

Councilor Naeem wanted to follow up on that discussion and said it would be helpful to see what those cuts would look like to get to zero for tomorrow night's deliberation, so that they could give some direction.

Councilor Eleveld said he would like Town Manager Souza to avoid any disruptions to service and reductions in headcounts, if possible. Town Manager Souza said that he understood.

Deputy Mayor Klase wanted to outline that the Board of Education did provide the Council with some examples of reductions and she reviewed them. A 1% decrease would include reductions in diesel fuel, major maintenance, physical plant services and possibly seven FTEs. A 2% decrease would include reductions in the above items and 11.5 FTEs and a 3% decrease would result in the above listed and 11.5 more FTEs for a possible total reduction of 37 FTEs.

Mayor Black-Burke shared that the outline Deputy Mayor Klase gave was provided to the full Council from the Board of Education.

Councilor Eleveld said that some of their reductions included items like maintenance, which we could assist in covering through 'pay as you go' basis if it is appropriate.

Mayor Black-Burke asked if he was referring to some of their major maintenance and he said yes.

Councilor Eleveld said that we all realize that this is a difficult time but what one of the problems that we have to realize with the Board of Education is that if you give them \$1M this year, then you are locked in to give them another million dollars next year and if the Council does a two-year phase in, then it is two years of paying.

Councilor Armstrong asked if we were talking about not filling positions that were vacant and possible layoffs during this budget. Town Manager Souza replied that to achieve a \$1.3M reduction to the general government budget, it would depend on how the Council would approach it. If more focus is put on reductions in capital spending and contribution to OPEB then it reduces the need to have vacant positions unfunded or potential layoffs. He added that some of the 'pay as you go' projects can be funded with the reserve fund. He said if you take \$500,000 away from paving, three years from now that money will probably be \$600,000 with inflation and the degradation of our road system. He said they would have to look at how we get that money back incrementally into the operating budget and said that it is the same challenge that the Superintendent has.

Councilor Armstrong asked if this would in any way affect the health insurance or benefits. Town Manager Souza replied that he did not believe so at this time.

Councilor Naeem spoke to Town Manager Souza and requested that the Council see what a two year phase-in would look like.

Mayor Black-Burke spoke to Town Manager Souza and asked if he could also provide what that might look like with a particular house value amount. Her biggest question they are facing right now is, what is the end impact on all citizens. She thought it would be very important to start to share what that looks like.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked Town Manager Souza to talk about doing a two billing cycle for paying taxes. Town Manager Souza said the most significant impact, if we went to a two payment system for real estate taxes only, would be a projected loss in interest income between \$675,000 and \$700,000. He said this would be assuming half of the taxes would be paid in July and half in January. He said that would reduce our \$3.3M in revenue that is built into the budget from those interest earnings by \$675,000 to \$700,000 using the interest that we are receiving today. He said to keep the mill rate where it is, they would either have to reduce expenditures by that dollar amount or find other revenues, i.e. increasing the tax rate.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked Town Manager Souza if the Montessori School and Stonybrook were the two properties that we collect rent from consistently. Town Manager Souza said the Montessori program at Milo Peck Center pays us a "rental fee", which is then used to go back to cover "landlord costs" of general maintenance of that property and then the Caring Connection pays a rental rate for their use of 330 Windsor Avenue Community Center and that again goes into a segregated maintenance account that pays overall utilities, as well as minor maintenance and repair for the entire building.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked Town Manager Souza if it was fair to say that it is not market rate rent. Town Manager Souza said correct. He said that they collected approximately \$150,000 between both buildings and that money goes back to maintaining those buildings. He said if those programs were not here, then we would have those costs.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman asked if the Windsor Arts Center pays rents. Town Manager Souza said they do and they cover a portion of the utilities based upon their total usage of the facility. He said they also have the train station, which are subleased to individual artists and those funds get segregated out to cover basic maintenance costs of those two buildings.

Councilor Naeem reviewed what the Council had talked about so far and said what they had not talked too deeply about was numbers on the opening cash side in terms of what they needed from the Town Manager. She said she knew that one mill with this Grand List is about \$4.4M and she would like to see what the impact is with the use of that \$4.4M in terms of that one mill equivalent. Town Manager Souza asked with what level of expenditure reduction. Councilor Naeem said to give them a minute and they would get back to that.

Councilor Naeem said she thought it would be helpful to see a \$4M and a \$3.5M usage of opening cash, just for comparison sake. She said they had not decided what dollar budget but in terms of how much opening cash to use she asked the Council if they were comfortable with that and if they would like to see more or less opening cash used.

Councilor Eleveld said that their side had discussed the idea of utilizing, as an objective criteria, the amount of interest we earned in the year and being able to use roughly that number, which is roughly \$3.3M. He said the other concern he had was that he did not think we want to lower the tax levy to a number less than it was last year. He said they

would have gone to a zero budgetary increase by using other methods to get it to zero and thought it would be more of a challenge to get out of that hole. He said if you do \$4.4M then next year they are looking at theoretically somewhere close to \$8M and the year after that possibly \$12M because you have to cover your hole plus a new hole.

Councilor Naeem asked what their proposal was for using opening cash. Councilor Eleveld said \$3.3M.

Councilor Naeem asked Town Manager Souza if they could see options with using \$4.4M, \$4M and \$3.3M of opening cash.

Councilor Pelkey asked to add what it would look like to use zero opening cash.

Councilor Eleveld suggested seeing the numbers for utilizing opening cash at \$4.4M, \$3.3M and zero would work and they can extrapolate further from there if they want to go lower or higher and the other Councilors agreed.

Councilor Smith wanted to make a clarification that no one on the Council is looking to deplete opening cash/rainy day fund. He said there seems to be a thought process that there is a direct correlation between reducing the reserves and the bond rating. He said there are many factors that go into determining a bond rating. He also spoke about the interest earned from tax payers. Town Manager Souza said that he was correct that the cash reserves is one component that goes into the credit rating and he was correct that we earn interest off the taxes that are paid up front. He said he wanted to be clear that if they went to two payments it is approximately \$675,000-\$700,000 in revenue that needs to be made up either by the mill rate going up or a further reduction in expenditures.

Councilor Pelkey said that he tries not to look at things in isolation and was curious going forward if we have an ability to do a revaluation sooner than five years. Town Manager Souza said yes, state law does allow for that.

Councilor Pelkey asked if there was any timeline that we would have to adhere to do another revaluation. Town Manager Souza said he did not believe so but that he would have to clarify and see how that works if we were in the middle of a phase-in.

Councilor Eleveld asked if Town Manager Souza could provide a \$1M, \$2M and \$3M reduction to the overall budget without saying where the money would come out of.

Mayor Black-Burke said the Finance Committee was interested in seeing a \$1M budget reduction to the budget.

Councilor Eleveld said his concern was that if they do \$4.4M, then they are going to be \$1M or \$2M below where we were last year in terms of tax levy, so we would be below the taxes that were collected last year.

Councilor Naeem said that is if we use \$4.4M in opening cash and Councilor Eleveld added and have some kind of reductions.

Councilor Naeem said she thought the only way that would happen is if our overall reductions go below \$6.4M.

Councilor Eleveld said if you take \$2M off and add \$4.4M in opening cash then they are at zero, relative to the increase.

Councilor Naeem said not below and Councilor Eleveld said his numbers are a little bit below by maybe a half a million dollars.

Councilor Naeem wanted to be sure Town Manager Souza was clear on what the Council's requests were for tomorrow evening's meeting.

The Council discussed if they were in agreement to include a two year phase-in.

Councilor Pelkey said that he would rather rip the band-aid off and just be done with it because if they do a two year, no matter what the numbers work out to be, it is roughly 2/3rds get paid this year and 1/3rd next year and he would rather pay it all knowing that immediately in a year that the tax bill is significantly crashing.

Council Eleveld said he had the numbers on a two year phase in with the methodology that Town Manager Souza discussed last year and it works out to be 2/3rds would be paid this year and 1/3rd paid the second year, assuming the current budget with no adjustments or opening cash.

Councilor Naeem said she thought that further conversation on that would get the Council into muddied water and that ultimately they needed to see the numbers from Town Manager Souza. She asked that all the scenarios be with a two year phase-in and she clarified what scenarios they were asking numbers for. She said \$4.4M, \$3.3M and zero opening cash.

Town Manager Souza clarified that is with a \$1M, \$2M and \$3M reduction in requested expenditures.

Councilor Pelkey added on a median property and Town Manager Souza responded with how about a \$322,000 fair market value house, which is the middle of the road.

Councilor Naeem asked the Council if there was one reduction number that they could take out so town staff would only have to provide two scenarios instead of three.

Mayor Black-Burke said \$1M and \$2M would be the two numbers she would like to see.

Councilor Eleveld said in the end that it is going to end up that their side would like to see a much larger reduction.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman said that they want to make it easier for staff to get it done in a timely fashion and for it to be accurate and not for them to be here all night.

Councilor Naeem said they could do the \$1M and the \$3M and they could do the math from there.

Town Manager Souza recommended doing a \$1M and a \$3M reduction in expenditures and they will build in the opening cash at those numbers.

Councilor Naeem restated what scenarios the Council was requesting.

Mayor Black-Burke thanked the spokespeople for their hard work and asked the Council if anyone had any other questions. She told the Council that they will need to be prepared to vote tomorrow.

Councilor Naeem asked if staff could share the number before the meeting so that Council could have time to prepare. Town Manager Souza said he would.

Councilor Pelkey spoke about the Board of Education budget and thought that \$1.3M should come off the top and ignore it and start negotiations from there because they knew the ESSER positions were temporary and funded with ARPA funds. He thought the reduction would alleviate the pain for everyone in town and that it is unfair to ask residents with no kids in the school system to bear that burden. He stated that our principals should guide us and not this unprecedented moment and hoped everyone would look at the bigger picture and look long-term.

Deputy Mayor Klase said that she believed in the commitment to education whether she uses those services or not and that it is a commitment to a society that we all want to live in. She called to the fact that the Board of Education's budget in years past has been very reasonable and that she understood that they absorbed as many ESSER positions as they could and that they are identifying positions that are still critical and still in need. She said it is a philosophical discussion.

Mayor Black-Burke said that she did agree that we live in a town where they do not use all of the services, like the senior center, pool, parks or the school. She said she did agree with Councilor Pelkey that they should be looking to the future and how they and Councils to come can ensure they are shoring up the education system and provide the best services in town. She said that she agreed with the Deputy Mayor Klase that the Board of Education has been prudent. She said it is her will as much as possible that they keep as much as is needed knowing that there are going to be cuts on both sides in the town and in the Board of Education. She shared that she has a nine-year old who was a kindergartener when Covid hit and shared concerns on how they were going to ensure that cohort of students are going to get the services they need and get them back up to where they are supposed to be because their educational process was interrupted. She encouraged everyone to be mindful and that they owe it to the folks in town to hear what



they are saying but also being sure to shore up for everyone so they feel like they are getting the best of Windsor, which includes their school system.

Councilor Armstrong said that she wanted residents to know that they are here and that they hear them.

Mayor Black-Burke thanked town staff that have been with the Council for the last few weeks through budget discussions.

4) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea D. Marcavitch
Recording Secretary

April 24, 2024

Special Town

Council meeting

Draft minutes



TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING – VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON
April 24, 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 Ojala Naeem, Councilor William Pelkey, Councilor Leroy Smith, and Councilor Walker

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Linda Alexander, 155 Fieldstone Drive, stated we can't have a town or community where no one can afford to live in. She will support a budget with no spending increases. She realizes that this does not mean that the taxpayers will receive a zero percent tax increase because we must cover the cost of revaluation, which for some people is quite considerable. She supports a two year phase-in. This is especially important for those with larger increases. She agrees that we should not raid the principle of the savings account to increase spending. However, we could use, not more than, the interest generated by the account. The Board of Education budget is the consequence of many years of spending additions and increases. Any addition to the \$80,000,000 is carried forward forever. If the Council votes for a smaller increase as a compromise, she doesn't believe people will vote for that on top of what they have to already pay for revaluation. In 2015, the budget was defeated four times. There are costs associated with voting multiple times. So, please let's get it right the first time.

Cora Lee Jones, 1171 Matianuck Avenue said she went through the revaluation process. The market value of her house is \$300,000, which is astronomical. Her house went up 70% more than any other house on the street. The town does not have control over revaluation. It is a mandatory and it happens every five years. But the town does have control over how much money is allocated to be spent by the town and the Board of Education. The Board of Education has control over their numbers and they submit them to the town and then the town does the government side of the budget. Tonight, this Council determines the total budget of the town. The taxpayers look to them to keep spending increases under control.

George Slate, 74 Ethan Drive, stated regarding the usage of opening cash, if Amazon, Windsor Federal Savings and the Bean benefit from something you've done tonight, you've gone too far. Those aren't the people that are saying they can't afford the increase. What you decide to do on the spending level, he is keeping it in the hands of the Council. For Windsor Federal, he will try to talk to the CEO and argue one point with him/her. Can you come up with a new product for micro HELOC, home equity lines of credit, because they don't have an application fee or annual fee. So for those in tough times, we can do this for the 1,000 or 600 people that need to be targeted. Don't go beyond that. You seem to be talking expansively, let's include everybody. There is only a small population that needs to be targeted. He was glad to hear from Linda Alexander that a 0% increase would be acceptable. He understands that, but the understanding is that revaluation is part of the pain of death and taxes. The collection level (if there are 600 people that really need relief and they can pay last year's level) if the shortfall in that is \$1,000,000 or \$600,000, whatever it takes, factor that into your collection rate that you're not going to get this year. Some things aren't globally necessary. Change your collection rate assumption.

Leonard Lockhart, 57 Columbia Road, stated he was talking as the Finance Chairman of the Board of Education. As you know, the Board of Education agreed to a 6.4% increase. There were differences and disagreements to get to that number. He said the town would like the Board of Education to improve the performance of their schools. Much of the ESSER funds went towards a lot of the Covid stuff. A lot of those funds went towards Tier 2 and Tier 3 support with interventionists. There was EL support there as well. We have been underfunded as a district but by them having those federal funds, they were able to bring those services and employees into the district to help at the K-3 growth spurt. Because if we don't resolve it by Grade 3, statistics show that they will struggle throughout the rest of their academic career. We made it very clear that they would like to keep all those things once the ESSER funds were done. Yes, the Board of Education was told that they have to get rid of that. As his position as a Board of Education member, he's responsible for advocating for the school system and advocating and fighting for the children. That's not to say the Town Council can't fight for the children. His point is that the Town Council is responsible for the appropriations but not the management of the school district. There are times that people think that the Town Council can tell the Board of Education what to do. So he wanted to make sure they cleared those lines up. This town has also benefited from them being an alliance district. Politically it's used as a double edged sword as we are one of the 36 worst districts in the state and that is not the case. This town has benefited from that financial head of protection from the state when other towns with the ability to pay were getting their funding from the state cut, the Board of Education's funding remained flat. That was consistent to this town. We have to make sure we put the full pieces of the puzzle on the table and that we understand exactly what we have and what we're trying to do. We have an achievement gap. We're trying to address it. We tried to address it with the ESSER funds. If we lose those ESSER funds, we will be struggling from K-3 and we'll have a hard time with this cohort of kids for the next two to three years where we'll be able to track through the rest of their academic career. History will show that this was a pivotable time in history when we had the opportunity to do the

right thing. As Finance Chair, he is advocating for the 6.4% increase. He knows it's a difficult ask of this town and for the Town Council, but he still has a responsibility to advocate for every single child in this district and work with everybody to get there. Mayor Black-Burke said that at the Town Council's meeting last night, the Council had asked that a few items be presented tonight. She asked the Town Manager to do that.

Town Manager Souza stated that the Council was provided with two items this evening as a follow up to last night's meeting. The first is potential adjustments to the town's side of the proposed FY 25 budget. It's broken into two parts. The first part is potential adjustments to the General Fund in the amount of \$1,000,000. The second component is potential reductions that total approximately \$328,000 which would equate to a zero percent change over the FY 24 budget. That's approximately a \$1.3 million adjustment to get down to the current year's level.

In that first \$1,000,000 bucket, there are items such as reducing \$85,000 of funding for street repaving, reducing contributions to the OPEB trust fund (\$448,000 in General Services and \$192,000 in Town Support for Education funding) which leaves an overall contribution of \$135,000 but a \$640,000 reduction from where we are in proposed FY 25 budget. Open space has a \$25,000 reduction in open space contributions to the Open Space Preservation fund which would bring it to an additional \$110,000 and approximately a \$65,000 balance. We generally have three vehicles in the General Fund. The proposed budget before you has already removed one of the three vehicles. Therefore, if the Town Council wants to make this adjustment, that would leave one vehicle in the General Fund and to achieve that there would need to be a \$60,000 reduction. Another capital 'pay as you go' component in the budget is our sidewalk replacement and repair category. The proposed budget has \$200,000 in it. One potential adjustment is to reduce that at a level of \$50,000. We have a vacant part-time administrative aide position in the Department of Public Works. That is a potential adjustment downward by \$43,000. Then there's a possible reduction to DPW materials, supplies and small equipment in the amount of \$12,000. This all totals the \$1,000,000 reduction.

If you want to go beyond that, you're getting into direct services and staffing. You'll see there everything from eliminating two full-time positions, several part-time positions, as well as potentially reducing programming such as those at the 330 Windsor Avenue Community Center on Sundays and reducing money that is in the Town Manager's office for sustainability initiatives and for materials and supplies related to anti-littering and Drive Wise programs. Those are possible reductions in response to the Council's request from last evening. A good number of those are recurring capital costs or related to our annual OPEB contributions. All of these programs and dollars provide programs and resources for our departments, but those recurring capital and OPEB expenses are approximately \$965,000. That relates to the conversation we had last night on how to best use our unassigned fund balance as well as what is the level of or the depth of the hole that can be created by reducing the operating budget this year knowing those are ongoing

expenses and how would the future Councils be able to incorporate building back those dollars back into the operating budget.

On the second sheet that was provided, we have set up a matrix or table format. There are three primary blocks of scenarios all based around a two year phase in. At the top of the page is the outline of the proposed budget with no phase in and no use of opening cash in either FY 25 or FY 26. It shows the tax change due to revaluation and the operating budget for a fair market home valued of \$322,000 as of the October 1, 2023 grand list. The first year would be a 27% tax increase. The mill rate would be at 28.26 mills. We did attempt to forecast out the FY 26 tax change. The projection is based on a FY 26 budget going up 4% from the Town Manager's proposed budget. Then we have a two year base scenario two year phase in, no use of opening cash, instead of a 27% tax increase that first year, that home would see 17.7% tax increase. That is simply due to the phase in of the revaluation.

Moving down to the next block, it is a two year phase in with various reductions. One is a \$1,000,000 reduction in expenditures. There are various scenarios regarding the use of opening cash or not using opening cash at those values you suggested last evening at a \$3.3 million and \$4.4 million scenario and stepping that down in \$1 million increments into FY 26. Depending on the amount of opening cash you use, you can have anywhere from a 12.5% tax increase for year number one up to 16.7% in that first year. As you go down the sheet, the next one is a \$2 million expenditure decrease and the last set of scenarios is a \$3 million expenditure decrease.

Councilor Naeem thanked everyone that got the information out to the Council in such a short time frame for this evening's meeting. Last night, we heard from a lot of the public and had discussions on the importance of trying our best this year, recognizing that it's a revaluation year, to maintain our services both on the government side and the Board of Education side. Also, to think about the impacts to those that might be in tight finances, knowing that the change of income is not the same as the change in tax increases. Tonight, we heard from a few people as well. Mr. Slate went over the things that we have at our disposal to mitigate impacts. What we are trying to do tonight is from a defensive perspective. What can we do again to lessen the impact on the residents and children both in terms of taxes to be paid and services to be kept to insure a bright future for everyone. Ms. Jones talked about the revaluation being out of the town's hands, which it is. As we review what the Town Manager has shared with us, both in terms of potential expenditure decreases as well as use of opening cash, two points from the democratic caucus side that we feel strongly about is we know cuts have to be made. Tonight we are looking to entertain somewhere in the range of \$1 - \$2 million overall in cuts between the town and the Board of Education side. On the use of open cash, the goal is to mitigate the expenditure increase as much as we can. If you had \$2 million in cuts, you have \$4.4 million left over to decrease our tax levy to where it was last year. Tonight, while they have discussions, they should start with the \$4.4 million and see where we go. As we evaluate that, she also recognizes that using \$4.4 million in this year slowly phasing off of that over

the next five or more years, means depleting our cash reserves to a place where we might no longer meet our obligations that we have set as a town of maintaining 15%-20% cash on hand. We want to be in that 15%-20% cash on hand range. As we think about our facilities, infrastructure and such down the road, it is critical that we maintain our bond rating and maintain a good exemplar how we operate fiscally as a town to insure that we have the opportunity to explore ideas like bringing on new facilities. We are looking at the \$1 - \$2 million cut overall for the town and Board of Education.

Councilor Walker said the amount of the Board of Education increase is a sticky point. Although there is a \$1 million cut, he believes it needs to be reduced even more. They want to preserve services for the core function of local government such as maintaining our roads and providing safety services including ambulance services and also educating our children. We can do all these core services without annual increases to the education budget. Our student population is decreasing but our education budget continues to increase. His colleagues on the Windsor Board of Education have the same issue with a more than \$5 million increase, so they voted no to the budget presented to the Council. Windsor is in great shape financially. We want to keep it that way. He is mindful that everybody is concerned about our bond rating, but we must cut expenses. While there are some cuts, we feel that is not enough. With revaluation we can delay the 'nice to have' items and arrive with a budget that does not burden our taxpayers or we can use reserve money and spend away. Windsor is no different than that of our neighboring towns where education budgets are facing scrutiny and many of those towns are cutting those education budgets. We should do what many families do in developing a sensible budget, which is to simply reduce spending. He is going to work with that tonight because Windsor families deserve a break from high taxes.

Councilor Eleveld said that on the Republican side they are open to using opening cash but to make it as low as possible because whatever number you use for conversation at \$4 million, you are slamming right into the next revaluation where you are going to have a problem. Now you'd have a left over hole, in a manner of speaking, you have to fill. That will create a greater problem. So the less you use opening cash, the better we are in respect to getting ourselves out of it. If we use a number of \$500,000 per year, which is low and was tried quite a while ago, you could do \$2-\$2.5 million, then you're looking at five years and you're right back to your next revaluation. Yes, we did have a great cash value at that time and it may have lowered real estate prices but unfortunately, he doesn't know what the future holds. However, we need to be cognizant. We'd be better off at a suggested \$3.3 million, which is the interest earned limit but the less we do the better it is. Being closer to \$2.5 million would be a better mark. We also have to deal with a reduction in the budget. Town Manager Souza did a good job of getting the numbers in tight and he can appreciate that the Board of Education has its issues. It's as he said in the past, that revaluation was going to be quite a challenge for our residents and not everyone makes \$250,000 per year so it doesn't matter. Most of our residents make \$75,000 a year. We have to think about them as well.

Mayor Black-Burke said that while we are looking at revaluation and trying to preserve services, it's also important to understand that education is also a service in our town. So when we are talking about services, we are speaking of all the services in town. As far as the opening cash, she had shared the other day that about \$3.5 million is the number she has in her mind, but with all the new information, she's comfortable at a solid \$3 million with everything that has been presented. Again, as we look down the road, to Councilor Eleveld's point, we have to make sure that we aren't walking into a revaluation wall. Education is also a service that we need to support as a town. Many people move here for the Educational services that are offered in our town.

Councilor Smith said they had the conversation on opening cash last night and are doing it again tonight. He understands some of the math regarding that, but we have a serious math problem which is the potential increases to revaluation and the budget which will be a burden to everyone. Therefore, the rainy day fund is just what it means. We have a rainy season right now and it's his impression that this is the time to use some of the opening cash to help the burden that we are potentially facing. Therefore, he would be okay with the use of \$4 million in opening cash. Because we have to help alleviate a burden and using opening cash is how we can do that. It's a rainy decade at this time. He is fine with \$4 million.

Deputy Mayor Klase said she was at the \$4 million a week ago but is now at a \$3 million figure for use of opening cash. She thinks these reductions are really difficult. She feels the Board of Education had their own rainfall happen. We had the pandemic and received a lot of funding to support what was happening. However, post pandemic has really had some after effects for our kids where they need extra support to get through. She believes we need to reduce the Board of Education budget, but we don't need to reduce it more than \$1 million. The kids still have their issues. She would like the town to think about the seniors and see what they can do. Maybe they can be the only ones that receive the two payment installments?

Councilor Eleveld stated he asked Town Manager Souza that question if it was possible to do something like that. Town Manager Souza said that is correct and that we are not aware of being able to provide any separation like that. Councilor Eleveld added that if you aren't paying that you have to pay 1.5% interest per month. He believes that is state law.

Deputy Mayor Klase said the mechanism we can provide for them is to think about the tax relief that we can provide them. She appreciates the hard work that has gone into this budget both on the Board of Education and town side. The departments have done an amazing job in a really difficult time. She's looking for a budget that supports all the citizens.

Councilor Naeem said from what she understands it's \$1 million from the town side and the Board of Education that needs to be reduced. She wants to make sure that all the

questions for the Town Manager are covered and asked Mayor Black-Burke if she would like to make a motion.

Mayor Black-Burke said before going into motions, she'd like to make sure that everybody has said what they'd like to say.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked Town Manager Souza if we were going to receive in this fiscal year, like the Board of Education is, some cash from the state. She believes that money is due to come back to the town. If that happened is there a way to allocate that money to add to the tax relief funding for the seniors? So it would be in FY 24 received but expended or targeted for FY 25. Are there any other pockets that we could do that with? Is there any extra funding available for FY 24? Mayor Black-Burke interjected and asked Deputy Mayor Klase to restate her question, which she did. Town Manager Souza stated the budget is expected to have a combination of additional revenues for FY 24 as outlined in the budget. It does expect to have a year end positive balance with revenues greater than what was originally budgeted as well as less expenditures on the town's side than was budgeted primarily due to a vacancy and salary savings. Town Manager Souza said the question is how does the Council provide an additional benefit to low/moderate income seniors and those that are disabled under that existing program. His thought is that it would have to be done as part of this evening's adoption of motions. There is a motion that sets the level of dollars that are set aside for that. What that does do is it, depending on the dollar amount, gets adjusted upwards which would have an impact on the mill rate. It is possible. There's another step that could be completed where the Council would need to adjust, at the Council meeting in May, the dollar benefit level. There are two components, you can increase the income ranges. We are presently at the upper limit of \$60,000 or somewhere thereabouts. The Council could make that catchment bigger. Or the Council can keep the income limits where they are and increase the dollar benefits. He noted that it would basically have to be done early in May in terms of those adjustments so that when we send out tax bills, with the short time frame, that we are able to send out the tax bills in time. He suggested that the Council take the action of changing the dollar amount versus changing the limitations at this time so the bills could be sent out in time. Last year there was an adjustment that needed to be made as there was a substantial increase both to the benefit level and the income ranges. It is possible but it would impact the mill rate depending on the dollar value that the Council would want to increase it by.

Councilor Eleveld stated he believes the current senior tax relief number is \$305,000. He believes the Veteran's tax relief was also changed last year. Councilor Eleveld asked if we changed the Volunteer firefighter amount. Town Manager Souza said his understanding is that we are at the maximum allowed by state law.

Councilor Smith said depending on how you're looking at this, this could be seen as an expenditure cut or revenue increase. He was wondering if potentially there is a scenario where we could reduce the contribution to the pension and that will be either a revenue adjustment or potential cut. He'd like to put that out there in way of helping with the budget.

Mayor Black-Burke asked if this was an additional reduction to the pension. Councilor Smith said it was.

Town Manager Souza explained there are two components to that request. A potential adjustment that's been suggested as part of the \$1 million reduction is to the Other Post Employee Benefit (OPEB) fund. That is different than our defined benefit program. The possible reductions that have been outlined in response to the Council's request last night essentially reduces all but \$130,000 that was allocated to go to our OPEB trust fund for future liabilities. Our defined benefit program we have had since the pension plan was established in the 1960's all Town Councils have made the annual recommended actuarial contribution. There are great examples across the country of communities not making the contribution to the pension plan. It's like a drug. Once you get on that drug it's hard to get off of it. He would strongly advise to not reduce the contribution to the pension plan.

Councilor Eleveld said he wanted to entertain this concept for a minute. What was the amount that we are contributing? Town Manager Souza said \$3.6 million. Councilor Eleveld said if we took \$1 million out of it, next year we would end up having to put in probably \$5 million? At least \$1 million back. Mr. Bourke said there are several factors that go into the actual analysis, such as investment performance and participant mortality that effects the next recommended contribution. Councilor Eleveld said that we'd potentially be looking instead of \$3.6 million at \$4.6 million potentially. Mr. Bourke said this would not be a dollar to dollar situation, and would depend on the plan performance and actuarial assumptions. Councilor Eleveld said it's an actuarial calculation. It also turns around and cuts one year of \$1 million of earnings over the course of an amount of years. He feels that would be dangerous for the town. Mr. Bourke said that it would not be a good idea.

Councilor Pelkey said for clarification's sake, when we're looking at the 'ask' both the town and the school board there is a sort of realization that it is an 'ask' and any reductions that we are making are in the 'ask'. That is critical for the public to understand. Any cuts that we take away from this budget are not actually cutting anything it's just simply a reduction of the 'ask'.

Councilor Pelkey said for the Board of Education's side, he was a public school teacher and he is well aware what funding can and cannot do for a school district. This town has made it a priority as we are already spending 57.5% of every dollar towards that. In the Board of Education current 'ask' they are actually trying to go another percent higher than what we currently give out of our tax dollars. So it's not the town that doesn't value that, it's just a matter of the 'ask' that the town or in this particular point the Board of Education is asking for balancing that with the overall needs of some of their speakers that we've heard from the last couple of evenings. It's definitely that balancing act but he wants the public to understand that we are not currently cutting anything anywhere, it's just cutting what the 'ask' is. It's not that we don't value anything. We are already contributing large portions of our budget to certain services in the community. It's the balancing act of what hurts our pocket book but also what serves what we need as a community.

Councilor Naeem wanted to clarify or correct some of Councilor Pelkey's comments. Yes, on the Board of Education side, what we are decided and voting on today is a dollar reduction, not a specific how they reduce and what they cut. However, on the town side, we will be making specific votes on specific cuts. Her hope and all of our intention is \$1 million on the town side and \$1 million on the Board of Education side. The \$1 million on the town side will be specifically the items that the Town Manager walked us through today. We are not dictating nor do we know what for sure those \$1 million on the Board of Education side will be. The Board of Education will discuss and vote on that themselves. On the town side, we are going to be making those cuts tonight. Her intentions in the motions to come is that what was proposed by the Town Manager in terms of the \$1 million expenditure cuts is what will be reflected in the motions that we make tonight.

Mayor Black-Burke added that we cannot dictate to the Board of Education what they can cut. We cannot do that.

Councilor Eleveld asked if we want to have a motion in particular to Opening Cash?

Councilor Naeem said her side will probably end up with a figure of \$3 million for Opening Cash. That does impact the revenue side so when we do have the motion, if we can go through the expenditure side first, take a 5 or 10 minute recess as needed and then we can move on from there, that would be appreciated.

Mayor Black-Burke said that is the path that they usually have done in the past is to go through the expenditure side first and then go through the other categories.

Councilor Eleveld asked if there could be a 5 minute recess right now so he can confer with his team. Mayor Black-Burke stated that is fine.

The Town Council went into recess at 7:28 p.m. and Mayor Black-Burke asked that the Council return by 7:35 p.m.

The Town Council came back from recess at 7:35 p.m. and re-entered the Special Town meeting.

3) FINAL DELIBERATIONS

EXPENDITURES

Board of Education (Section D of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$85,313,340	(\$1,000,000)	\$84,313,340



MAIN MOTION

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Deputy Mayor Klase to amend the proposed budget for the Board of Education of \$85,313,340 by \$1,000,000 to \$84,313,340.

AMENDMENT

MOVED by Councilor Pelkey, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to amend the motion for the Board of Education by \$2,513,340 to \$82,800,000.

Councilor Pelkey said that \$1.3 million of that was temporary and should still be temporary and will be removed. The rest of that amount he feels at this juncture going forward would be beyond what would be prudent for the benefit of the entire town.

Councilor Pelkey said he recognizes the need to have that increase because we are all seeing gas and electricity and other things going up. We have contractual agreements in terms of salaries. He feels this is sort of splitting the difference and keeping that appropriation level.

Councilor Naeem stated in response to Councilor Pelkey, the 'ask' is temporary. The pandemic was now four years ago. A lot has changed in those four years between inflation, impact on our students and needs changing where one could argue while those funds were to be used for supporting temporary needs that some of those temporary needs have become much longer term. That is why she will not be voting in favor of the amendment but will approve the motion that was originally brought forward.

AMENDED MOTION VOTE

Motion Failed 4-5-0 (Mayor Black-Burke, Deputy Mayor Klase and Councilors Armstrong, Naeem, Smith opposed)

MAIN MOTION VOTE

Motion Passed 5-3-1 (Councilors Eleveld, Pelkey and Walker opposed and Councilor Gluck Hoffman abstained)

Town Support for Education (Section E of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$6,167,430	(\$192,000)	\$5,975,430

MOVED by Councilor Smith, seconded by Councilor Naeem to amend the proposed budget for Town Support for Education of \$6,167,430 by \$192,000 to \$5,975,430.

Councilor Naeem said this motion produces the funding of the town's contribution for our OPEB fund.

Motion Passed 8-1-0 (Councilor Pelkey opposed)



Safety Services (Section F of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$13,608,200	(\$60,000)	\$13,548,200

MAIN MOTION

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Deputy Mayor Klase to amend the proposed budget for Safety Services of \$13,608,200 by \$60,000 to \$13,548,200.

Councilor Naeem clarified that this motion will be reducing the funding for one police vehicle, leaving one vehicle in the General Fund.

AMENDED MOTION

MOVED by Councilor Walker, seconded by Councilor Pelkey to amend the proposed motion and increase it by \$60,000 to \$13,608,200.

Councilor Naeem stated that she would recommend keeping that out too as it will be less of an impact to our residents and potentially considering that through the use of Opening Cash in the future.

Mayor Black-Burke stated in the last couple of years through the Health & Safety committee they have looked at various ways to continue supporting the town, especially with our vehicles in Safety Services. A few years back, they had made sure there were enough vehicles in Safety Services. She understands that while all of us are in full support, she would subscribe to taking the reduction of \$60,000 from Safety Services as it relates to one police vehicle. Given to where we are at this point, the \$60,000 is a reasonable reduction.

AMENDED MOTION VOTE

Motion Failed 4-5-0 (Mayor Black-Burke, Deputy Mayor Klase, Councilors Armstrong, Naeem and Smith opposed)

MAIN MOTION VOTE

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Recreation & Leisure Services (Section G of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$2,509,970		\$2,509,970

MOVED by Councilor Armstrong, seconded by Councilor Naeem to accept the proposed budget for Recreation & Leisure Services of \$2,509,970.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Human Services (Section H of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$571,470		\$571,470

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Gluck Hoffman to accept the proposed budget for Human Services of \$571,470.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Health Services (Section I of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$645,000		\$645,000

MOVED by Councilor Walker, seconded by Councilor Pelkey to accept the proposed budget for Health Services of \$645,000.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Library Services (Section J of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$1,991,200		\$1,991,200

MOVED by Councilor Gluck Hoffman, seconded by Councilor Walker to accept the proposed budget for Library Services of \$1,991,200.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Development Services (Section K of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$2,257,540		\$2,257,540

MOVED by Councilor Pelkey, seconded by Councilor Naeem to accept the proposed budget for Development Services of \$2,257,540.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Community Development (Section L of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$114,350		\$114,350

MOVED by Councilor Eleveld, seconded by Councilor Walker to accept the proposed budget for Community Development of \$114,350.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Public Works (Section M of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$7,108,420	(\$55,000)	\$7,053,420

MAIN MOTION

MOVED by Councilor Smith, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to amend the proposed budget for Public Works of \$7,108,420 by \$55,000 to \$7,053,420.

Councilor Smith stated this motion eliminates funding for a part-time Administrative Aide by \$43,000. It also reduces funding for materials, supplies and equipment by \$12,000.

Councilor Pelkey said he heard Councilor Smith state that this would eliminate the position of a part-time Administrative Aide. Would this be the termination of a position or would this be not filling a current vacancy? Town Manager Souza stated this position is currently vacant.

Councilor Walker added that it reduces funding for materials, supplies and equipment by \$12,000. Do we have any idea what that entails? Town Manager Souza stated it is spread across the department's divisions. There could be some out of the parks and grounds and some out of facilities department divisions. It would be for miscellaneous materials and supplies so we haven't identified specific quantities of what those would be at this time.

AMENDED MOTION #1

MOVED by Councilor Walker, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to increase the proposed budget by \$55,000 to \$7,108,420.

Mayor Black-Burke stated she definitely supports Public Works and feels they do an amazing job here in our town. Based on the recommendations, she'd like to state that this is currently a vacant position and if we are in these fiscal straights, if this is something that can be eliminated. It's a part-time role and she's good with the recommendation coming from the Town Manager. She will not be fully in favor of the amended motion, but again she wants to make it clear that the department does a fabulous job.

AMENDED MOTION #1 VOTE

Motion Failed 4-4-1 (Mayor Black-Burke, Deputy Mayor Klase and Councilors Naeem and Smith opposed and Councilor Armstrong abstained)

AMENDED MOTION #2

MOVED by Councilor Gluck Hoffman, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to increase the proposed budget by \$12,000 to \$7,065,420.

Councilor Naeem reiterated that if there are \$10,000 or \$12,000 worth of needs and if it will make the Public Works Department successful, she hopes that would be communicated through to the Town Manager. We have the opportunity to entertain that through our General Fund recognizing that we do have the intention of bringing our original thought of \$4.4 million down to \$3 million and over time that leaves more capacity in our General Fund. She is good with taking the \$12,000 out of the budget so we are lessening the tax impact on our residents.

AMENDED MOTION #2 VOTE

Motion Fails 4-5-0 (Mayor Black-Burke, Deputy Mayor Klase and Councilors Armstrong, Smith and Walker opposed)

MAIN MOTION VOTE

Motion Passed 8-0-1 (Councilor Armstrong abstained)

Information Services (Section N of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$734,540		\$734,540

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Councilor Gluck Hoffman to accept the proposed budget for Information Services of \$734,540.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Administrative Services (Section O of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$3,014,060		\$3,014,060

MOVED by Councilor Armstrong, seconded by Councilor Walker to accept the proposed budget for Administrative Services of \$3,014,060.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

General Government (Section P of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$1,299,630		\$1,299,630

MAIN MOTION

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Smith to accept the proposed budget for General Government of \$1,299,630.

Deputy Mayor Klase stated that if there is a motion to amend this to add money to a community group, this is the time to do that.

Councilor Eleveld stated it would be the right time if it were a request for the FY 25 budget.

Mayor Black-Burke added that her understanding is that the request is for an immediate action.

Deputy Mayor Klase stated she wasn't sure if this was going to be a recurring request because it's insurance.

Councilor Walker said he believes this appears to be a recurring request.

AMENDED MOTION

MOVED by Councilor Walker to amend the General Government proposed budget of \$1,299,630 by \$10,000 to \$1,309,630 for Windsor Fife & Drum Corps.

Councilor Eleveld asked if there is any way that we can knock another \$10,000 from another pot so we don't have to change the amount on this request? Town Manager Souza said there is. If the intention is to provide dollars for the organization group before July 1st, then he would suggest that this motion not be made at this meeting, instead that the motion be considered at one of the regular Town Council meetings in May. That way, if that organization needs that money or desires to get it before July 1st, that would be a supplemental appropriation at a May or June regular Town Council meeting versus waiting until this budget is adopted, whenever that might be, and the monies don't become available until July 1st.

Mayor Black-Burke agreed with the Town Manager that if the need is immediate, it would be better to do it at a Regular Town Council meeting in May or June. She believes what the Deputy Mayor was looking to raise might be that it is a recurring piece and asked should it be added here. Her point of clarification is this for a fiscal expenditure or is this for a level of service like for their insurance on the vehicle? Town Manager Souza stated from what he understands their request is that it's not for the physical piece but it is primarily for the insurance to make sure that vehicle can be placed on the road and transport individuals.

Councilor Eleveld said in regards to Deputy Mayor's point, he asked Town Manager Souza, we have several deductions in here, can we reduce these items by \$10,000 additional dollars and after that we would allot that allocation to this group for Fiscal Year 2025? Town Manager Souza said that is the directive of the Town Council. None of these

recommendations that have been put forth that achieve \$1 million is done lightly. These are actual reductions to the town's operating budget. These reductions are not reductions to request above and beyond these particular areas. Therefore, if the Town Council wanted to reduce pavement or sidewalk repair, or OPEB that has \$130,000 allocated in their bucket, any one of these buckets could be reduced further.

Councilor Eleveld stated the only reason he makes this note is because that would force a change in some of the other numbers.

Mayor Black-Burke said she believes that is what they are all saying. She believes that unanimously, they all want to have some type of action for the Windsor Fife and Drum Corps. But she is not sure that it's fitting for right now. She thinks they all want immediate action. The next Town Council meeting is May 6th. Is that something we can add to the agenda?

AMENDED MOTION VOTE

Councilor Walker WITHDREW his AMENDED MOTION. He stated that he will wait until the next Town Council meeting to bring this up.

Mayor Black-Burke said she thought that it was clear from last night's meeting, that they would be adding this item onto the next Town Council agenda. She believes it is something that they are all supporting 110% on.

Deputy Mayor Klase added that we needed to talk about it because of the recurring expense. We may have time later to figure that out.

MAIN MOTION VOTE

Motion Passed 8-1-0 (Councilor Pelkey opposed)

General Services (Section Q of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$20,335,690	(\$693,000)	\$19,642,690

MAIN MOTION

MOVED by Councilor Walker, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to amend the proposed budget for General Services of \$20,335,690 by \$693,000 to \$19,642,690.

Councilor Pelkey stated that this motion would reduce funding for paving management, sidewalk replacement, town contribution to OPEB and reduce some funding for the open space.



AMENDED MOTION

MOVED by Councilor Walker, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to amend the motion to increase the General Services proposed budget by \$693,000 to \$20,335,690.

Councilor Walker explained this motion would put back into the budget \$85,000 for paving management, \$50,000 for sidewalk replacement, and funding for town contribution for OPEB by \$448,000 and also will put back the reduction in funding that is proposed by \$110,000.

Deputy Mayor Klase said although it's very difficult to reduce these things, she thinks that in this budget, they are reductions that make sense. It pains her to see reductions in the open space category. She will not be voting in favor of the amended motion.

Councilor Armstrong believes these reductions are warranted and she will not be voting in favor of the amended motion.

Councilor Pelkey said although he agrees with Councilor Walker that these items are important and need to be funded, he will have to vote against the amended motion just because he feels that we can go in and backfill these in later if we so choose with our rainy day fund.

AMENDED MOTION VOTE

Motion Failed 1-6-2 (Mayor Black-Burke, Deputy Mayor Klase, Councilors Armstrong, Gluck Hoffman, Naeem, and Smith opposed and Councilors Eleveld and Pelkey abstained)

MAIN MOTION VOTE

Motion Passed 9-0-0

TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$145,670,840	(\$2,000,000)	\$143,670,840

MOVED by Councilor Gluck Hoffman, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to amend the total proposed General Fund expenditures for the FY 2025 budget of \$145,670,840 by \$2,000,000 to \$143,670,840 based on the motions discussed.

Motion Passed 5-4-0 (Councilors Eleveld, Gluck Hoffman, Pelkey and Walker opposed)

REVENUES

Revenues (Section B of Proposed Budget)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$145,670,840	(\$2,000,000)	\$143,670,840

REVENUES

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Deputy Mayor Klase to amend the proposed budget for Revenues of \$145,670,840 by \$2,000,000 to \$143,670,840 to reflect expenditure adjustments.

Motion Passed 8-1-0 (Councilor Pelkey opposed)

OPENING CASH

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to increase Opening Cash under Miscellaneous Revenues from \$0 to \$3,000,000.

AMENDMENT #1

MOVED by Councilor Eleveld, seconded by Councilor Pelkey to amend Opening Cash under Miscellaneous Revenues from \$0 to \$2,500,000.

Councilor Eleveld stated the more money we take out of the Opening Cash the more difficult it will be to get back to a balanced non-Opening Cash budget. \$2.5 million would allow arguably a \$500,000 reduction each year and hopefully by the fifth year we would be back to \$0.

AMENDMENT #1 VOTE

Motion Failed 4-5-0 (Mayor Black-Burke, Deputy Mayor Klase and Councilors Armstrong, Naeem, and Smith opposed)

AMENDMENT #2

MOVED by Councilor Smith, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to amend Opening Cash under Miscellaneous Revenues from \$0 to \$4,000,000.

Councilor Naeem stated that we are making sure that we are doing what we can to mitigate the impact of revaluation as well as the needs of our town while still making sure that we have enough of cash on hand 3, 4, 5 years down the road so we are able to maintain a good bond rating but also have enough in case something happens. We started at the \$4.4 million range. She knows her colleagues are looking for \$2.5 million and she thinks \$3 million is reasonable. We'll slowly still be able to work our way out of that without falling below our 15% in cash reserves.

Councilor Eleveld said he is not in favor of the motion. As he stated earlier at \$2.5 million, eventually we'll have to dig ourselves out of taking money from the savings bank to get back to a \$0 fund opening cash balance position. That's to stop raiding the savings account. Formally, we'd require almost three quarters of a million dollars and some change and that is even more excessive than needless to say \$600,000-\$700,000 required for \$3 million. If it's a bad year, we'll have no reserves left.

Councilor Pelkey stated in general he's not going to split anything that goes above the projected interest that we would have. He believes that Councilor Naeem had said \$3.3 million is the rough target and \$4 million definitely exceeds that number for him.

Mayor Black-Burke stated as she shared earlier in the conversation, that probably looking at the information two weeks ago, she was at the same place of thinking about \$4 million but for all the reasons that have been shared, she can't support the change. She doesn't think we have enough time to recover from that. Therefore, she cannot support this amended motion.

Councilor Eleveld thanked Councilor Smith for the motion. He understands where his heart is at and he thinks they all agree that they wish they could go that route.

AMENDMENT #2 VOTE

Motion Failed 1-8-0 (Mayor Black-Burke, Deputy Mayor Klase and Councilors Armstrong, Eleveld, Gluck Hoffman, Naeem, Pelkey and Walker opposed)

MAIN MOTION VOTE

Motion Passed 7-1-1 (Councilor Pelkey opposed, Councilor Walker abstained)

CURRENT LEVY

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Deputy Mayor Klase to decrease the Current Levy by \$5,000,000 from \$122,521,400 to \$117,521,400.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

TAX COLLECTION RATE

Section B of Proposed Budget

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
98.80%		98.80%

MOVED by Councilor Pelkey, seconded by Councilor Gluck Hoffman to accept the proposed tax collection rate of 98.80%.



Councilor Eleveld said a gentleman from the public, Mr. Slate, suggested a change to the tax collection rate. Is that something that would be appropriate? Town Manager Souza replied as he understands it, if the Town Council was to reduce the proposed tax collection rate, that actually creates an upward pressure. It requires the mill rate to be increased unless there is some other action in terms of expenditure or use of opening cash.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

SENIOR TAX RELIEF

Section B of Proposed Budget

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$305,000		\$305,000

MOVED by Councilor Pelkey, seconded by Councilor Walker to accept the amount proposed for senior tax relief of \$305,000.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

VETERAN'S TAX RELIEF

Section B of Proposed Budget

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Amended Amount
\$23,100		\$23,100

MOVED by Councilor Eleveld, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to accept the amount proposed for Veteran's tax relief of \$23,100.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

EXEMPTIONS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Section B of Proposed Budget

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Adjusted Amount
\$118,500		\$118,500

MOVED by Councilor Smith, seconded by Councilor Pelkey to accept the amount proposed for Volunteer Firefighters tax relief of \$118,500.

Councilor Pelkey asked the Town Manager if we are at the max and we can't increase this even if we wanted to. Town Manager Souza said that is his understanding that we are at the max.



Motion Passed 9-0-0

ENTERPRISE FUNDS

Landfill Enterprise Fund (Section S)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Adjusted Amount
\$1,321,250		\$1,321,250

MOVED by Councilor Armstrong, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to accept the proposed budget for the Landfill Enterprise Fund of \$1,321,250.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Resident Transfer Station Enterprise Fund (Section S)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Adjusted Amount
\$385,930		\$385,930

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to accept the proposed budget for the Resident Transfer Station Enterprise Fund of \$385,930.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Caring Connection Adult Day Care Enterprise Fund (Section S)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Adjusted Amount
\$574,220		\$574,220

MOVED by Councilor Walker, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to accept the proposed budget for the Caring Connection Adult Day Care Center Enterprise fund of \$574,220.

Motion Passed 8-1-0 (Councilor Pelkey opposed)

Windsor Montessori School Child Development Center (Section S)

FY 2025 Proposed Budget	Town Council Action	Adjusted Amount
\$1,589,530		\$1,589,530

MOVED by Councilor Hoffman, seconded by Councilor Smith to accept the proposed budget for the Windsor Montessori School Child Development Center Enterprise Fund of \$1,589,530.

Motion Passed 8-1-0 (Councilor Pelkey opposed)

OTHER FINAL MOTIONS

PRICE GUIDE

MOVED by Councilor Pelkey, seconded by Councilor Naeem to accept the price guide as proposed (located in Appendix G of the Proposed Budget document).

Motion Passed 9-0-0

REVALUATION

MOVED by Councilor Eleveld, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to implement the October 2023 revaluation with a two year phase-in starting at FY 2025 (with an estimated taxable grand list for FY 2025 of \$3,947,100,000.)

Councilor Pelkey stated that he'd like to see a one year phase-in instead of a two-year phase-in. If we're going to pay roughly 2/3 the first year, he'd rather have it all done at one time.

Councilor Eleveld said when we originally looked at these numbers there was a 2/3 and 1/3. His numbers show currently on average for us under this Town Council it drops to a 56% / 44% split. So from 2/3, we're much closer.

Councilor Naeem thanked the Finance Committee members and also to the rest of the Town Council. This has been quite a process. There have been a lot of discussions and a lot of work to try and do what the Council hopes is the best for the town and its residents.

Motion Passed 8-1-0 (Councilor Pelkey opposed)

Councilor Eleveld said it's been a pleasure working with Councilor Naeem and Councilor Smith to try and get this budget somewhere.

ANNUAL VOTE

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Gluck Hoffman that the annual vote on the budget be held on Tuesday, May 14, 2024 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. at all 7 polling places.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Town Manager Souza thanked the Town Council for all the hours they have put into this budget. This has been a very challenging process for the last 4-5 months. Thank you very much. The League of Women Voters and CT Votes will again be hosting three different budget information forums. Two on May 7th and one on May 8th. There's one on the evening of May 7th and May 8th and then one on May 7th in the morning at the Senior Center. We will be publicizing those through a variety of avenues. We will also be updating

our budget information on the website. It may take us until the end of this week to incorporate it in the phase-in. We'll be updating the tax calculator and the actions that the Town Council took this evening so that the public understands what adjustments have been made to the overall budget.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked Town Manager Souza when the budget forums happen, is the Superintendent of School included in those. Town Manager Souza responded that yes he is. He said that he and Dr. Hill and will give a brief overview of the budget and the majority of that time is for questions and answers.

Mayor Black-Burke thanked the full Town Council for their time and dedication. She thanked Linda Collins, Assistant Finance Director and Jim Bourke, Finance Director, and all other staff as well who helped to ensure that the Town Council had all the information they needed to make this happen. She thanked Assistant Town Manager, Scott Colby, and Town Manager, Peter Souza as well. We still have work to be done until the budget referendum on May 14th to ensure it is successful.

4) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by, Councilor Pelkey seconded by Councilor Armstrong to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary

May 6, 2024
Public Hearing
Draft minutes



**TOWN OF WINDSOR
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING
May 6, 2024
PUBLIC HEARING**

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:20 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:

- TOWN'S 2024 SMALL CITIES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION
- REALLOCATION OF CDBG RECOVERY PROGRAM INCOME TO THE TOWN'S HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

2) PUBLIC COMMENT - None

3) ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Black-Burke declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary

May 6, 2024

Regular Town
Council meeting
Draft minutes



TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING – VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON
May 6, 2024
Regular Town Council Meeting
Council Chambers

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Black-Burke called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

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

2) PRAYER OR REFLECTION

Councilor Armstrong led the group in prayer/reflection.

3) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Armstrong led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4) PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS

- a) Proclamation designating May 2024 as Older American Month in Windsor

Mayor Black-Burke read the proclamation aloud.

- b) Proclamation proclaiming May 6, 2024 as Margaret Ginnitti Nurses Day

Councilor Gluck-Hoffman read the proclamation aloud.

- c) Proclamation designating May as Historic Preservation month

Deputy Mayor Klase read the proclamation aloud.

5) PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS - None

6) COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Eleveld said Shad Derby is on the 18th and he hopes to see everyone then.



Councilor Smith said he attended the Shad Derby ball. It was a wonderful event. It was nice to see all the young people and all the effort they put into their high school career. We are proud of everyone who received an award and those that participated in the program.

Councilor Pelkey stated if you are interested or know someone who is interested in being a fire fighter for our town, you can always reach out to any of the councilors, call town hall and just reach out and we will try to get the information that you are requesting. He added that he went to the Hayden Station Pancake breakfast and he is already looking forward to next year.

Councilor Naeem said there are more Shad Derby events happening. She recognized Councilor Gluck Hoffman for all the work she has done through the Junior Women's Club and other organizations in the past. We'll be sad to see you go. She thanked everyone who made the Shad Derby events happen.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman announced all the candidates that won at the Shad Derby Ball. All the girls were fantastic and their speeches were amazing. She thanked everyone at the dais that attended the event.

Councilor Armstrong said it was a wonderful event at the Shad Derby Ball. She gave kudos to Councilor Gluck Hoffman for her participation in that event. She added spring is here and summer is coming so we should be mindful of our health, stay hydrated and do what you can to enjoy the season.

Councilor Walker congratulated Councilor Gluck Hoffman on her work she has done with the Shad Derby. You need to remember that those ladies that participate are our kids and attend our schools, so we should do whatever we can to support them. He also thanked all the councilors for supporting that event as well. He congratulated the West Indian Social Club on its 74th anniversary. It was a wonderful event. He, the Mayor, Councilor Smith and Councilor Armstrong attended the event. It was well attended. His Windsor colleagues have a lot of influence. He believes they went there and changed the people's programs. Going from farm work, to assimilating in the community, to being a part of Windsor and moving that organization forward so now they are involved in cultural and educational activities, accepting our state and community grants and being a part of the community. Major changes are to come.

Deputy Mayor Klase reminded everyone about fire safety. She knows people are starting to use their fire pits and there are some regulations about burning brush. She encouraged everyone to know what those rules are and make sure they have access to water if they are using their fire pits. There are many activities in Windsor as the *There's A lot to do in Windsor* booklet outlines which is a fantastic resource. Please practice safe driving around town. Everyone is very excited because it's nice out, but we should stay within the speed limits. She reminded the voters that on May 14th we have the town budget referendum. The town budget is nicely explained on the town's website so take a look at that. She also thanked the local businesses that support things like the Shad Derby in our town, as without them we couldn't do all the things we do.



Mayor Black-Burke thanked the town staff, the councilors for the hours of hard work, your thoughts and contributions, the Finance Committee and everyone that was involved in getting us to that next step in our budget development. May 14th is coming and we want residents to go to the polls and vote. The end of April was busy. We heard about several things that occurred. The Veteran's and Military Appreciation day happened on April 20th at the LPW community center. She thanked the team that put that together. On April 25th, she had the opportunity to sit with the mayors from Wethersfield, East Hartford, and Hartford for the Riverfront Recapture's annual meeting. There was a lot of information and lots of things are going on with the Riverfront Recapture with more to come. On April 28th, she had the opportunity to visit the Sikh Temple. They were celebrating Vaisakhi and they invited her and the Mayor of South Windsor to be a part of it. It was great to be with them as they were in their time of celebration. Last Thursday, the National Day of Prayer was held at Trinity United Methodist Church and it was beautiful to see several of our faith communities come together for that National Day of Prayer there. She thanked everyone that was able to attend. She gave a shout out to Pastor Chris Yount who is newer to our community.

7) REPORT OF APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

a) Board of Education

Leonard Lockhart, Board of Education, stated the following:

- The Windsor High School Class of 2024 Commencement will take place on Tuesday, June 11, 2024 at the Bushnell Performing Arts Center at 6:30 PM. Town Council members will receive additional information regarding graduation and other year-end events via the WHS principal's office. The last day of school for students Pre-K to Grade 11 will be Friday, June 7, 2024. The last day for teachers will be Monday, June 10, 2024. All of you should have received an email with a google type of survey if you are requesting graduation tickets and parking passes. That is on a first come, first serve basis. Please check your email if you are interested in going to the graduation.
- The Board of Education, through a proclamation at its April 16 meeting, declared its appreciation to the district's teaching staff and proclaimed the week of May 6 - May 10 as Windsor Teacher Appreciation Week. The Board is hosting a special breakfast for teachers and staff at each school locations throughout the first two weeks of May. We hope Town Council members and members of the community will reach out to a teacher(s) and express their appreciation for their dedication to the students of Windsor Public Schools.
- The WHS National Honor Society Induction Ceremony was held on Thursday, April 25. President Furie congratulated the new inductees. Dr. Hill was pleased to announce the three superintendent awards given in honor of three previous superintendents: Daniel Howard Scholar is Ethan Zhang, Dr. Earle S. Russell Scholar is Rjelyn Nikka Ersando and the Paul J. Sorbo Scholar is Sophia Wilson.



- The WHS Music Department participated in the Music in the Parks Adjudicated Festival in Virginia Beach, VA, April 18-April 21. They received various awards in seven different disciplines ranking either first, second or overall best throughout their achievements.
- Congratulations to our seniors who have signed to play athletics at a college/university next fall. Currently, there is a list of seven seniors that have declared their disciplines and schools they wish to accept scholarships from.
- WHS Spring Signing Day is May 22, 2024
- The BOE's next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 7:00 PM in the Board Room at LP Wilson Community Center.
- Dr. Hill's next Coffee Talk will be on Wednesday, May 19, 2024 at 6:00 PM in the LP Wilson Courtyard. Please RSVP for the event on the district website so that he may prepare for your arrival.
- The Office of Family and Community Partnerships hosted their annual Volunteer Appreciation Celebration on April 23, 2024 at Windsor High School. The event honors all of our volunteers and partners who support our students, families and staff. We had an excellent turnout and a great time was had by all. Our OFCP team (Dr. Mallery, Gianna Gill, Sadia Santana, and Jen Phelps) did an incredible job, and the guests were very pleased with the event.
- TSA Advisor Megan Rickus is pleased to announce the TSA State Championship Award winners at Killingly High School on April 27. In the middle school division they won eight different awards with the majority being 1st or 2nd place and one in 3rd place. The high school also placed in seven different events with the majority winning 1st or 2nd place and then there were two individuals elected back to the TSA Officer team.
- The goal of the WPS District Educator of the Year program is to identify, from among each of the WPS Buildings' nominees, one educator to serve as a visible and vocal district representative of what is best in our profession. Traditionally, this has given professionals in our district a role where they can further amplify the needs of their students, colleagues and our community. There are six Building Educators of the year that are participating if they so choose to continue to the District interview round. The District Committee will announce their selection in May. In the seven schools there are participating now in the division round and we'll see who will be announced as the District Teacher of the year. From there that teacher would represent Windsor in the state competition as well.
- Please remember to check our website, www.windsorct.org, for the most updated information, athletic schedules and academic calendar. Families should make sure their child's school has their most up-to-date contact information for them both email and telephone.



Councilor Eleveld asked Mr. Lockhart if he got his breakfast wish as they had discussed several years ago. Mr. Lockhart said no that doesn't usually happen at the teacher appreciation breakfast. That happens at the Academy for 18-21 year olds. Every year the breakfast is becoming more and more extravagant. This year there were gluten free options offered for the teachers, quiche, less pastries and more fruit. At least two of the schools' food was all gone. It was well received. He thinks this type of event should be done more often during the year. In his opinion, that is an inexpensive way to help lift morale and to help the teachers through what they go through daily for our kids. It's a small token and something they may expand upon.

b) Economic Development Commission

Mr. Nathan Karnes, Vice Chair of Economic Development Commission, and Patrick McMahon, Economic Development Director, gave the following report of the overview of the Commission's activities:

Amendments to the Windsor Center TIF District Master Plan

The Commission, as the TIF Advisory Committee, discussed technical amendments to the Master Plan and recommended favorable action by the Town Council.

90 & 92 Deerfield Road – The Commission has monitored the status of the former Stanadyne property through its bankruptcy sale and purchase by IRG.

Amendment to Assessment Abatement for Blueprint Robotics – the Commission reviewed and recommended approval of amendments to the fixed assessment agreement for Blueprint Robotics, a manufacturing facility of approximately 450,000 SF to be built at 11 Goodwin Drive.

American Rescue Plan Act Program – The Commission was kept apprised of the activities of the Windsor Worx and The Collective Space Small Business Incubators that was recommended to the Town Council for the use of ARF funds.

Annual Business Breakfast – The Commission co-sponsored with the Chamber of Commerce a very well attended business breakfast in October at the Hilton Garden Inn. The speaker was John Bordeaux, President and CEO of AdvanceCT – the state's business recruitment and retention arm. Town staff also worked with the Bradley Development League in hosting a Spring Gathering at the New England Air Museum for firms in the four towns around the airport, as well as a BDL Day at the State Capitol.

Griffin Office Park – The Commission reviewed the status of buildings in the office park and discussed future scenarios for this area.

Career and Technical Education – The Commission heard from CTE Faculty Member, Eric Eisnor, about initiatives at Windsor High School to provide students with hands-on technical experience and highlight manufacturing careers and path opportunities.



The EDC discussed, supported or worked with nine projects that remain in their pre-development phase of approval, or finalizing financing or are currently in construction. For additional projects, they have either completed their construction or stepped up their operations or are doing so now.

Councilor Naeem stated coming out of budget season she is asking herself what we are doing with our big office park areas. Is there anything on the Economic Development Commission side that you have talked about or foresee coming from the community side in terms on how we are going to tackle and figure out what we are going to do with those areas. As we know, large employers that would want to take on that kind of space are hard to come by as they are going remote and downsizing themselves. Mr. Karnes said they have talked about this on the commission level. He said that public input might help to broaden the situation. Mr. McMahon stated the town is in constant communication with the Hartford as well as the Voya representatives. Both properties are on the market. Both have some activity relative to tenant activity in the space today. There aren't any specific prospects that we've heard of. They are going to take in large floor plates, but hopefully that would change. We are trying to market it. We get it out there through our channels to developers. We are hoping we would be able to find businesses in the Boston area or New York area, potentially Europe that would be looking for those bigger floor plates. For right now, they are hoping for it to continue as a class A which are higher quality properties to maintain that office component, but we will ultimately need to address that if they can't be filled.

Town Manager Souza added he and Mr. McMahon have been involved in a number of conversations at the regional level. Clearly it's a huge challenge across the region if not the entire nation. The town will also be embarking on, later this summer or early fall, on a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) update. We are prioritizing updating the Day Hill Road corridor chapter as a scheduling perspective. The overall POCD development review and update will probably be a 14-16 month process. Through that process, we will be speaking to the earlier comment about getting community engagement and comments. We will have a significant amount of opportunities for public engagement not only just regarding commercial office space but also for the overall plan. To be frank, some developers are suggesting that both those facilities be demolished and totally repurposed. Those particular developers are not bullish on the office market. He and Mr. McMahon have a little more hope that those buildings, which are Class A office, are dividable. They aren't built on a monolithic style so even if they are larger floor plates, they can be somewhat segregated by wing and floor. We are hoping those positive amenities will play through.

Councilor Naeem stated that she believes the Town Manager is right as this is not only a Windsor or state problem but it is a nation-wide problem. The reason she brought up those two buildings was because they're significant and she has heard not only in Windsor but elsewhere that buildings of that size, the recommendation from other developers is to raze them and they'll do some other type of development with them. She wonders if that economic condition might entertain thinking there are ways to see what other creative ways or ideas are out there. She doesn't see a real solution to the Class A building problem. She doesn't think things will change. She knows the Town Manager is being optimistic and she wishes she could be the same, but just looking at where large employers are going, she'd love to see creative opportunities or ways to market that space. Mr. Karnes added that if 150 year old brick and stone, asbestos and oil

filled mill can be turned into housing, he suspects these buildings can be converted into housing as well. It just takes money.

Councilor Pelkey asked if they have any openings on the commission. Mr. McMahon stated they do. Councilor Pelkey asked how someone would apply for the position. Mr. McMahon stated they would apply through the Town Manager's office. Town Manager Souza added they can go to the town's website and apply online similar to any other board or commission and then that application is reviewed in the Town Manager's office.

Councilor Pelkey asked what we can do to get some of these vacant store fronts in downtown occupied. What are we working on to try and get that done? Mr. McMahon stated he is in constant communication with First Town Downtown, the Chamber of Commerce and the property owners. When we get a lead or First Town Downtown gets a lead, we look to see what particular size space they need and try to match them up with a property owner. For instance, an event company will be going in between the Enterprise Rental Car and Millbrook Package store. There's a new hair dresser that is going in to where the old Cat Connection space used to be located next to the tobacco shed. That's what we're trying to do. We're facilitating those conversations. We are able to get Dr. Sachdev to hire a commercial broker for their artistic Hairdresser on Fire and that whole complex. That has been listed and the realtor has brought several parties through that property. The Taste of India space has another tenant that is very close to opening. That is moving forward. There's Greg Vaca's project coming out of the ground. It's important for us to support the existing businesses behind that fence such as Peking Chinese restaurant and the Blue Dragonfly. It's really up to the public to come and support local. There are a lot of choices out there. If individuals can concentrate on coming and spending their dollars in Windsor, that would be fantastic. The Bean is sort of this hub of activity. One of our goals for that business incubator and for both Windsor Worx and The Collective Space is to have some spin offs that might take a while but we're open to those. We are hoping the spin offs will fill some of those open spaces.

Mr. Karnes added that there was an event that spotlighted Windsor. Mr. McMahon stated last fall we had that event and it was the 'Spotlight on Main Street' event. 80 individuals or so came to visit Main Street in Windsor. It wasn't only economic developers and town planners from other communities there, we had folks representing the state arts and state tourism, and there were some key stakeholders knowing that if a project came forward that they think they could avail themselves of state funding or potentially the foundation funding, that we are set and lined up for that to assist our businesses.

Councilor Smith said that he believes some of his comments were already addressed so he will try and be brief. He wants to get into the repurposing and the creativity that he has seen in other towns in Boston and cities in San Francisco regarding trying to repurpose some of these vacant commercial office buildings into housing. He knows that no developer will be knocking on our doors and so it's probably going to take a situation where we may just have to go seek that developer. He would have loved to see some of that repurposed into housing. He stated that he has read of it working in other states. That would be something great to see happen. He followed up on what Councilor Pelkey said in terms of the revitalization. He would also like to see that going. We all know some of our favorite restaurants in the region. We may have to at some point

knock on their door also and try to gauge their interest in coming to Windsor. We already know that they are successful so instead of getting a startup business here, we might as well get an establishment here that we know has been successful. That would be a great thing to see. He knows we are moving forward in that direction. He loves the effort that he sees and hope that it's successful.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman stated she loves that he brought up the housing component as Europe has been doing it or the last 10-15 years or so. They've been using old malls and buildings like that. It would be a great opportunity for us if it could be done. She wanted to clarify that the Economic Development Commission appointment is not done by the Personnel Committee but rather by the Town Manager. She wants people to know that they can apply for it, but the applications go through the Town Manager's office and not through the Personnel Committee.

Councilor Walker said that the commission has ex-officio people on it and you said First Town Downtown and the Chamber of Commerce. He asked who those people are. Mr. McMahon replied that Andrew Surprise, the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce and the Executive Director of First Town Downtown, which just had a transition. Ken Fredette was the Executive Director for a period of time and Deb DeLucia has taken over the reins. She jumped right in and is trying to learn as much as possible. He gave her a quick spin around downtown and the projects that he mentioned before. There was a walk on Saturday morning and she participated in that.

Mayor Black-Burke asked if there is any work the Economic Development Commission would be able to do to connect all the market places in our town. How would we get the word out to individuals to support local but to also look at what is happening in the Wilson area, what's happening in the center of town, Day Hill and then going as far up to Poquonock Avenue. She only raises this up as from time to time individuals seem to think that the only place where they can put their dollars is in the center of town. How do we go about instructing locals that shopping local means the entire piece and not just the center of town. Town Manager Souza said over the years, the Chamber of Commerce has been the lead with that. They have a retail committee. We can restart some of those conversations with the Chamber. They are well adept and equipped for that.

c) Conservation Commission

Tammy Young, Conservation Commission, gave the following report:

It is important to preface this report with the statement that due to COVID many of our meetings were held online rather the in-person. Members of WCC worked to present a number of pertinent and timely programs.

During this period we held a Hybrid workshop on agriculture and plantings presented by Kip Kolesinkas – State Agriculture. The group also participated in a Clean-up day.

April 2023

- Reviewed and discussed Windsor waterways, wetlands, natural resources, wildlife corridors. They work with Chloe Thompson in this area.
- Opportunities for River Walks conducted by Brad Robinson -

May 2023

We continued our talk about invasive plants and Washington Park growth of vegetation wetland areas.

June 2023

- Dealing with Changing Climate on a local level and in family households.
- Designating the value of trees
- They WOW (Wonder of Windsor) Finalizing Fall Photo Contest Public Relations and contributors. Two divisions – adults and students.
- Moving forward on WOW (Wonder of Windsor) Photo Contest focusing on the beauty and appreciation of Windsor natural characteristics, namely: parks, farmland, waterways, fauna and flora, gardens and spaces. The public is invited to vote.

September 2023

- E-Cycle event open to all Windsor residents had an impressive turnout and a deserving thanks to TAKE II.

October 2023

- Brad Robinson provided information on River Walks and when they can continue to schedule river walks.
- Lea Chayes will follow up on Climate Change webinar with David Rogue.
- Other related conversations they are having is the costs of compost bins.
- Julie Bergeron feedback and suggestions for placement of built birdhouses

November 2023

- WCC Vice President Tammy Young reported on CACIWC event she attended.
- Ann B. has had advanced discussion on clarifying artificial fertilizers and WCC opportunities to educate/refer citizens
- Colette Yeich provided update on WOW current contributors/sponsors distribution of flyers
- Status of new members.

WOW Photo Contest

There were 21 entries online – awarded 1st and 2nd divisions – adult and youth.

Councilor Eleveld said relative to the hydroponics, the Windsor School services was running a hydroponic program for lettuce and a few other items. If you aren't aware of that, you might want to reach out to them. Ms. Young thanked him for the information and said she would reach out to the school.



Councilor Elevled stated David Rogue was mentioned. Who is he? Ms. Young replied he is an author and he writes on Climate Change. He puts climate change into a language that people can better understand. He is also a wonderful speaker.

Councilor Naeem said a lot of what Ms. Young spoke about tonight feels like there's some overlap with the work we've seen happening in town by the Windsor Climate Action team. What is the relationship between the two? She believes we had another commission that was focused on this as well. Town Manager Souza stated it was an ad-hoc committee that was developed overall scope and framework. She asked how those two pieces plug into what the Commission is doing. From a recommendation perspective, what are the type of things you hope to bring to the Council as the Conservation Commission on recommendations to take action on? Ms. Young said they try to keep in touch with other commissions as their mission is for education and educating people on how best to use the land and water, etc. We overlap with waterways and other commissions that are looking at how best to use the land. Because we are mostly about education, we want to stay in touch with them and work with them as much as we can. If we can co-sponsor some kind of education event/program, we try to do so.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman said the Arts Commission that was just put together, the Windsor Arts Center Beautification team, the Economic Development Commission, the Chamber of Commerce and First Town Downtown are you overlapping with them as well? Ms. Young said that Ms. Bergeron from the commission was working with an artist who is connected with First Town Downtown or some other arts group. There definitely is a connection there and there is definitely overlap. This is again a place where we try to do cooperative or sponsor together on programs. If we can work together, it brings more people in. Councilor Gluck Hoffman thought that the artwork on the birdhouses would be a great collaboration with the Windsor Arts Commission, the Windsor Art Center or part of First Town downtown.

8) TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Souza gave the following report:

Annual Budget Referendum

The town's annual budget referendum is Tuesday, May 14th. All polling locations will be open from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM. If you're unsure where to vote, you can easily check for your polling location on our website at www.townofwindsorct.com.

Absentee Ballots are available in the Windsor Town Clerk's Office during regular business hours, Monday - Friday from 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM. The deadline to request an absentee ballot is the day prior to referendum. Absentee ballot requests on the last day must be in-person at Town Hall. For additional information, please call the Town Clerk's Office at 860-285-1902.

For more information go to: <https://townofwindsorct.com/finance/town-budget/fy25/>



FY 2025 Budget Information

Based on the proposed budget approved by the Town Council on Wednesday, the Budget in Brief, Tax Calculator and Build-A-Budget have been updated and can be found at <https://townofwindsorct.com/finance/town-budget/fy25/>.

Please visit <https://townofwindsorct.com/app/uploads/2024/04/REVISED-Windsor-Budget-at-a-Glance-24-25-4.26.24.pdf> for more information on the Board of Education budget and adjustments.

Community Budget Forums

Community budget forums sponsored by the League of Women Voters and CT Votes will be held on the following dates and locations:

- May 7, 2024 – 10:00 AM – Senior Center
- May 7, 2024 – 6:30 PM – Poquonock School
- May 8, 2024 – 6:30 PM – 330 Windsor Avenue Community Center

Public Works Open House – May 23rd

To celebrate National Public Works week, we are hosting a Public Works Open House event on May 23rd from 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM at the Department of Public Works, 99 Day Hill Road.

This is a great opportunity to meet the amazing public works crews who take care of the community. Those attending will see firsthand the large equipment used on daily basis, go for a ride on a plow or can take a tour of the facility to learn more about what goes on behind the scenes at the facility.

Recreation and Leisure Services News

All summer camp programs are open for registration. Registration for summer swim lessons and pool passes begins on May 23. Residents can register online at <https://townofwindsorct.com/recreation/> or call the recreation office at 860-285-1990 for more information.

Work continues on the major renovations to Welch Pool. There have been delays in receiving certain supplies and materials such as the new pool liner resulting in the expected completion date being pushed back to the latter part of June. Recreation staff are developing plans to utilize Veterans Pool at the high school similar to last summer. Staff also have been in contact with parent teacher organizations that have traditionally used Welch Pool for year-end activities. The groups are planning to use other town or school facilities for their events.

Pavement Rehabilitation Work

Contractors are planning to start pavement rehabilitation work in mid-May on Sylvia Lane, Millbrook Circle, Mountain Road – from Millbrook Circle to Bloomfield Avenue – Avon Circle, Strafford Court, Sheffield Drive, Trent Drive and Surry Lane. Rehabilitation of the roadways will be through a method called micro surfacing. Micro surfacing is an economical way to extend a roadway's service life. The process typically includes the installation of two lifts of asphalt



emulsion, aggregates, mineral filler and water. See this link for info on this method:
<https://townofwindsorct.com/engineering/>.

Work is planned to take place within the existing roadway limits. Access to driveways will be maintained. DPW crews have been repairing/ replacing storm water catch basin tops in preparation of the paving contractors starting in mid-May.

52nd Kiwanis 5k Shad Derby Road Run And Walk

The 52nd Kiwanis 5K Shad Derby Road Race and Walk will be on May 18, 2024 at 10:00 AM. The race winds through the Town of Windsor starting at the Windsor Green, along the picturesque Farmington River and back to the Windsor Green.

Bring your family & friends to help us celebrate! The proceeds support scholarships for Windsor High School graduates attending a 2 year or 4-year education program. Free T-shirts will be given to the first 100 registrants.

To register for this event online please select and click <https://k06121.site.kiwanis.org/> and you will be taken to a page with the option of completing and paying the entry fee online or to print the form and send it with your check via regular mail. Race day entries will be cash or check only.

Shad Derby Parade and Festival

The Shad Derby Parade and Festival will take place in Windsor Center on May 18 from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Festivities include games, activities, food, drinks, entertainment and parade. For more information, contact the Windsor Jaycees at www.windsorjaycees.com or email at info@windsorjaycees.com.

Windsor Lion's Club Spring Arts and Crafts Fair

Join us on Saturday, May 11th from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM for the Windsor Lion's Club Annual Spring Arts and Crafts fair which will take place on the Windsor Town Green. Every vendor will have handmade items, from yarn to soap to candles to jewelry! You are bound to find something that you like and perhaps find something for mother's day at the same time. For more information contact the Windsor Lion's Club at krf.lions@gmail.com.

WinWag Photo Contest

To help promote dog licensing efforts, the annual Win Wag Photo Contest has begun as of May 1st. The photo contest is free and open to Windsor residents. The entry period for the contest ends at noon on May 15th. The voting period begins May 17th and ends May 31st at noon. This year's contest has eight categories: Top Dog, #1 Puppy, Best Smile, Best Athlete, Community Ambassador, Town Employee Mascot, Most Spoiled and Judges Choice. The winning entries determined by online public voting through our website will be announced on June 4th. For more information, see contest details at: <https://forms.windsorct.com/winwag-contest/>



Local Tax Relief for Elderly and Persons with Disabilities

Real Estate tax relief reductions for elderly and person with disabilities are available to qualified Windsor residents meeting the income and/or age guidelines. The application period ends May 15th. A taxpayer who is 65 years old, or 100% Social Security disabled, owns and occupies a home in Windsor and meets certain income guidelines may be eligible for elderly tax relief benefits. Annual income guidelines for the State of Connecticut program are:

- Single person household up to \$43,800
- Married up to \$53,400

In addition to the state program, the Town of Windsor provides for local elderly tax relief benefits under the local HEART program. Any taxpayer that is 65 years old, owns and occupies a home in Windsor, and does not meet the previously mentioned income guidelines may still be eligible for a local benefit listed below. Income guidelines for this year are:

- Single: \$43,801 - \$60,300
- Married: \$53,401 - \$60,300

A guide to these exemptions is available at the Town Assessor's office and on-line at <https://townofwindsorct.com/app/uploads/sites/4/2017/07/exemptionguide-4-2023-12-04.pdf>

For more information or questions, please call the Assessor's Office at 860-285-1817.

Oliver Ellsworth Birth Date

Given May is Historic Preservation month, it is appropriate to recognize that last week marked the 279th anniversary of Oliver Ellsworth's birth. As you know, he was born here in Windsor and played a large part in our country's earliest years as a framer of the United States Constitution. He served as a United States senator and the third chief justice of our country. His homestead on Palisado Avenue is carefully preserved and curated by the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution. This historic landmark is open to the public. For more information please see <https://ellsworthhomestead.org>

National Public Service Week

The first week of May is National Public Service Week and I would like to thank all of you and our other local elected officials as well as our many volunteers and our employees for the dedication, commitment and effort to make Windsor the great community that it is. Your passion and energy for our community is much appreciated.

Councilor Pelkey said he's had a couple of people ask him about one of the local ponds we have available. They are on open space that is owned by the Town of Windsor. Silver Birch Pond was one asked about and there's 277 Kennedy Road. Do we have a policy for people to use these areas? Town Manager Souza said access to many of these are limited where there's no public access. He would encourage those that have questions to call the Planning Department and our Environmental Planner, Chloe Thompson, would be able to answer their questions in a more specific way. They are varied and some are accessible but most of them are not.



Mayor Black-Burke asked the Town Manager about a follow up on the Windsor Giants piece. Where are we with that and as far as the paving that is going to take place how are citizens notified? Town Manager Souza stated they will receive a letter from our Engineering Department that is mailed to all of those locations. We have in the past taken a visual observation if there are a lot of individuals parking on the roadway when we're doing that work. We'll also put out signs to say paving will be happening and we'll leave door hangers where there is concentrated parking on the streets. In terms of the Windsor Giants, the question relative to youth football, the Sage Park concession stand we have made arrangements so that 06095 would be able to use the restrooms. We are still awaiting information regarding the status of Windsor Giants. As of a week ago, we are still waiting for their plans for the upcoming summer/fall timeframe.

9) REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Town Improvements Committee – Councilor Smith – nothing to report.

Finance Committee – Councilor Naeem just wanted to remind everyone to go out and vote on May 14th.

Joint Town Council/Board of Education Committee – Deputy Mayor Klase – nothing to report.

Health and Safety Committee – Councilor Armstrong - nothing to report.

Personnel Committee – Deputy Mayor Klase – nothing to report.

10) ORDINANCES - None

11) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Authorize submittal of the 2024 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant application for Housing Rehabilitation program

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Pelkey to approve the attached resolution entitled “2024 Community Development Block Grant – Small Cities Application” approving an application to the State of Connecticut Department of Housing and authorizing the Town Manager to file said application and execute all necessary documents.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- b) Authorize the reallocation of Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Recovery program income to the Housing Rehabilitation program

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Pelkey to approve the attached resolution entitled ‘Resolution for the Reallocation of Program Income’, which reallocates \$130,000 from the CDBG-Recovery program to the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program.



Motion Passed 9-0-0

12) NEW BUSINESS

- a) Set a Public Hearing for Jun 3, 2024 at 7:20 p.m. to solicit public comment on applications for participation in the Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit program

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Armstrong, to that a Public Hearing be set for June 3, 2024 at 7:20 p.m. to allow for public comment on applications submitted for the Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program administered by the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- b) Approve an amendment extending the Fixed Assessment Agreement for Blueprint Robotics

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Gluck Hoffman, to approve the attached Second Amendment to the Fixed Assessment Agreement with Blueprint Partners Corp which provides an extension for the start of construction to June 1, 2025 and authorize the Town Manager to execute said amendment.

Councilor Eleveld asked why this group is looking for an extension. Town Manager Souza said the company is looking for an extension as they've been working through the financing market for this project. They have not been able to secure the overall financing packet at this point. They have also been working on some of their own company financing where they are entertaining minority ownership in investors. They will be focusing on those two components. That is primarily the reasons why they are looking for this extension to start construction by no later than June 1, 2025. There are a number of amendments that were created by this extension as you see outlined. Mainly, they are dates. The amendment does increase the minimum investment in the facility by approximately \$4.5 million as well as the minimum investment in personal property by \$500,000, which is due to inflationary factors due to the time extension.

Councilor Pelkey said his understanding on those two numbers is that it's not that they are adding more money to the project but that it's due to inflation and that is why the numbers went up. Town Manager Souza said that is correct.

Councilor Pelkey asked what happens 11 months from now and they haven't secured their funding? Are they eligible for another extension? Town Manager Souza said that would be the Town Council's policy decision to make at that point. There's nothing that would preclude them from requesting that. He imagines they'd be having conversations much sooner than that.

Councilor Pelkey added that he doesn't like that the property will be sitting vacant for two years without anything happening to it. Town Manager Souza said that it's privately owned land. They still have that under the Purchase and Sales agreement. Our understanding is that in the coming



90 days, they plan on closing on the property. We continue to encourage them and work with them in terms of their planning in overall permitting. To facilitate that we are in communications with the private property owner. They seem comfortable to have granted extensions of their Purchase and Sales agreement. There have been opportunities for that agreement to have been cancelled or nullified. He believes that is the owner's right to do that under their Purchase and Sales agreement with Blueprint.

Councilor Smith said this company was offered a Fixed Assessment Agreement and he's taking from that that the company was offered a tax abatement as well. Town Manager Souza said that is correct. Councilor Smith then asked for the terms of the abatement. Town Manager Souza stated he believes it was a five year at 60% with the potential, if they incorporate in sustainability of clean energy, that it could be increased by 5%.

Councilor Smith asked if the five years would start at the time the building is issued a Certificate of Occupancy. Town Manager Souza said that was correct. It would start at the beginning of the grand list which is October 1st, after they have received a Certificate of Occupancy and demonstrated they have met the minimal investment levels.

Motion Passed 8-1-0 (Councilor Smith opposed)

- c) Authorize acceptance of a Senior Services American Rescue Plan Grant from the State of Connecticut in the amount of \$87,145

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Walker to authorize the acceptance and expenditure of the Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services American Rescue Plan Act Grant in the amount of \$87,145.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- d) Authorize acceptance of State of Connecticut grant funds for senior support services in the amount of \$15,000

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Naeem to that the Town Manager is authorized to accept and expend the grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Economic Development to support and assist senior residents in the amount of \$15,000.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- e) Approve authorization of \$15,000 in American Rescue funds to the Windsor Fife & Drum Corp.

MAIN MOTION

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Walker to authorize the use of \$15,000 in American Rescue Funds for the purpose of funding the community service request by the Windsor Fife and Drum Corps.

Councilor Pelkey stated he received an email with lots of questions from Mr. Slate. Much of it has to do with insurance. It's not about the organization or anything it represents. He has some reservations due to these questions. State regulations has put them in a different classification. If you're spending \$3,000 per year and the van has been out of service since 2022, what was happening to the insurance payments during those years and why doesn't that count against the \$10,000? Some other points Mr. Slate raised and he had thought of as well is before giving this money over, he'd like to see some type of documentation that this is what the premium is or any of the listed repairs. If they're asking up to \$15,000 he'd like to know why we are spending that when this van has been off the road. There are many questions regarding this request and he would like to get more answers or hear something from the representatives or have them at a Council meeting so we can talk to them. He's not sure if anyone else here has any information. There are many concerns on his end about voting for this. It's not an ultimate 'no' from him but it's a hand out and he's not sure if we should be putting money in it that could be potentially spent somewhere else in town. Another question regarding the insurance is if this is good for one year what happens the following year for that organization? Again, it's not about the organization itself it's rather is this sustainable.

Councilor Eleveld stated he will vote for this on the affirmative however, he's very concerned that we're giving money to the organization. There's nothing wrong with the organization, nothing wrong with their appropriateness or intent. We don't know how many Windsor residents are involved in this organization other than they are based in Windsor. His bigger concern is are we going down a slippery slope with other Windsor organizations coming up and saying I have a problem with "X" and I need \$5,000 or \$10,000. That could create a problem. He also doesn't see any documentation for the request except for the letter that went to the Town Manager. There is a point in which we need to request to receive financial documents from Town Manager Souza. Town Manager Souza stated there is a policy related to those organizations that receive money from the General Fund operating budget in the community services contributions section of the budget and the threshold for that is \$15,000. We've applied that traditionally to those organizations that received it through the General Fund annual operating budget process for the past year.

Councilor Eleveld said there is no reason why we can't ask for it for this group as well. Town Manager Souza said that is the Town Council's prerogative to do that. Councilor Eleveld said that even if it's after the fact he'd like to get a copy of their financial report. He feels it's only reasonable.

Councilor Walker stated he has been asked to help the Windsor Fife & Drum Corps for quite a while now. These are American Rescue funds and they are not coming from the General Fund. The people at the Windsor Fife & Drum Corps have protested the insurance increases to the State of Connecticut Insurance department. They've asked to be considered as a non-profit, which they are and unfortunately their complaints did not go anywhere. We have community

grants that we issue to multiple organizations for far more than the \$15,000 that we are asking for tonight. Let's be fair when we're asking multiple questions of one organization asking for \$15,000. Moreover, the vehicle is a bus that will definitely need to get licenses and there is work involved with getting this bus on the road. He is asking his colleagues to consider that these are our kids. He's heard the question we don't know how many people there are and that's a fair question. He explained why he supports this endeavor. As town councilors it is the role of government to assist wherever we can. While we're asking appropriate questions and everybody should be able to do that, we should have a heart. If we are going to ask this much for \$15,000, we need to really rethink what the 'ask' is. You have the right to do that, but he's asking his colleagues to support our kids and support the Windsor Fife & Drum Corps.

Councilor Naeem said Councilor Walker made some good points on the importance of this organization and what they've been doing for us and our kids here in town. This is not questioning the organization and what they are doing. She doesn't want to speak for them but she'll put her hat on as Finance Chair. We just went through a very difficult budget season. We know that our American Rescue Funds are funds that come from the federal government but they are still funds that we can use for many other things. The big concern she has is at the last meeting, we had the Windsor Arts center here. In the past few months, we've had other organizations come by to ask for support and funding. A couple of weeks ago was the first time we heard a formal request for this organization in terms of funding needs. She thinks overall a part of the challenge is that we as a Council and as a town, she knows they've done this with the ARPA funds in a couple of different manners, but we need to have a process in place. If we approve \$15,000 for this organization, she thinks the different scout troops in town do a great job too. Why can't they come ask for some funding? We set a precedence by what we do here. She worries without a process in place or a firm understanding of what this organization's budget is are we just helping to fill a need that was created by unprecedented circumstances that differ from other organizations so on and so forth. It's a little bit of a tricky slope to go down. Knowing that we just came out of budget season, she's looking at every penny and dollar we have and what we might need to use it for in the future. Either having some sort of parameters or guidelines in how we review requests such as these for funding for community organizations is important.

Deputy Mayor Klase said she is going to support this item tonight. She does have concerns but she thinks those concerns apply to other funding and the way we fund those groups as well. Perhaps it's time to look at that policy and perhaps we have to lower that threshold to \$10,000 or whatever it is. Then if we do have ARPA funds next year, we could include in that policy any funding we give to civic organizations. We have a little bit more information where we're making the ones that we're funding through the budget, but not really on a lot of them. To her, it feels like they are applying different criteria right now for this group but she knows they are in need now. They should understand that going forward it would be an application process and they should think how to fund a regular operating expense.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman agrees with Deputy Mayor Klase and she will support this motion. Just to remind everyone, the Windsor Fife & Drum Corps plays a role here with the tradition of what Windsor is and who we are as a community and how long we have existed. The people that run the program are so dedicated to these kids and what they do. They do the Northwest Park fair and so many other events and it helps to keep these great traditions that we have. We can't lose

sight of that. We need to keep moving with modern times but we don't want to lose that tradition that this community has as that is what Windsor is so known for. In regards to other organizations here in town, they work very hard in fund raising so they don't have to come to the town to ask for funds because they do it on their own. Maybe it's an opportunity for civic groups to work with the Windsor Fife & Drum Corps and other organizations to fund raise and work with them to try and find a better way to raise some money going forward. Maybe that's something that we discuss, is kind of like an educational process for the organizations. She feels that would be a great opportunity.

Councilor Pelkey said he agrees with most of them and he's not adamantly opposed to it but he's finding it hard without some sort of process. While he understands there is a need, he'd like a little more time so with that said, he'd like to postpone this item until Monday, May 20th at the next Regular Town Council meeting. This will help us to answer some of those questions that we have and get a little bit of understanding from the Windsor Fife & Drum Corps regarding their plan going forward, even for next year. He doesn't want to give \$15,000 to an organization that could very well go under next year because it doesn't have the support it needs. Then we've given away \$15,000 for one more year that we could have given to sustain another group in town or multiple groups in town.

NEW MOTION

MOVED by Councilor Pelkey, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to postpone this agenda item until the next Regular Town Council meeting of May 20th.

Councilor Naeem said it's not about the organization and what they bring forward but more about what we as a Town Council and town think about some process, guidelines and parameters. She feels it might be unfair to impose it here where as we were going through the budget process we didn't have for those that were already in the budget. She will be against this motion but will support the main motion. She requested that they work with the town staff to figure out some of those parameters we agree on as we review future requests coming in.

Mayor Black-Burke said she has reserved her commentary because she does think that postponing it would not give us the ramp needed to put the parameters in place. She thinks that will be a needed discussion to determine what those parameters would look like not just for this request, but all of the requests. She thinks everything that has been shared is relevant, is needed. However, just moving it to May 20th she doesn't think that would give the opportunity or the time to really step out what needs to be on paper for all organizations. It would mean to her, that we are holding one organization differently than those that came before us during the budget process. For the current motion, she will be voting against postponing the vote until May 20th.

Councilor Armstrong is in agreement to move forward with the motion to accept the authorization of \$15,000 to the organization. As we have spoken, she doesn't think we have that criteria for any other organization that came before us. Perhaps we can have criteria later on to consider for this group.

Councilor Eleveld asked if this could be referred to the Finance Committee to start a conversation on this at the next Regular Town Council meeting. Mayor Black-Burke asked on the parameters? Councilor Eleveld said yes and that it was just a suggestion.

WITHDRAWAL of NEW MOTION

Councilor Pelkey WITHDREW the new motion to postpone this agenda item until the next Regular Town Council meeting of May 20th.

Mayor Black-Burke stated that it is very important that they as a governing body do look at the 'what.' The 'what' and the 'how' and how we move forward overall and not just for Windsor Fife & Drum Corps. She wants anyone that is watching or listening to understand that what we are looking to do is to ensure this is an equitable process for all the folks in town. That is very important to her. An equitable process where no one feels as if there's some injustice being done because they have not come forward to ask for a request. She said she feels it would be important for the Finance Committee and Personnel Committee to see what could be done in regards to that.

MAIN MOTION

Motion Passed 8-0-1 (Councilor Pelkey abstained)

Town Manager Souza asked why it was being referred to the Personnel Committee. Mayor Black-Burke said the rationale with sending it to the Personnel committee is that she totally subscribes with what Councilor Gluck Hoffman and the Deputy Mayor spoke about 'education'. She thinks as we are having conversations with the various groups in town, we should touch on what is your fundraising efforts and things like that.

Mayor Black-Burke said she feels the education piece of it is very important. Not all of our commissions fund raise but she feels it's something that should be discussed.

Councilor Naeem clarified that it is going to the Finance Committee to figure out what parameters might look like and then to the Personnel Committee to think about how we can further educate individuals. Mayor Black-Burke said that was correct.

- f) Set a Public Hearing for June 3, 2024 at 7:20 p.m. to solicit public comment on the proposed change to the Plan of Conservation and Development's Future Land Use Plan related to 5T and 105 Birchwood Drive

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to set a Public Hearing for Monday, June 3, 2024 at 7:20 p.m. on a proposed change to the Plan of Conservation and Development's Future Land Use Plan related to 5T and 105 Birchwood Drive.

Councilor Eleveld asked these two properties are used as a tree farm correct? It appears that most of the land is wooded but not with Christmas trees. Town Manager Souza said 5T Birchwood is predominately the tree farm. There are some that go onto 105 Birchwood, but the

majority of the operation is at 5T and two other lots that go to the north of 5T also have trees that are being cared for.

Councilor Eleveld asked if we know how many acres these two lots contain. Town Manager Souza said 5T and 105 Birchwood are approximately 16 acres together.

Councilor Eleveld asked if one of these properties flip to agricultural usage does that impact the valuation for tax purposes. He believes it does. Town Manager Souza said it depends on if the properties are in agriculture. For this action itself, the Town Council has the ability to act on May 20th but it does not change the zoning. Until the zone is changed, which is only an action the Town Planning & Zoning Commission can take, that's when the property owner would have the eligibility to apply for the agricultural exemption which effectively lowers the assessment value. Councilor Eleveld asked if the same owner of the property own both of these parcels. Town Manager Souza said yes.

Councilor Eleveld then said the combined total of the two parcels would be 16 acres and the property owner would be able to qualify for PA490 because the minimum is 10 acres. Town Manager Souza said he believes so. Councilor Eleveld said PA490 for those who don't know is an element in the law that allows you to value a property at one tenth of the market value. However, you cannot do anything to the property for a decade and if you do, you are subject to paying back all of the taxes you should have been paying for if you had not changed it to PA490.

Councilor Eleveld asked why we have to approve this before it goes to zoning. Town Manager Souza replied the State of Connecticut a number of years ago amended the process that relates to how Plans of Conservation and Development are adopted at the local level. Prior to that change, the local Planning & Zoning Commission had the sole responsibility. With that change, about 12 years ago, it required that amendments to the Plan of Conservation and Development be brought to the Town Council. The Town Council may hold a public hearing or the Town Council may elect to not have a public hearing, but the Council is required to endorse or reject the proposed amendments. It is a deviation from years ago. There have been several amendments to the Plan of Conservation and Development that have been proposed in the last 8-10 years and the Council chose not to hold a public hearing. This motion is to hold a public hearing and then on May 20, the Council would have on the agenda to either endorse or not endorse the amendments.

Councilor Smith said in terms of making this agriculture, could this include having a chicken farm or some type of animal farm on that land? Town Manager Souza replied he does not have the agricultural zoning regulation in front of him but he believes it would allow for animals to be raised there.

Mayor Black-Burke added that whatever is put on the property would be predicated by the owner. So, using her as an example, she wouldn't be able to come and say she wants to open a chicken farm. Instead it would be based on the property owner. Is that correct? Town Manager Souza stated the owner would have to be able to provide that right through a lease or other type of

instrument. What this is doing is that it is changing the future land use plan. It does not change the zoning. That authority only sits with the Zoning Commission. His understanding is that even if the Town Council does not agree with this amendment, the Planning & Zoning Commission could approve it with he believes a 2/3 vote.

Deputy Mayor Klase stated she wanted to bring it forward that they decided to put this on the agenda, discuss it and have a public hearing as they thought it was important to be as transparent as possible in these matters going forward.

Councilor Pelkey asked if we have any idea why 1 Birchwood is not involved in this given it's the same property owner. Town Manager Souza replied that he does not have the specifics but he can follow up with the property owner on that.

Councilor Pelkey asked what would the impact of changing this do to the adjacent abutting land values just by changing this designation. In general, going forward is there anything to say that all of a sudden because you've now changed the Plan of Conservation and Development now they can't do something to their property because it's within a certain distance of something. Town Manager Souza stated he doesn't believe there is a negative impact by changing the future land use plan to agriculture. You can still build residential homes on an agricultural zone. The existing zones that are abutting this property are low density.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

g) Approve granting an easement with Eversource at Welch Park

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Naeem to approve a 20 foot wide utility easement in favor of Eversource Energy through land owned by the Town of Windsor at 43 Niles Road and 1701 Poquonock Avenue as shown on the easement map.

Motion Passed 8-0-1 (Councilor Gluck Hoffman abstained)

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Naeem to authorize the Town Manager to sign the required easement documents on behalf of the Town of Windsor.

Motion Passed 8-0-1 (Councilor Gluck Hoffman abstained)

13) RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to:

- Accept the resignation of Loretta Raney from the Historic District Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals



- Accept the resignation of David Raney from the Greater Hartford Transit District, the Hartford Area Cable Television Advisory Council and the Library Advisory Board
- Accept the resignation of Eric Kuintzle from the Town Planning & Zoning Commission
- Accept the resignation of Louis Morando from the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and the Capital Improvements Committee

Motion Passed 9-0-0

14) MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

- a) Minutes of the April 1, 2024 Public Hearing (FY 25 budget)

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2024 regular Public Hearing as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- b) Minutes of the April 1, 2024 Public Hearing (TIF Master Plan)

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2024 regular Public Hearing as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- c) Minutes of the April 1, 2024 Regular Town Council meeting

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2024 Regular Town Council meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- d) Minutes of the April 3, 2024 Special Town Council meeting

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2024 Special Town Council meeting as presented.

Councilor Pelkey stated that there is a small typo on the ipad on the title for the approval of the April 3, 2024 Special Town Council meeting. It currently reads 'Special Town meeting' and it should read 'Special Town Council meeting'.

Deputy Mayor Klase amended the motion to state 'Special Town Council meeting' instead of Special Town meeting.



Motion Passed 9-0-0

e) Minutes of the April 8, 2024 Special Town Council meeting

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2024 Special Town Council meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

f) Minutes of the April 15, 2024 Special Town Council meeting

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2024 Special Town Council meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

g) Minutes of the April 17, 2024 Special Town Council meeting

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2024 Special Town Council meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

15) PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS - None

16) EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

17) ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Black-Burke wished everyone a Happy Mother's Day. Do something special for your mom. For those of you that are thinking of their moms in memory she's praying for strength to get you through the day.

MOVED by Councilor Pelkey seconded by Councilor Smith to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary

May 20, 2024

Regular Town Council
meeting minutes



TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING – VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON
May 20, 2024
Regular Town Council Meeting
Council Chambers

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Black-Burke called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

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

2) PRAYER OR REFLECTION

Mayor Black-Burke led the group in prayer/reflection.

3) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Black-Burke led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4) PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS

- a) Proclamation designating May 19-25 as Public Works Week

Mayor Black-Burke read the proclamation aloud.

- b) Proclamation proclaiming May 2024 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage month

Deputy Mayor Klase and Councilor Naeem read the proclamation aloud.

5) PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

Susan Miller, 130 Palisado Avenue wanted to share that she was disappointed that the budget did not pass. It was very close and she knows the Town Council and the Board of Education worked very hard to make this as pain-free as possible in this challenging year. Given where we are now, she would just implore the Council to not cut the Board of Education budget. The kids, teachers and staff have been through so much in the last several years and we need to keep holding them up. They are our future so hopefully we'll maintain services for them and the rest of the town as well.

Marayann Overbaugh, 706 Palisado Avenue, stated she has been in town for a very long time. She's watched these budgets and heard the very same arguments over and over but she feels that this budget is too high. She does like the results because she knows a lot of young and elderly people which might have effected them tremendously. Her feeling is that when you discuss this the Council should take into consideration the fact that they have to pay a lot of money for these referendums. She would suggest that whatever cuts the Council is proposing that they make sure that we don't have to go through four rounds of the referendums. She would like to know how much the referendums cost the town.

Jen Fields, 19 Parkwood Drive, stated she has been in Windsor for 28 years and raised her kids here. She is here for two reasons. One as a concerned citizen and one as a concerned parent. Neither one of her children are now in the Windsor School system but they are successful because of it. She and her husband are in mental health field and their daughters are going into the mental health field as well. The reason that is happening is not because they forced them to go that way but rather it's what they saw and what they see every day in their lives. One of the things that is essential to school systems across the country is that more and more money needs to be invested into them. School is a safety zone for our kids. Parents have to work. If they are able bodied, they are working and they are trying to make ends meet. Yes, every time you increase a budget that squeezes someone but not everybody. However, if we don't invest in our kids, our kids will be exposed to things that are not going to support their resilience and growth. What's different from our generation (for those not raised with the internet) is that we were exposed only to ourselves to maybe news media, our parents and our friends. Now there is a huge access that children are exposed to. She feels every dollar we invest in the school system is essential simply because these are the people that are going to decide whether we go into a nursing home. These are the people that will take care of us. They will be the adults making the adult decisions when we're older.

Caleb Kisson, 23 Longview Drive, stated he is currently a 5th grade student at Clover Elementary school. On March 4th, he spoke to the Council about the importance of preventing budget cuts for the public schools. This evening, he has returned to represent his stance on the importance of avoiding budget cuts for our schools. He previously mentioned that he benefits from the Challenge program three times a week and he and his school mates have benefited from the support of his teachers, administrative staff and SEL instructor. He worries that these staffing programs might be in danger of being eliminated, depriving them of these valuable resources. If we truly believe that children are the future, then it is crucial to acknowledge that reducing staff and cutting programs will certainly have a direct impact on our present experience. He is kindly asking the Council to keep in mind the importance of investing in the future by preserving and valuing our present and providing them with the necessary resources and staff needed to foster their development.

Kathy Bousquet, 3 Winthrop Road, Director of Windsor Fife & Drum Corps stated she is here to thank the Council for allocating the ARPA funds to the Windsor Fife & Drum Corps. It is always their greatest pleasure to march in their town as well as represent Windsor in each of our performances throughout New England. Having our bus insured and back in service provides a valuable asset to our members. It allows families to send their Corps members off to a

performance and leaves them available to tend to other children or to go to work. It allows our Corps members to travel together and develop stronger friendships. It allows us to pack, manage and store our instruments, equipment and uniforms in a safe and organized manner. Since their beginning in 1985, the Windsor Fife & Drum Corps has been self-sufficient. Their main source of income comes from their contracted performances. With Covid shutting down all large gatherings, they lost a full year of income. The change in Connecticut legislation that tripled their bus insurance was just another unforeseen expense. These ARPA funds are an enormous boost for their group. She thanked the Town Council again for providing the funds. She gave a special thanks to Councilor Walker for recognizing the Windsor Fife & Drum Corps and what they offer our residents and for leading the discussion with Town Council on their behalf.

George Slate, 74 Ethan Drive, said regarding the second proclamation, recently he was made aware that it has just began or will begin soon that there will be an Asian American caucus at the State legislation. He is making his pitch for the Senior Tax relief. He did find on page 7 of the Council's deliberations minutes at the top of it was Deputy Mayor's conversation about the excess revenues. For the three items he mentioned to the Town Council in his email, you are going to have excess revenues in Fiscal Year 2024 of \$3.2 million. He asked what the Town Council will do with it. Somebody tried to pursue using some of that for the Senior Tax relief with an amount of \$305,000. That is less than 10% of the excess revenues. He is totally perplexed that for a group that is certifiably recognized as in great need that the Council has not changed that. He believes the amount should be doubled. Also at the top of page 18 of the minutes from the last meeting, the phrase was, 'As Town Councilors it is the role of government to assist wherever we can.' He thanked Councilor Walker for those words. For the Senior Tax relief he believes that is the least the Town Council can do given the impact of revaluation on the hardest hit group in this town.

Dr. Linda Alexander, 155 Fieldstone Drive, said that until we have a budget that the majority of tax payers can agree to, we still don't have a new budget. She truly appreciates the contributions of Town Manager Souza to decreasing expenditures. Unfortunately, we have yet to see a significant spirit of cooperation and understanding from our highly compensated school Superintendent and his administrators and the majority party on the Council. Revaluation of properties will hit Windsor residential taxpayers very hard and they simply cannot pay tax increases due to increased spending on top of it. The full force of the revaluation change will hit next year and continue unless there is a significant change in real estate values and that is not likely to happen any time soon. Additions to spending in the school budget are permanent and are just not affordable at this time in this town. Every year we pour money into the schools. \$80 million plus all the grants they get surely should be enough to educate the kids in this town with decreasing enrollment. She does not support taking money out of the savings fund. It's just not the solution to increased spending. It's time to decrease the demands on Windsor taxpayers.

Sarena Sky Raymond (spelled phonetically), 31 Bent Road, stated she is a graduate from Windsor High School. She feels cutting the budget for the school is not the answer. The budget from last year cut many classes that reduced creativity. She wanted to join the yearbook class but it had been turned into a club instead of a class. She wanted to ensure there would be a great yearbook for her senior graduating friends. She joined the club and it was her and one other person for the whole entire school year creating this yearbook single-handedly. It was

detrimental to the year book and her personal mental health as she had to sit there night upon night creating things that could have been a class. All these teachers are losing their jobs and their classes. The previous teacher who taught the yearbook class was teaching the class for over 10 years and now it is a club. We can have more students be involved in it and creativity is taken away from the students as no one can share their opinions. She doesn't think money should be taken from the school system because it is going to take away from students having the opportunity of being creative. Another example is a dance class that is gone and students are singlehandedly running a class as a club on their own. This should not be the case. She feels there should not be money taken away from students that need the opportunity to foster their creativity because some of these students in high school are using those skills for college and going into those fields. She feels this money should not be taken away from the students opportunities because it is pushing back on what they can achieve.

Nancy Field, 27 Pilgrim Drive, said four votes fewer than 5% of eligible voters casting ballots. It's not a mandate, yet it is a result of the referendum. Windsor is still a desirable place to live. We have good schools and services. In past times, when we have encountered referendums that have not passed, the easy way people look at it is to cut the school budget. Because to many people school cuts are invisible, every cut impacts students, their education and their opportunities. All of us are stewards of the future, and as a previous speaker said, we just need compassionate, capable students because they will be adjusting our IVs later in life. Coming back from Covid has been a challenge for students, families and schools. We need to continue our support for our schools because education cuts don't heal.

Eric Weiner, 130 Palisado Avenue, said to take a position that as a Council we know better than the school Superintendent and the staff regarding the emotional and educational well being of our children, in his mind is irresponsible and unbecoming of this Council. We have been starving our schools for years. Enrollment is constantly growing, it has not been declining. We must continue that process. As the previous speaker mentioned, a cut become cumulative and causes pain. We are already at a shoestring. We've let our buildings deteriorate. We lose staff because we are not above par. Don't do it. If there must be a cut he proposes that we look at the capital budget that has expenditures from the General Fund. He would first target pushing out road paving and sidewalk projects. Push them out a year or two. This spreads the pain across the town. It doesn't affect an individual program. It's an easy thing to do if you need to do a cut. As the previous speaker said, this vote was not a mandate. Our budget referendum process has long outlived its usefulness. He looks to the Town Council to do the right thing.

Tracey Zotter, 28 Spring Street, stated she had something prepared for the Council but they have already heard it from two students and the Windsor school system. We are at the state average for what is spent for the students. We have 21% of Windsor students that are special needs in the Windsor school system. Special needs require additional services. They require paraprofessionals, psychologist, programs, and the social/emotional learning staff. Running a school is running a business. Costs will go up yearly as utility costs rise and as services and goods rise. We can't expect to have a flat budget every year and progress our schools. There are significant links between a town's economic growth and the standing of its school systems. For us to continue to look at the Board of Education like it's an easy target, we are doing our town a disservice. A town where she grew up and learned that we are inclusive of everybody.

We are inclusive of our children with special needs, teachers that live in our town, and senior citizens to name a few. Those are the cornerstones that Windsor taught her and she is here to remind the Council that this is what students learn at the Windsor school system. We learn about community. She was disappointed that just 2,050 people showed up to vote. She doesn't think we can say an overwhelming majority either way feel yes or no but to continue to cut significant cuts from our budget for five votes seriously concerns her. A \$1.5 million cut in the budget will save the median household \$90 for the year or \$7.60 per month. You're talking 20 people's jobs and our children's education and their future.

Leonard Lockhart, 57 Columbia Road, said he is speaking as a taxpayer and not as a Board of Education member. He believes that this budget that was presented was not robust enough. He has been very vocal about that. There was no mandate at this last referendum. There shouldn't be any cuts to this budget at all. It will be sent back to the voters to decide again whether they want it or not. He agrees with the previous speaker that only 2,050 voters came out to vote. That is not good. Using the Board of Education or the district as low hanging fruit to say this is where we can cut. The town has benefited from Windsor schools being an alliance district because it has saved them from paying a lot more money in taxes and has kept their funding flat from the state, even through the pandemic when towns with the ability to pay were having a funding slash from the state. The town benefitted from that narrative. From his perspective, he knows what it is to live at the bottom with schools poorly funded, teachers not wanting to be there, teachers telling you that you aren't going to make it. He refuses to see a town where he lives and pays taxes in that he risks his life for every time he answers and alarm, that we are going to be racing to the bottom. We need to properly fund and take care of our most precious resource and that's our children. We need to make sure that we take care of every employee within the Town of Windsor. He doesn't care if they are Police officers, DPW, clerks at the town hall, district staff, etc. We should be making sure we are taking care of every employee of the Town of Windsor, both the Board of Education and town to make sure that we continue to provide the service that we are accustomed to here in the Town of Windsor. We have a great quality of life for the very low mill rate that we have. If you don't think so go to another town and see if you can get the quality of life like you're getting in Windsor with the taxes that you pay here. He's a wage earner who cheerfully pays for seniors and children and every service that we have here in the Town of Windsor as it is a collective responsibility that we take care of each other and not just ourselves. He implores the Town Council to send this budget back 'as is' and to allow the voters to have another crack at it.

Ashanti Osbourne Martin, 95 Pierce Boulevard, stated she moved to Windsor about seven years ago with her husband. They moved to Windsor and they believed it was a good town to raise a family in. She is disappointed that the budget did not pass. She asks this Council to not only think about the Windsor of today but the Windsor of tomorrow. That requires us to elevate our town and to invest in our town. Yes, that means increasing a budget. She is hopeful that as her family grows and they get at the point of having children that she is continually experiencing great services, not good services but great services. That means a constant re-evaluation of what great looks like. It also means continuing to think about the overall resident experience. This looks like investment in our education system for our future leaders. It is very disheartening to sit here and listen to the two young adults that came to this podium and shared their experience currently as students of the Windsor school system. That is very discouraging and

she is very concerned. She hopes that the Council really thinks about that current experience. She also wants the Council to look at other services that our tax dollars are supposed to provide for us, such as our community centers, parks, programming, etc. She asked the Council to consider increasing the budget. It is necessary and we cannot continue to operate on a flat budget. We need to continue to do more. She thanked the Council for their time.

Milo Peck, 23 Archer Road, said he has served on the Board of Education, Town Council and is on the Board of Assessment Appeals. He agrees with Mr. Lockhart. Our budget is not robust enough. We have to continue to increase as surrounding costs have increased. There are many people in the town that are hurting. It's unfortunate that the system of providing value and raising the tax dollars is with the most regressive tax rate possible. It's the property tax. Unfortunately, as people looked at the budget it looked like the town was just raising the property taxes to pay for the budget as opposed to determining the budget, which the Council did, irrespective of the assessed value. We need to take that step forward. As someone said, it was only about 2,000 votes with a 4 vote differential. How does the Council know that they were voting 'no' because we should have more in it? There weren't signs on the lawn. He's supporting the budget and he supported how we got there. We can't stay stagnant while costs rise. We are locked into our property values now for the next five years. We do have an unreserved unallocated fund balance to help smooth it out. Town Manager Souza has been generous in doing that and guiding the Council over the years to use this to reduce the mitigation. He would not back off. He'd keep it at 'as is'.

Sally Grey, 87 Ethan Drive, said she has a question about the tax increase that we had last year of 1.5% which was supposed to ameliorate the situation with the approaching revaluation. She doesn't see that it has been figured into things to help them with their tax situation. She wonders what happened to the 1.5% increase. Where did it go? Is it still around? Was it used for something else? As far as the turnout for the referendum, she believes one of the reasons it was so low is that people are very frustrated and they feel that when they go out to vote, it doesn't count or matter. Everyone is in favor of spending the money. They don't feel it's worth their time to go out and vote, which is very sad. As far as the budget goes, we can all appreciate a budget. We all have our expenditures that we have to make. With less money coming in and more going out, it's hard to navigate that. People are very much in a difficult position and she thinks any adjustments that can be made would be helpful for the people of the town in terms of reducing what the taxes will be.

Leslie Harrison, 41 Early Dawn Circle, said her comments are in regards of the solar farm that was recently approved by the CT Siting Council to be constructed at 445 River Street which is directly across from her house. She thanked Town Council members, Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager and the legal representation that the town engaged to try and fight the CT Siting Council in this decision. When she spoke to each of them they were all very encouraging and helpful. They encouraged her to get into this upward battle in which she has expended much of her time fighting. She has attended every meeting, has spoken and sent interrogatories and feels she has done her part to be a good citizen. While she knows we were unable to convince the CT Siting Council of the folly of placing this solar farm as close as they have to residential homes, she does want to say that she read the background information attached to the agenda and she would like to emphatically implore the Town Council to go against Town Manager Souza's recommendation to not appeal this decision. The CT Siting Council is not representative

of any citizen in this State. The members of that Council are appointed by the Governor, by the Senate Majority leader and by the House Majority leader. Those people do not represent her, they do not live here in Windsor and will not be effected by the safety concerns and most especially the sound coming from that solar farm. She will be unable to open her windows for the rest of the time that she lives in Windsor because that solar farm will produce a humming that will totally prevent her from opening her windows during the summer and enjoying the quiet solitude of her home. She respectfully asks that the Town Council please appeal this decision. There are bills that are trying to reign in the authority of this unrepresented CT Siting Council. This will not be the only place in Windsor that this will occur. She asked the Town Council to consider that.

Diane Lehan, 29 Early Dawn Circle, said the solar installation is going to have a strong effect on the quality and value of her home. Her house was just re-evaluated and it has gone up which means her taxes will go up. The installation will go in and the value of her home will drop. That has been proven in many states. The sound, take a drive over to East Windsor to hear it, that they will have sheep wandering around taking care of the vegetation and they have no plan to pick up the feces. It will dry and be forced into the soil. You got a nice windy day and her front yard is about 400 feet from the farm. She chose her home and neighborhood based on the beauty and serenity of it. She's lived there for 31 years. For the greed of one person, how many of us are going to be affected by this installation.

Divon Haughten (spelled phonetically), 31 Bent Road, said she has four children that have gone to Windsor public schools. She was very angry when they did the redistricting so she took her kids out of the Windsor public schools and sent them to magnet schools. She believes education follows the money. When Windsor started to reinvest over the decade she saw a lot of change happen in Windsor. She then placed her kids back into the Windsor school system because she saw change. Now she's seeing that there are so many cuts and changes. If you keep pulling money from the schools, you will end up like me where you are going to pull out your kids from that system to another one. Please keep making Windsor great. Yes, it will cost the citizens money and the taxes will go up, but don't take away from our children.

Aron Kiehne, 603 Brick Layer Road said just like Sky he is a senior at Windsor High School. He'd like to once again raise his voice in support of Windsor High school. Public school funding is crucial, and as the gentleman earlier said, above par spending is necessary for teacher retention. Teacher retention is key to student success. He is lucky to have avoided this himself over the past three years. He's seen hundreds of kids' school year disrupted because one or more of their teachers left half way through the school year, sometimes with literally no notice. This is just in high school. He's sure that students in the elementary schools are struggling through similar experiences. In particular, he personally benefited a lot from the Challenge program himself. When regular class wasn't challenging enough, it provided him a space and place to explore learning along like-minded students and under the supervision of excellent teachers. These are the programs under fire here and these are the ones that matter. These are the things that have set Windsor apart from other districts and he doesn't want to lose any more than we already have. He seconds what Dr. Lockhart said. This budget should not be cut any more than it already is, especially since it failed to pass by four votes. He could have single handedly gotten four people to change that vote if he had known beforehand. Go ahead and cut

a little bit and send it out again, it'll pass this time. He wanted to remind everyone that this comes back to Windsor residents directly. Who's moving into Windsor, who's buying new homes? It's families drawn by the quality of public schools and community services. It's why towns like West Hartford do so well. Without good schools, you miss out on this. If you're looking at saving yourself some money by voting no or cutting the budget, it doesn't work. Eventually down the line it will come back to you because your home value will drop by 25% and you won't be able to get a job nearby.

Jennifer Bernardino, 36 Pierce Boulevard, is here to represent for the budget in favor to cover the Windsor Public schools. She is a co-president of the JFK PTO. She has triplet boys that have attended Oliver Ellsworth and John F. Kennedy elementary school. Her kids get lots of resources from the school and she would like to keep their budget intact. Please vote for the public schools so they can have the budget that they need so they can move forward and progress.

Lucy Goins, 9 Sage Park Road, echoed what many of the others said. The public schools give so much value to our community. The budget is hard and rough decisions were made and what we got is good so keep it going. She is voicing in favor of funding the schools.

Marclion McMikle, 85 Trent Drive, said she's been a Windsor resident for 20 years. When her kids were young, they were placed in private school. In Kindergarten her daughter needed additional support. Private school could not provide that additional support she needed therefore they made the decision to bring her over to Windsor public schools. It's been an amazing experience for them. She can say without a doubt if her daughter hadn't had those services, she wouldn't be thriving today. She's a junior now and an honor roll student. The services that she received such as occupational therapist and a para when she was young has made a world of difference in her being able to thrive. She stated that the children are worth \$8 per month. That's what it comes down to. If we can't spend \$8 per month on a child, I think we have bigger issues.

Lakisha Hyatt, 104 Benjamin Court, stated she wants to lift her voice in agreement in support of the budget. She would only add as a healthcare provider and nurse we are relying on educators to really engage our children after all they've been through. She iterated once again that she wanted to voice her support of the budget. She applauded the great work of the Council and she knows they faced with (connection failed).

Lisa Cato-Scott, 9 Plum Ridge Lane, said her daughter is in a magnet school and she also needed some special services. She is still in a magnet school but the support we get from the Board of Education is second to none. She feels that we need to lift up our children as they are our future. They will need to make decisions later on in life when we are no longer able to. It is important to understand that \$8 per month is not a big deal for us to pour into our children. They are the ones that will suffer in the long run. She is in support of the budget.

Quinn Martin, 10 Sachem Hill Road, said her family moved here about four years ago. They came from private schools. They wanted to try Windsor because of the community and the love and support they found here. She has three children and two of them have ADHD. The services that they receive in Windsor are beyond belief. She did not get this support at the private schools.

\$8 per month is not a lot of money. We spend more money on coffee than that every day. She implored everyone to think about how far the \$8 month will go. This is for the benefit of not only our children but our community. Windsor has a phenomenal community. The only way to keep that is by making sure we aren't cutting our funding for the public schools.

Eric Crossett, 415 Broad Street, stated that he wanted to express some thoughts around the revaluation and that the budget as presented before is reasonable and this body knows the Board of Education took into account the impact of revaluation as they were coming up with the budget. As far as a long-term strategy of reducing services, reducing funding to the school systems would be to the detriment to the town because he believes long-term we need to shift the tax burden back onto commercial real estate rather than private property which happened with this revaluation. Our long-term strategy is we need to bring in more business into Windsor and in order to do that we need to maintain the funding, the social services and basic services such a Fire, EMS, Police so that the property values do not decrease. We maintain our property values but we need to increase the commercial value. He feels we need to do those things to draw businesses into Windsor. He is recommending that we keep the proposed budget 'as is' and bring it back up for a vote.

Beverly Moody, 39 Lamberton Road, said she is an ESL/multi-lingual teacher at Poquonock Elementary school. Her daughter just graduated from Windsor High school. At first she had her in private schools but then she put her into Windsor public schools and her daughter had a great time there. As a teacher, she can see where they can struggle if they don't get this money. We really need our budget to pass. It would be great if they can once again do a referendum and since only 5% of the town came out, she's asking that we have another vote.

Mayor Black-Burke thanked everyone that came out to speak tonight.

6) COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Eleveld said thank you to everyone that came out to speak. This was a much more enjoyable group for a large group of people speaking than what we've seen in our past meetings. Everybody is entitled to an opinion. He understands where many of them are coming from. However, one gentleman said to cut from capital and the need to invest more money in schools. You can't do both because it is the same money. It's nice that people came out to speak and he understands where the \$8 per month is coming from but many people are looking at a \$800 - \$1,000 increase in their tax bill. The \$800 is a valid number however, it's not the whole number. He thinks that is what people should take a look at. This Saturday was the Shad Derby. The rain did not hold off until 11:00 AM and that's about when the parade started. There was a good turnout but not as good as years past. We can only hope that in the future the weather might be better.

Councilor Smith said May is College Graduation Month and he congratulated all from Windsor that are graduating from college this month. Please consider volunteering some tutor or mentoring time into our schools for those students graduating college. Thank you in advance for supporting the Windsor school system and congratulations on this important achievement in your life.

Councilor Pelkey thanked the Registrars and employees at the polls. He thanked the Town Manager and department supervisors in allowing town employees to help out with the recount because that did save dollars for our town since we didn't have to pay for extra people. He touched on the solar power plant on River Street. While we supported the legal aspects in trying to preserve our neighbors' rights and interests of the town, that ultimately we don't have any responsibility or authority over that. Please there is an election in November. Talk to your state representatives from all parties across the state. As one speaker said, these individuals on the Siting Council are decided by the Governor, Senate and House majority leaders which are people who don't live here in Windsor. So you need to talk to your representative so they can vote for what you want in the interest of your town rather than a one size fits all from the state. The Town Council does not have control over that. He thanked his fellow Councilor Gluck Hoffman in helping to run the Shad Derby for 20 plus years. He thanked the police officers in town. As they were marching the parade route, every time they went by an American flag, they all stopped and saluted. Public Works open house is this Thursday from 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM. There will be refreshments at the event. There is the Windsor House Tour sponsored by the Windsor Historical Society on June 8, from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. If you are going south on Route 159, Windsor Avenue, and you are at that light on Rood Avenue and Deerfield, the light and signal has now changed. It used to be a left on green arrow only. Now it is a yield on left. For those going northbound please be aware of this change. Tomorrow there will be a ground breaking for a new park just south of I-291 across from the Roger Wolcott School. The Governor is scheduled to appear. There are a number of things happening. We still need more fire fighters in town. If you're interested please contact the town hall, a Councilor or talk to a fire fighter.

Councilor Naeem thanked all the speakers that came out and those that joined us online today. It was great to see all the engagement. We will be addressing the budget and having some deliberations later on this evening. She thanked a few of the individuals that came out tonight to talk about the Senior tax credits. We recognize that this budget and the impact of revaluation are impacting everyone and seniors with their circumstances are getting hit on that as well. She looks forward to bringing forth, along with all her fellow Democratic council members, the increase for the Senior tax credit tonight. She knows there was another question that came up in terms of last year's tax increase. As the Town Council, they had put in a lot of one time expenditures with that increase to make sure that we are able to remove those off the books this year. The ground breaking and the Shad Derby were great. She gave a shout out to the Shad Derby queen, Serena Sky Raymond, that came to speak at tonight's meeting. Congratulations to you and your full Queen's court.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman thanked the Shad Derby queen for speaking tonight and for Caleb speaking as well. She mentioned a few of the organizations that gave toward the scholarships for the kids in town. It's doesn't only take just one, but it takes a village. Many of us here today have talked about the stewardship of our kids. We have taken it on and we want our kids to take it on as well. Community service is extremely important. She believes it is something that we as a town strive for. It's important to have that in the public schools and it's something that she would like to see more of. She just wanted to say thank you to those organizations and everyone who participated. It's been a wonderful ride and she thanked all the councilors that came out this weekend.

Councilor Armstrong said she was happy to see the audience that's here today and those online that are here to participate. She commended Councilor Gluck Hoffman on the Shad Derby and it running so smoothly, the Shad Derby queen and the event which was wonderful, the Grand Marshal and everyone that attended the Shad Derby. Be careful, be hydrated, relax when you can, exercise for your health and enjoy life. She asked that everyone look out for the bikers and walkers out there and to heed the speed limit. There is much to do in the Town of Windsor. If you're looking for something to do she's sure it can be found as we have vast opportunities for our seniors and our young people. She congratulated all the graduates. For the young people, we sometimes talk about what they don't do and not of what they do. We should appreciate that. She added that the Council does care and appreciates all their comments. We are concerned and we anticipate more participation in the audience and the calls that come into us.

Councilor Walker thanked all people that came out and made their voices heard. We also heard from the Windsor Fife & Drum Corps and he'd like to thank his fellow colleagues who worked with him to make sure that those kids got some things that they desperately needed. It is difficult for moms to run back and forth and go to different homes to attempt to pick up these kids. You've seen the Windsor Fire & Drum Corps perform not only in Windsor but in different towns and he urges anyone who wants to learn more of what they do to go to their website. We need to find things for our kids to do because there is so much out there to lead them astray. He said he's been to the neighborhood where the solar farm is proposed and has seen all the communications back and forth. There is no doubt that people who purchase a home will look to see what is in the surroundings. Unfortunately, there is what is known as a solar farm that is coming. He's not sure what the landscaping around that property will do and it's unfortunate that people bought those homes before there was a solar farm. The flip side to that is that people have property rights and they can put up anything they want to put up as long as it's within the zoning rules. The bigger issue is the push, not just in Connecticut but it's strong in CT for state government to come in and tell municipalities what they will do with their zoning rules. The push is on the take away the say of local zoning boards and to put it in the hands of the town. He feels local people know what is best and they are best able to determine what fits in their neighborhood. Talk to your state representatives so when these bills come up, they can vote to defeat it and give back to municipalities some of the rights in what they can say. There are people in town that support these solar projects. There's one on Broad Street and when it came about the residents protested it as well as the school. It's still there and it does make noise regardless of what the decibel levels are. All the councilors and Town Manager did the best they could do. Regarding the budget, he hears the figure of \$8 put out. He thinks that most residents in town wish that it cost \$8 to educate a child in Windsor. It doesn't and it's very misleading. Just about \$0.75 of every dollar that the town spends goes toward the Board of Education budget. This budget in his opinion was not really about the schools but about affordability. With many seniors in this town and a lot of those that are getting by just barely, it's about what they can afford in taxes. We need to redirect the focus to affordability. It's about what people can do to stay in their homes. Currently, you have people choosing between buying gas or food. He looks forward to the deliberations this evening.

Deputy Mayor Klase thanked everyone who came out and spoke online.

Mayor Black-Burke stated that she lifted up the students that came out to speak. She spoke of Caleb and how she's read in his class before. She congratulated the Shad Derby court. She's really proud of these young women and all they have accomplished. They are a very accomplished group. She highlighted the award winning music department from Windsor High School who had many concerts over the last few weeks. She encouraged folks to go out on May 31st to join them at the 'Hartford's got Talent' talent show. They will be a part of the line up in the talent show. It will be held at the Bushnell. The award winning Gospel choir will be performing on stage at the Bushnell. On June 8th, Art and Bloom is taking place at the Windsor Art Center. There are so many things that happen in our town each and every week. She encouraged everyone to look through the nice bulletin that is out and what is being pushed out via social media. Windsor is a great community.

7) REPORT OF APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

a) Public Building Commission

Jim Bennett, Public Building Commission, stated the following:

Oliver Ellsworth School Humidity Mitigation Design - 9574

Construction is underway. A kickoff meeting was held with contractor, engineer, and town officials to set expectations and answer questions. All HVAC equipment has been manufactured and shipped. Project is expected to be completed by the end of August 2024.

Sage Park Middle School Slab Moisture Mitigation Project – 9567

Nothing new to report with Construction anticipated over the 2025 summer break.

Sage Park Middle School Energy HVAC Efficiencies Upgrades Project Phase 2 & 3 - 9542

Auditorium unit return air ductwork is being redesigned to reduce the noise levels. Design should be completed in the next two weeks and work shall be scheduled shortly thereafter. Project is expected to be completed by the end of June 2024.

Milo Peck School HVAC Construction – 9538

Nothing new to report

Clover Street School Roof Replacement Project – 9549

Nothing new to report

LP Wilson Community Center HVAC Renovations Project - 9551

Phase - 1

Major construction is completed. Sequence of operation programming for DOAS units and controls continues to progress with project expected to be completed by the end of June 2024

Phase - 2

Contracts have been issued and a kickoff meeting is scheduled for this week. Work to begin shortly and is expected to be completed by the end of August 2024.

330 Windsor Ave. Community Center Gym HVAC Renovations - 9550

Work continues to progress. Punch list review has been performed and contractor is working on identified corrections. Project is expected to be completed by the end of July 2024

Clover Street School Restroom ADA Code Compliances Phase-1 - 9552

Construction is underway. A kickoff meeting was held with contractor, engineer, and town officials to set expectations and answer questions. HazMat testing has been completed and quotes for abatement have been received. Project is expected to be completed by the end of August 2024.

LP Wilson BOE Restroom Renovations - 9553

Nothing new to report

Sage Park Middle School Roof Design Project – 9541

Contracts have been issued and a kickoff meeting is scheduled for this week. Work to begin shortly and is expected to be completed by the end of August 2024.

Poquonock Elementary School Roof Project - 9558

Nothing new to report

JFK Elementary School HVAC System Upgrades Phase III Project - 1932

Punch list items are being addressed and project completion is expected to be completed by the end of June 2024.

Welch Park Pool House Renovations Project - 1938

Work continues to progress. All interior masonry is complete. All interior and exterior slab has been poured. Roof decking is being repaired with roofing installed thereafter. Water and Electrical supply to building will be completed this week. Project is expected to be completed by the end of May 2024.

b) Board of Assessment Appeals

Milo Peck, Chair of the Board of Assessment Appeals, gave the following report:



He thanked the Town Assessor Josh Gaston and all of his associates for all the hard work they did during this revaluation period which isn't just the meetings, but the process beforehand with Vision. They worked very hard and he thanked them very much for their diligence.

The members of the Windsor Board of Assessment Appeals met 19 times for over 75 hours during the course of the 66 days from March 2, 2024 to May 7, 2024. Mr. Peck added that the amount of appeals of 177 was the highest he's ever seen in the 17 years that he's been on the board. The last time he saw something close to that is when they had 110 appeals.

These meetings resulted in the following Assessment changes:

Category	# Appeals	\$ Assessment	\$ Change	% Change
Residential Real Estate	132	49,697,690	(1,516,890)	-3.05%
Commercial/Industrial Real Estate	27	273,857,250	(2,379,790)	-0.87%
Personal Property	2	197,095	0	0.00%
Motor Vehicle	16	314,454	(42,007)	-13.36%
Total	177	324,066,489	(3,938,687)	-1.22%

*These figures treat the 432 Condos of the Rivers Bend Complex as a single commercial appeal as opposed to 432 residential appeals.

*These figures reflect the BAA's decisions prior to any values being phase-in.

Councilor Pelkey said he had the pleasure of sitting in on a few meetings. The patience that they have to have to repeat themselves time after time along with listening to citizens complain about things they don't have control over is commendable. He's not one to give praise lightly but putting in that many hours we should quadruple their salary. For Mr. Peck and the board members he thanked them for all they did. As far as education goes, he agrees with Mr. Peck about education and would love to hear his thoughts about anything we can do. We have time to plan this so we can better educate our neighbors in the town.

Councilor Pelkey asked what the average decrease is for a residential property. He just needs a ballpark figure. Mr. Peck responded that he doesn't think that it ever went down lower than \$20,000. They had some at \$10,000 or \$5,000 as well.

Councilor Naeem said thank you to him and the board. She thinks she saw them here every time she came to town hall. Mr. Peck stated that the Assessor's office had to work extremely hard because they were constantly going back and forth to the property specifications to validate information and or look up information which took a lot of time and preparation before the meetings.

Councilor Eleveld thanked everyone on the board and the town staff. His question is on the motor vehicles. You ended up with about 13% average reduction overall. What were the reasons for the reductions? Mr. Peck responded that you'd have someone come in with a car with a

mileage of 258,000. They go by the JD Powers values. Individuals get a reduction on the mileage once it hits a certain level. 90% of the reductions deal with the mileage deduction.

Councilor Armstrong asked for an example of an appeal for personal property. Mr. Peck stated if someone has a small business in town and you have office furniture, that furniture within the business is classified as personal property and is taxable. The same thing would happen with the property that is in a hotel. You look at the bedrooms, the beds, etc. and that is all considered personal property.

Councilor Walker thanked Mr. Peck as well. He thinks some of this conversation we're having tonight might help those that didn't win an appeal or didn't get a larger decrease in their assessments understand it better. While a lot of us can afford to pay higher taxes, everybody can't. It might look good on the outside but a lot of people in this town are saying they have a budget, they're on a fixed income, and some of us have heard it. But he thinks that by Mr. Peck explaining the process it helps.

Councilor Armstrong asked how you apply for an appeal of assessment. Mr. Peck said that the form is at the Assessor's office and the person fills that out. Then it goes to the Board of Assessment Appeals for review.

Mayor Black-Burke thanked him and the Assessment team for all they do.

8) TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Souza gave the following report:

Town of Windsor Memorial Day Observances

Memorial Day observances will be held on Monday, May 27, 2024.

An observance will be held at the Elm Grove Cemetery located in Poquonock beginning at 8:00 AM followed by a ceremony at Veteran's Cemetery at 9:00 AM. Following the ceremony at Veteran's Cemetery, the Memorial Day Parade will proceed to Windsor Town Hall via Poquonock Avenue. The parade usually arrives in the center of town between 9:45 AM and 10:00 AM. The 10:00 AM ceremony at town hall will include a special flag ceremony performed by Windsor Scouts.

This year's Parade Marshal is Windsor Police Officer Joshua Amaro. Amaro is an Afghanistan Combat Veteran and currently holds the rank of Staff Sergeant with the CT Army National Guard where he serves as an instructor for newly enlisted soldiers.

Within the Windsor Police Department, he has fulfilled roles as School Resource Officer, Field Training Officer and Peer Support. He is also an Assistant Lacrosse and Field Hockey Coach at Windsor High School.

In case of rain, one single ceremony will be held at 10:00 AM in the Town Hall Council Chambers. Contact Enita Jubrey at 860-285-1835 with any other questions.

Ground Breaking Ceremony of New Park at 458 Windsor Avenue

We are ready to celebrate 'breaking ground' on the new park project in Wilson. A ground breaking ceremony will be held on May 21, 2024 at 10:30 AM at 458 Windsor Avenue for this event. The park will be a transformative project set to breathe new life into a long vacant parcel, creating a multi-dimensional space at the gateway of the Wilson neighborhood. Planned enhancements include a parking lot, trails, trees, landscaping, habitat improvement, public art, food truck parking, picnic patio, playgrounds, pavilion, amphitheater and a great lawn. This is an investment in the community's well-being, offering spaces for recreation, relaxation and cultural enrichment. All are welcome to attend!

Public Works Open House

Come celebrate National Public Works week with us on May 23, 2024 from 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM at 99 Day Hill Road and meet the amazing public works crews who take care of our community! Step into large equipment, go for a ride in a plow truck, take a tour of the facility and learn more about what goes on behind the scenes at the Public Works facility.

MDC Water Line Replacement Project - Kellogg and Lennox

Starting the week of May 13th, the MDC will be replacing water lines on Kellogg Street and Lennox Avenue. This work will also include replacing water meter pits at a number of homes and select hydrants. The MDC has notified the residents of this scheduled work. The project is expected to take three months. Our plan is to repave these roads and several others in the neighborhood during the summer or fall of 2025.

MDC Sewer Line Extension Project – Pierson Lane

The MDC plans to begin construction this summer on extending the sanitary sewer line along a portion of Pierson Lane. The existing sewer line in Pierson Lane ends just west of the Palisado Cemetery. This project will extend the sewer line west under the railroad tracks to the area in front of the Windsor Tennis and Racquet Club. Work will require alternating one way travel and at times the road way will have to be closed in the area of the railroad. Work is expected to take 12 weeks. As the schedule gets firmed up, MDC will be providing public notices through various means of the altered traffic patterns.

Siting Council Decision on River Street Solar Project

The CT Siting Council made their decision on the proposed solar project at 445 River Street approving the petition with some conditions pertaining to items the town had expressed initial concerns with.

The Siting Council approved the revised layout plan. The revised plan provides a greater set back or buffer in this area near the residential property. The set back from this property line near the condos is now over 120 feet and was previously approximately 25 feet.

The CT siting Council also approved the enhanced screening along the River Street frontage. The town had an independent sound engineer review the applicant's pre-operational sound study. Our consultant found the applicant's sound study followed acceptable standards/methodology and based on the information submitted it appears the operation of the facility's equipment will not violate State and local noise regulations. The CT Siting Council is

requiring the applicant to conduct a post-operational noise study that documents compliance with state standards and if needed mitigate the noise to adhere to the standards.

According to our outside legal counsel, the courts afford deference to the decisions made by the Siting Council, but parties are still able to appeal those decisions if the Siting Council has acted unreasonably, arbitrarily, illegally or in abuse of its discretion. The deadline to file the appeal is 45 days from the date of the filing of the Siting Council decision.

Here is a link to view the Siting Council documents, correspondence and information related to the proposed project. https://portal.ct.gov/CSC/3_Petitions/Petition-Nos-1501-1600/PE1598.

Greater Hartford Legal Aid

The Social Services Department and Senior Center have partnered with Greater Hartford Legal Aid who provides free consulting services to address the critical needs of individuals related to obtaining government benefits, housing, senior issues, employment laws, and more. The Social Services department is hosting individual appointments for residents of all ages on the first Friday of every month from 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM. Walk-ins are welcome. The Senior Center appointments are reserved for residents who are 55 and up, and host appointments on the last Friday of every month. Residents may call the Windsor Senior Center to schedule a 20-minute appointment at 860-285-1992.

Volunteer Animal Feeders Needed

Northwest Park is seeking volunteer animal feeders to help feed, water and care for the heritage breed farm animals on display in the barn and pastures. Applicants must be at least 18 years old and able to work outside in all kinds of weather. The typical commitment is one scheduled evening or weekend shift (morning or evening) each week. Applications may be requested via phone (860-285-1886), email (northwestpark@townofwindsorct.com), or picked up from the park office in the Nature Center.

Red Cross Emergency Preparedness

The Red Cross will be at the Main Library to educate attendees about emergency preparedness on Wednesday, May 29, 2024 from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Learn how to prepare for natural disasters, fires, and other unexpected emergencies. Come ready with any questions you may have.

Registration required. To register, go here: <https://windsorpl.librarycalendar.com/event/red-cross-emergency-preparedness-21221> or call the Reference Desk at 860-285-1918.

Food Bank renovations and move back update

The Windsor Food Bank (temporarily located at 100 Addison Road) will close beginning Wednesday, May 29th to begin preparation to move back to the newly renovated food bank space at the L.P. Wilson Community Center. The food bank will reopen at L.P. Wilson for client distribution on Thursday, June 6th.

Food Bank clients will be notified of the schedule change. For questions, contact Windsor Social Services at 860-285-1839.



Bradley Airport

Bradley Airport is doing some work on their main runway this month. That will require a change in the flight patterns for a few weeks. There will be more traffic over the Hayden Station area than normal.

Town Manager Souza stated that the cost of having a referendum is from \$19,000-\$20,000.

Town Manger Souza said that there was a question about how the FY 24 budget to a degree helped mitigate revaluation. The FY 24 budget had \$755,000 in one time monies that were built into the budget with the expectation that those costs would not continue. In addition to that, there is \$300,000 for our housing rehabilitation program. Our desire is to keep that project funded because it's an important program. Those \$300,000 were also reduced from the town's side of the operating budget to mitigate as well. Essentially, over \$1 million was built into the FY 24 budget to try and mitigate to some degree the property revaluation impacts.

Councilor Pelkey said lots of people said they didn't know when the referendum would be and they feel they missed it because of that. He has many people proposing to maybe use the electronic billboards to put that information out ahead of time whenever we do set a vote for the next referendum. Town Manger Souza said that we can look into that. We only have one that is programmable. We share that with the Town of Bloomfield. We had received that through a shared services grant a good number of years ago. We can look at that in terms of visibility and the best place to put that.

Mayor Black-Burke asked the Town Manager to restate the cost of the referendum. Town Manager Souza said it is from \$19,000-\$20,000. That goes to pay for printing the ballots and the election workers stipends.

9) REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Town Improvements Committee – Councilor Smith – nothing to report.

Finance Committee – Councilor Naeem – nothing to report

Joint Town Council/Board of Education Committee – Deputy Mayor Klase – nothing to report.

Health and Safety Committee – Councilor Armstrong - nothing to report.

Personnel Committee – Deputy Mayor Klase said the Personnel Committee has two upcoming meetings on May 22nd and May 23rd.

10) ORDINANCES - None

11) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Update on proposed solar development at 445 River Street

Assistant Town Manager, Scott Colby, stated the Town Council authorized the Town Manager to request the CT Siting Council to hold a formal local public hearing and to also submit an application for 'party status' related to Verogy's Petition of Declaratory Ruling in December of 2023.

On May 9, 2024 the CT Siting Council approved Verogy's project with several conditions pertaining to items the town had expressed initial concerns with as outlined below.

As part of the CT Siting Council review process, three lengthy evidentiary hearings were conducted by the CT Siting Council, these were held on February 8th, March 19th, and April 9th. Evidentiary hearings included the presentation of witnesses, the numbering of all exhibits, requests for administrative notice, and the verification of all exhibits by appropriate witnesses. Witness panels were subject to cross-examination by the CT Siting Council and the parties and intervenors.

Setbacks from Property Lines

Final Decision

The CT Siting Council approved a revised layout plan (see attachment). The blue areas indicate the proposed solar panels. At the top or north of the site, the tan/brown shaded area indicates the area where the panels were originally proposed to be installed. The revised plan provides a greater set back or buffer in this area near the residential property. The set back from this property line near the condos to the northern section of the site are now roughly 123 feet compared to the developer's proposed 25 foot set back.

Vegetation/Screening

Final Decision

The CT Siting Council did not approve the berm. However, they approved the enhanced screening along the River Street frontage and the northern section of the site. Attached is a plan showing the landscape/screening along the River Street frontage and northern section of the site. The highlighted areas indicate plantings that the project developer has agreed to add to enhance the screening.

Noise

Final Decision

The CT Siting Council is requiring a post-construction operational noise study be completed that documents compliance with state standards and the identification of any noise mitigation measures that are employed to adhere to the standards.

Decommissioning

Final Decision

The Siting Council ruled that the lease is a private agreement between WSO and the property owner. At the end of the lease term, control of the solar facility site reverts back to the property owner. The CT Siting Council does not have the authority to supersede restoration provisions of the site lease or require additional site restoration conditions beyond those established by the site lease. The property owner would determine site restoration conditions at the time of Project decommissioning.

According to our outside legal counsel, the courts afford deference to the decisions made by the CT Siting Council, but parties are still able to appeal those decisions if the CT Siting Council has acted unreasonably, arbitrarily, illegally or in abuse of its discretion. The deadline to file the appeal is 45 days from the date of the filing of the CT Siting Council decision.

Mayor Black-Burke said there has been a lot of work at the State level in regards to legislation to look at the level of control a Siting Council would have. She knows that for State Representative Garibay and State Representative Jaime Foster and others this is something they are continuously working on just to look at the level of control a Siting Council does have, especially if it will impact the town.

Councilor Walker asked about the screening that the Siting Council recommended and if its vegetation and if there is a height restriction to it? How tall is this screen going to be? Assistant Town Manager Colby said they will be placing new trees and shrubs in that area at a variety of different heights. They worked with the town to ensure that they were a species of plants and trees that would grow full and lush within the next few years so that it does provide adequate screening. It should blend into the neighborhood naturally. Councilor Walker said if they get too high then there's the possibility that they will block sunlight which is what a solar farm needs. He's sure they are not going to dig into their revenues. It's unfortunate because it's a huge area, but the town did the best they could and we'll see where it goes.

Councilor Pelkey asked why is it being recommended not to appeal the decision. Assistant Town Manager Colby said with an appeal it doesn't guarantee that the town will be able to get any of the items that they are expressing concern for changed. It doesn't mean that those would occur. It would be a cost expense to go through the courts to be able to gain some traction to enhance screening or do anything else that there is a concern with but it doesn't guarantee any of those changes would be made.

Councilor Armstrong asked if the solar farm had to be removed would it be labeled as a hazardous removal and it would require an additional cost. Assistant Town Manager Colby said to his knowledge and understanding these materials are not hazardous and that the cost of the removal is on the petitioner at the end of life cycle which is expected to be 30-35 years. The petitioner would be the ones required by the Siting Council to remove those panels.

Deputy Mayor Klase said she knows that this property was eligible for a solar farm because it was zoned agricultural. Is there a zoning that exists where the town could identify the land that is more suited for solar. We do want green energy and that is one of the Council's commitments but we want to be able to say that we'd like it at a particular site like maybe the landfill where there isn't a trench. If a company is looking, we can say these are the preferred areas that will not impact neighborhoods. Town Manager Souza said that any project that is over 1 meg they can go in any zone they want to unless the CT Siting Council overrules the zoning. We do allow solar facilities currently under the zoning regulations if they are generating power for their use on site. We do have regulations that are in place for that. If it's less than a meg, they can have the opportunity to look at our zoning regulations and talk to town staff. If it goes beyond that, they just have to notify the town and go through the petition process with the state. We are extremely limited for anything over 1 meg.

Councilor Eleveld asked what is the cost of an appeal. Assistant Town Manager Colby said he does not have a cost of how much that would be to go through an appeal process.

Councilor Eleveld asked if we were to do that for this project wouldn't that put us on the slippery slope for the group that didn't want to see Dollar Tree go in and then now saying okay Windsor now you go and pay for the cost to fight Dollar Tree (used as an example only). We provided an opportunity for a hearing and we spent \$20,000 or so for that but to go to an appeal we are looking at six figures at least. Then what do we do when the next Dollar Tree pops up and the residents that live 150 feet from it could say, oh this isn't what we want and they want us to stop it when it can't be stopped? It's an issue that we need to consider in this process. He just wants to put that out there. He's not thrilled with the project and the location but unfortunately CT Siting Council has jurisdiction and we don't have much that we can say about it.

Mayor Black-Burke stated the Bill is House Bill #5507.

12) NEW BUSINESS

- a) Approve Public Relations job descriptions

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Gluck Hoffman that items 12 C and 12 D be moved ahead in the agenda before item 12 A.

Motion Passed 5-4-0 (Councilors Eleveld, Gluck Hoffman, Pelkey and Walker opposed)

Mayor Black-Burke said that they were looking at the timing and they wanted to make sure that they had enough time for deliberation and that is why the Democratic side had put that motion forward. They thought that was something that everyone would want to do.

Councilor Eleveld suggested to Mayor Black-Burke that a Special Town Council meeting be set for budget deliberations within the next few days. He believes it can be done on Wednesday if we don't have it hybrid and we have plenty of time notice-wise to do that. Thursday is not an option as that is the Town Committee caucus meeting. He believes we are all going to want to attend for our respective reasons. Or we can just recess this meeting to another date. He's not sure if there is a notice requirement for something like that.

Councilor Eleveld said there's been no discussion on our side relative to what your side is proposing at this point so we are a little on the blind side over here.

Deputy Mayor Klase stated she totally understands that, however, it was on the agenda, we discussed it during the preparation meeting for the agenda and we didn't make up anybody's minds. People came out and spoke. We know what we stand for, we understand that. It's a deliberation session and she thinks they should be able to deliberate their thoughts publicly. She doesn't understand the movement of this as there are conflicts for some of us. We have meetings set for the rest of this week and the longer this sits, the longer it will take for the voters to get the budget and vote on it. The longer we hold people in limbo regarding their tax bill. She thinks they should continue with the agenda as published.

Councilor Eleveld said that in order to change the agenda, it requires 6 votes and he believes the vote was 5-4-0. So you'd have to continue with the agenda in the order that it was laid out prior to the motion.

MOTION RESCINDED

Deputy Mayor Klase rescinded her earlier motion.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Armstrong that the job descriptions for the positions of Senior Communications Specialist and Communications Specialist be approved as presented and the position of Senior Communications Specialist be placed in the Administrative Pay Plan in pay grade 6.

Sophia Castellanos, Human Resources Manager and Enita Jubrey, Assistant to the Town Manager and Public Relations Specialist, gave an overview of the item.

Ms. Castellanos stated the change to the title from Communications and Community Outreach Specialist to Communications Specialist is to better align the title with industry standards or practices.

Adding the Senior Communications Specialist position creates the capacity for career development within the Public Relations division. It furthers the goal of enhancing recruitment and retention in the organization by providing opportunities for professional development and growth. As employees develop more knowledge, build their skills, and become more valuable to the department and the town, this allows opportunities for career advancement.

The Senior Communications Specialist position will have some of the same job duties as the Communication Specialist position but will be responsible for strategic planning, training employees, developing methods to analyze the success of various outreach efforts, and coordinating, scheduling and assigning work. This position would also be involved in higher-level projects/assignments.

The Communications Specialist position will be more focused on planning and creating content with guidance from the Senior Communications Specialist.

Councilor Pelkey asked for the Communications Specialist, he sees that the minimum qualifications were down graded from needing a Bachelor's degree to now needing an Associate's degree. Why do we need to have a degree at all for this position? Why is that a requirement? Ms. Castellanos stated that it is really just the change of going from a Bachelor's degree to an Associate's degree. There has to be some level of understanding and that is just a basis point.

Councilor Pelkey then asked if we could substitute work experience instead of the degree. Ms. Castellanos said they could look into that. Town Manger Souza said there is language within the minimum qualifications that allows for equivalent combination of work experience. So we do have that there. Town Manager Souza added this is in the position description. The way



that you recruit nowadays you don't put out your job description. We are using other tools to demonstrate to folks that we are open to all different types of experiences.

Councilor Gluck-Hoffman thanked them for the job description. Just as Town Manager Souza said, you have to capture people and she knows that job experience is important but working with folks for many years in Public Relations, Communications, and social media, you have to have all of this in there. She thanked them again for a great job description.

Councilor Smith asked if there are any requirements to seek minority candidates in the search for this position. Ms. Castellanos explained they use the same means that is used to post all positions. We do reach out to different organizations in the community, we have a specific group of people, different emails and contacts that we do to ensure we reach all demographics within the community.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

b) Approve tax suspense list

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Gluck Hoffman, that \$305,451.30 motor vehicle, supplemental, and personal property taxes be transferred to the Suspense Tax Book from the following respective Grand List years.

OCTOBER 1, 2016 -	\$	745.28
OCTOBER 1, 2018 -	\$	198.49
OCTOBER 1, 2019 -	\$	311.80
OCTOBER 1, 2020 -	\$	<u>304,195.73</u>
	\$	305,451.30

Cathy Elliot, Tax Collector, stated in accordance with *Connecticut State Statutes* §12-165, the Suspense List must be submitted annually to the Town Council. This list consists of motor vehicle, supplemental, and personal property taxes on the 2020 Grand List that are considered not collectable. Also included is one account from the 2016 Grand List, one account from the 2018 Grand List and two accounts from the 2019 Grand List which were added on after those lists had been suspended and are still showing as active accounts.

Various methods of collection have been pursued and all vehicle registrations have been reported to the Motor Vehicle Department. Transferring these bills to the Suspense Book does not mean we cannot collect if the taxpayer appears or is found through further efforts. However, this transfer presents a more accurate picture of the town's accounts receivable at this time.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

c) Budget deliberations and adoption of revised FY 2025 budget

Councilor Naeem felt they brought forth a budget that was very strategic and in the reductions that they made to make sure they had fiscal stability in the long run. She feels they were very responsible on the use of opening cash as well. We recognize that there is a significant tax increase in town, but the significance is not because of the increase of expenditures, it is because of the impacts of revaluation. As we look to move forward, it is important to protect the financial stability of our residents. It is also very important to protect and support our town services which includes our education services. She knows that earlier tonight, Ms. Zotter shared some numbers and Councilor Walker eluded that \$8 per month is not the full cost of the Board of Education budget. She doesn't think they are here to talk about the full cost, rather we're here to talk about expenditure increases in particular because that's where there is a lot of discussion. She pointed out that beyond that \$8, if we were to bring all the expenditures down to \$0, we would be saving an average household in Windsor \$18 per month. For those \$18 per month in savings we would potentially be laying off 40-50 full-time employees between the town and the Board of Education. That is going to be a significant decrease in service levels. She feels that is not something that they can afford to do as a town. She talked about protecting the financial stability and earlier we heard from folks about the importance of making sure there is support there for our seniors. She would like to make sure that they are looking tonight at increasing the senior tax credit and doubling it as we look into the next budget that will be passed. There are other adjustments on the budget that we saw and she'd like the Town Manager to touch on that a bit.

Town Manager Souza said in preparing for the phase-in, there was a transfer to the Great Pond Improvement District which is based upon the overall taxes that are generated within that district. That transfer was not reflected downward. That was an oversight on the staff's part in preparing for the evening of the final adoption of the budget by the Council. What that does is it allows the Council to reduce the expenditure overall level by \$355,000 which is located in General Services of the budget. We apologize for that oversight. That does not impact any services. We are still meeting the obligation of our interlocal agreement with the Great Pond Improvement District. That provides some flexibility for the Town Council. If the Council were to reduce that \$355,000 in expenditures, there are a series of other motions that would need to take place relative to overall revenues, the overall expenditures and the current levy. If there were no other changes made to the budget by the Council, that \$355,000 reduction would result in a mill rate of 30.28 mills. The budget that was not passed on the 14th would have had a 30.37 mill rate associated with it.

Councilor Pelkey asked how we arrived at the \$305,000 figure for the Senior Tax Relief. Town Manager Souza said that \$305,000 is based upon the number of eligible participants per the ordinance that the Town Council has in place.

Councilor Pelkey asked how much does the \$305,000 translate to for each person? Town Manager Souza said it varies upon your income, if you meet the state program or if you are a part of the local option. He explained the different ways you can get the money and how much you would get.

Councilor Pelkey asked if we proceed with doubling this benefit would that possibly be \$800 to \$3,750? Town Manager Souza said conceptually that is correct but they'd have to work through that. He noted that several years ago when the Council made an adjustment, if it's included within the operating budget, then we'd have to come back to the Council to make an amendment to the ordinance. The Council would have to conduct a public hearing and then act on the amendment to put into effect what was in the adopted budget.

Councilor Pelkey asked if we are currently using all \$305,000? Town Manager Souza said he does not have that information will him but some years we may not reach that full amount, it depends upon those people that are re-upping and new people that have joined.

Councilor Pelkey asked if the Town Manager can give an estimated guess that we hit 98% of it versus 50%? He's trying to see what the need is. Town Manager Souza said in recent years it's probably 90%.

Councilor Armstrong asked if the mandatory recount remained the same? Town Manager Souza said it did.

Councilor Smith said we are trying to add to the Senior Tax Credit and people that are disabled. In his opinion, this is a very much needed service to give to seniors and the disabled some type of tax relief. If the numbers work out to be \$800 / \$1,300 that's where the numbers are. He feels that is totally acceptable. What would be the ramifications of having this tax abatement? Town Manager Souza said if there's a qualified individual that makes \$22,000 or less they currently are eligible under the state program \$1,250. On top of that they are able to receive local funds in the amount of \$1,875.

Town Manager Souza said in regards to Councilor Pelkey's question earlier, he would envision the \$1,875 would be doubled if we increase it.

Town Manager Souza wanted to clarify what he said earlier. He is using terminology from when the State of Connecticut gave us reimbursement for this program. The State of Connecticut still sets the income guidelines. What the dollar amounts are for the State is we used to get \$200,000 per year in reimbursement from that 'state' program. They did away with that about 5-6 years ago. What we refer to as the local match is the municipality has the ability by local option to increase the benefit to those that are eligible under the State program as well as to increase the income cap. In other words, expand the umbrella so more people can qualify.

Councilor Eleveld said the \$305,000 we are doing now is all on us at this time and the Town Manager's number for the State is irrelevant because it's all coming out of our pocket anyways. Town Manager Souza said yes, on that perspective, yes it is not irrelevant because they set the income thresholds. Councilor Eleveld said but we set the amounts that we can credit. Town Manager Souza said for the local portion of it we do.

Councilor Eleveld said if we were to double it to \$610,000 the proposal would be to either increase the income cap and/or increase the amount received at the various levels. Town Manager Souza said his recommendation would be that you don't increase the income cap

because at this point in time, that application deadline has passed but it does not mean that we cannot increase the benefit amount. Just note that the benefit amount needs to be determined prior to and giving enough time for staff to prepare the billing for this billing cycle. It's doable but it does impact the calendar for when the bills can be prepared and sent out.

Councilor Eleveld said so we'd have to run through this quickly between this meeting and the following meeting to get the ordinance approved and on the books. Would there be a possibility of looking at the Veteran's Relief program? Town Manager Souza said the Council adjusted that last year. Councilor Eleveld asked do we have any more room to increase that. Town Manager Souza said he'd have to look into that.

Councilor Pelkey asked how many people currently utilize the Veteran's Relief program. Assistant Town Manager Colby said there are 287 participants in that program.

Councilor Pelkey asked are we suggesting with the Great Pond miscalculation, does that wash out the increase. Town Manager Souza said yes.

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Councilor Smith to amend the proposed budget for General Services of \$19,642,690 by \$355,000 to \$19,287,690.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

MAIN MOTION

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to accept all other service unit budgets as adopted by the Town Council on April 24, 2024.

AMENDED MOTION

MOVED by Councilor Pelkey, seconded by Councilor Walker to amend the motion and reduce the Board of Education budget by \$1.3 million, reduce Community Services by \$108,860 and reduce Open Space by \$65,000.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman stated she cannot support moving funds from Community Services.

Mayor Black-Burke stated she cannot support reducing the budget of the Board of Education. As a mother to a student that was part of the Covid class, in the summer she will take time to use her own money to ensure that her son continues to be where he is supposed to be for his education. So reducing the Board of Education by another \$1.3 million is something she cannot do in good conscience.

Councilor Armstrong stated she does not support reducing the Board of Education, Community Services or Open space.

AMENDED MOTION

Motion Failed 3-5-1 (Mayor Black-Burke, Deputy Mayor Klase, Councilors Armstrong, Naeem and Smith opposed and Councilor Gluck Hoffman abstained)

MAIN MOTION

Motion Passed 5-4-0 (Councilors Eleveld, Gluck Hoffman, Pelkey and Walker opposed)

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Councilor Smith to amend the total proposed General Fund expenditures for the FY 2025 budget of \$143,670,840 by \$355,000 to \$143,315,840.

Councilor Eleveld said we are going to send this back to the taxpayers with no real change. Deputy Mayor Klase said that is a pretty accurate portrayal. We took some money and added it to the Senior Relief program.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman said they had discussed the creativity programs. We did not discuss certain people in certain positions with certain salaries. She does not want to delete programs.

Deputy Mayor Klase clarified that when they had their prior deliberations, the Board of Education came to us and said that if we reduce it by any other things there is going to be positions. They've looked at other scenarios from the Town Manager that showed positions at a certain point. The proposal that was made is going to require position reductions.

Mayor Black-Burke said that she thinks it's been very clear overall that on the town side as well on the Board of Education side that it would be a total of about 50 positions total for the town as well as Board of Education. Also keep in mind that the contractual obligations on both sides must be met. The cost of living will continue to go up. She just wants to make sure for everyone listening that we do have contractual obligations that is a bulk of a budget.

Councilor Gluck Hoffman said she is well aware of the contractual obligations.

Councilor Eleveld said we are having the same problem that every community in the state is having. Hartford got hit with a \$44 million deficit. Multiple towns that have had revaluation and/or have had the ESSER funds disappear are all rejecting their budgets. The fact that that is happening is clear that there is a problem. It isn't our making. It's not our fault. The Federal government gave us money and presumed that we would fund it later and reality is you're asking taxpayers, on top of a revaluation year, to cover this. Next year, we have a secondary problem which many people may not realize and it could be much worse next year. He can't support this. You're giving the taxpayers back the same budget, with no changes effectively. He can't support that.

Councilor Walker said it is a fact that nothing has changed in the budget that was presented to the voters. It failed but maybe it will pass this time. We keep talking about the Board of Education. Councilor Eleveld mentioned the ESSER positions that the Superintendent knew because were temporary positions. He agreed to that. All those temporary positions have been filled. He went to one of the budget presentations at 330 Windsor Avenue. He hears people saying we will make reductions, any reductions at all 20, 40, 50. It's great to say those statements but we need to back it up with facts. How many actual positions will be eliminated, if any, if there are reductions in the budget. We're still an alliance district. Granted that we have kids that are doing very well, but are we getting the best bang for our buck. With the reduction,



not an increase in student population, it's \$5 million that the Board of Education is looking for. This is a trend every year to increase it. As Councilor Eleveld said it's not just Windsor that has to do it. He's heard people in town say to his face, 'you can't touch the Board of Education budget and we're not going to touch it.' It's fine. He's only just one vote. The citizens have said we need to do more. We can vote on it tonight, but he would definitely never vote for something like this.

Councilor Pelkey stated that it was 11:00 PM and they are at the end of their meeting.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to extend the regular meeting to 11:30 PM.

Motion Failed 5-4-0 (Councilors Eleveld, Gluck Hoffman, Pelkey and Walker opposed)

Mayor Black-Burke said that tonight they have not concluded their business for the evening. They will look to come back to continue this business.

MOVED by Councilor Eleveld, seconded by Councilor Armstrong to adjourn the meeting at 11:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary