



TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING – VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON
April 24, 2024
Special Town Council Meeting
Council Chambers

APPROVED 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