

**BUDGET MEETING MINUTES  
TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL  
HYBRID MEETING  
6<sup>th</sup> FLOOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND ZOOM**

**March 16, 2023 – 7:00 P.M.**

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*Kathleen Pagan*

**Members Present:** Steve Jones, Chair; John Reagan, Vice Chair; Sami Khan, Lou Luba (Zoom, left at 7:30PM), Katie Murray, Tammy Nuccio, Colleen Yudichak

**Members Absent:** none

**Also Present:** Brian Foley, Town Manager; Lisa Hancock, Director, Finance & Records (Zoom); Mike Wilkinson, Director, Administrative Services; Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent (Zoom); John Littell, Fire Chief/Director of Public Safety; Kathy Pagan, Town Clerk; Michele Manas, Collector of Revenue; Jason Lawrence, Assessor;

1. Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04P.M.
2. Consideration of the Town Manager's Proposed FY 2023-2024 Budget

Mr. Foley reviewed the presentation for each department noted.

a. Finance

Accounting Services

Ms. Hancock provided information regarding payroll.

In the FY 22/23 budget, the union negotiated wages were not included, nor were the non-affiliated wages. The union budget was approved in FY 22/23 after the budget was adopted. The funds are set aside in a contingency account. A reduction in the contingency account is a reallocation of the FY 22/23 wages set aside for the respective departments. For non-affiliated staff, the FY22/23 salary is listed as the salary for FY 21/22. Raises for FY 22/23 are in the contingency. When the FY 23/24 budget is done, the salaries for FY 22/23 are in the budget and raises for FY 23/24 are in payroll contingency.

Ms. Nuccio asked about the MUNIS line item. Ms. Hancock explained that this is for the annual software support cost which increases every year. Ms. Nuccio asked what is driving the increase on office supplies. Ms. Hancock noted that they need to purchase more checks and paper products although they have reduced how much is printed.

Ms. Murray asked about efforts to be more digital rather than paper oriented. Ms. Hancock reviewed a number of ways they have gone digital but noted that some items, including tax documents, still need to be printed. The MUNIS upgrade may be in the FY24/25 budget – they are awaiting more information. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Ms. Hancock responded that it is.

Independent Audit

Ms. Murray asked why the contract allows for a substantial increase in cost. Ms. Hancock explained that this dates back to a former Town Manager, and they do not have a formal, binding written contract. She negotiated the price as far down as possible. The firm is having staffing difficulties and there are more mandates requiring more manpower. The only other option was to go out to bid and research showed that pricing was significantly higher. She is very satisfied with the services provided by the vendor. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and

objectives for FY24. Ms. Hancock responded that it is but there is a possibility that this will substantially increase in the next budget process.

#### Miscellaneous Support Services

Ms. Hancock explained that the copier is a lease replacement and services will be needed for printers (Xerox) that are not under contract.

Ms. Nuccio expressed concern about the increase in the price for gas. Mr. Wilkinson explained that they do not know what the price will be on January 1<sup>st</sup> so the blended number \$3.25/gal was used after reviewing the numbers. Ms. Hancock explained that they cannot get gas on a fiscal year basis and noted that they have reduced the number of gallons. If there are savings, they will go to the general fund. Mr. Wilkinson explained that they try to be a little conservative since they do not know what the cost will be.

Ms. Murray asked about the 71% increase in the Fuel & Oil line. Ms. Hancock explained that during COVID the vehicles were used less, and fewer visits were made to homes. The account covers the vehicles including the pool car and reflects the number of gallons being used. Ms. Hancock will review the data. Ms. Murray commented that moving to digital services would save on the purchasing and maintenance of copy machines. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Ms. Hancock responded that it is.

Mr. Khan commented that the price for gas is too high. He asked if town employees are allowed to take cars home and how far they are allowed to travel. Ms. Hancock responded that only the building inspector takes a car home; otherwise, the vehicles remain onsite for town business. Mr. Foley noted that the activity report illustrates the use of building inspector's vehicle. Ms. Hancock noted that 4 individuals from the DPW take vehicles homes as well. Mr. Khan requested that the town logos on the vehicles be larger. Ms. Murray confirmed that when vehicles are taken home, personal use is not permitted.

#### IT/Telecommunications

Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Ms. Hancock responded that it is.

#### Revenue Services

Ms. Hancock noted that Quality Data Services (QDS) is the software used to manage tax collection.

Ms. Murray asked what efforts have been made to move to more digital usage. Ms. Manas explained that they send files so paper copies are not needed'; however, this cannot be done with motor vehicle, personal property, or small bank items. Last year, 3,100 bills were sent electronically to escrow holding companies. Mr. Foley confirmed that they have looked at regionalization but there are many variances between towns and it is not viable. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Ms. Manas responded that it is.

#### Assessment Services

Mr. Jones asked if a reevaluation is coming soon. Mr. Lawrence explained that it will take place in 2024. They will go out for an RFP in the spring. Depending on cost, it may be done internally once again.

Ms. Nuccio asked for detail on professional services. Mr. Lawrence explained that the vendors (including Vision) have had increases. Ms. Nuccio asked about motor vehicle evaluations. Mr. Lawrence explained that moving trucks to personal property should provide more accurate data since value declarations will not be estimates. They may save on NADA pricing guides if they are no longer needed as well.

Ms. Murray asked about the increase in the salary line and why money is being transferred to CNRE. Mr. Foley explained that an adjustment was made based on retention. Mr. Lawrence explained that funds are being transferred to CNRE for the reevaluation. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Mr. Lawrence responded that it is.

#### Board of Assessment Appeals

Ms. Nuccio commented that only \$200 is traditionally spent. Mr. Foley will review this. Mr. Lawrence noted that \$200 is for training if an employee wishes to take a class. Legal notices are also required.

Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Mr. Lawrence responded that it is.

#### Town Clerk

Ms. Nuccio asked how long minutes books need to be kept. Ms. Pagan explained that they need to be kept permanently. Funds are for department items that are both paper and digitalized. They are required by state statute to keep all minutes, land records, and maps in paper form.

Ms. Murray asked about overtime and temporary help. Ms. Pagan explained that this is for if help is needed during election season and for emergencies (temp help). Ms. Murray asked about the service contracts and code updates lines. Ms. Pagan noted that it covers the dog system and the onboard system. These contracts have not changed. The code update line is for everything that needs to be submitted to general code for maintenance and preservation of the town code and charter. This includes ordinances, code changes, and updates. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Ms. Manas responded that it is.

Mr. Jones asked if storage is sufficient or if expansion will be needed. Ms. Manas responded that they should have adequate storage for the next 10 years.

#### Public Safety

Mr. Reagan asked for information on the reduction in ambulance and fire suppression. Mr. Foley explained that it was based on actuals and discussions with Chief Littell. Chief Littell explained that he makes significant cuts at his level. He and Mr. Foley reviewed each line item and compromised in the overall budget. Mr. Reagan asked if, with the Town Manager's proposed budget, if the Chief feels he

can continue to offer level services that have been provided to the town. Chief Littell responded that they do not know what will happen i.e. increased calls, number of buildings, weather, etc. but they will try to provide the best service possible and stay with what they are doing.

Ms. Nuccio commented that they passed legislation for \$1.5M to assist fire departments that make highway calls. She asked if Tolland has utilized this. Chief Littell explained that Tolland has recouped about \$6,000 from the \$850K the state has disbursed. Ms. Nuccio asked about the increase in overtime. Chief Littell explained that they have had to catch up on vacation days, sick time, and COVID had a big impact. If coverage cannot be found, they have to call someone in for a shift or hold someone over for a shift to keep services running. They also have mandatory training, injuries, and have lost many of part timers. Additionally, travel time to local hospitals is now longer increasing turnaround times. Ms. Nuccio asked if they bill for mutual aid calls from an ambulance perspective. Chief Littell noted that all ambulance items are billed and the revenue goes into the ambulance fund account. They also do rescue billing that also goes into the account. Ms. Nuccio asked for breakdown of the town's calls and mutual aid calls. Chief Littell explained that they have lost revenue recently due to the shortage of ambulances (awaiting delivery and down 1). Towns have come to assist Tolland during this time. Ms. Nuccio requested data on the mutual aid calls. She asked what can be done to try to get more volunteers. Chief Littell explained that turnaround time to hospitals impacts this as well and he is drafting a recruitment and retention plan. They recently started running in-house classes and the UConn program is an asset. Mr. Foley noted that one of his goals is to look at volunteer recruitment of firefighters. Ms. Nuccio requested a cost benefit analysis to bring the Explorer Program back online. Ms. Nuccio asked about temporary help in fire suppression. Chief Littell explained this covers staffing for ambulance and fire.

Mr. Jones asked if the building for the Animal Control Officer (ACO) is sufficient. Mr. Foley noted that he looked at it with Mr. Lappen and it will be added to the capital improvement plan. Mr. Jones asked if they have considered nearby towns for regionalization. Chief Littell explained that the need to be careful how far out they go and consider if there is a different court system. Mr. Jones asked if they should look at staffing. Chief Littell noted that they need to look at call volume and the budget.

Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for fire suppression to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Chief Littell responded that they will do the best with what is given to them, but he needs to know the level of service they would like him to provide. Ms. Murray asked what is driving the communication increase in ambulance services. Chief Littell explained that 911 dispatch services split between fire, ambulance, and police is the largest driver. Many costs have increased. Ms. Murray asked about the service contracts. Chief Littell noted that this includes annual maintenance of the washer and dryer at station 140 and servicing of stretchers. Ms. Murray asked about the impact due to the reduction on the training and development line. Chief Littell explained that more people are attending conferences online and they will offer some training in-house. Ms. Murray asked about the increase in the computer software. Chief Littell noted that this is the firewall. Ms. Murray asked about fuel and oil costs being higher than other departments. Chief Littell explained that they need to forecast and consider the call volume. If he falls short, he will need to make it up in another area. Ms. Murray asked about fire prevention and other services and fees as well as books and subscriptions and other equipment. Chief Littell explained that maintenance costs for vehicles have increased. Fire Marshal DaBica explained that every few years they get a new code and need multiple books/documents. In terms of other equipment, they need a backup camera as a replacement. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Fire Marshal DaBica responded that it is.



Mr. Jones asked how the mutual aid agreement is going. Fire Marshal DaBica responded that it is going well and is beneficial.

Ms. Murray asked if the reduction in the communication line (ACO) impacts services and what is covered under other services and fees. Chief Littell responded that it does not. Other services and fees include annual software, dog licensing, and dues/membership fees. Miscellaneous costs address maintenance of the ACO vehicle. Ms. Hancock explained that due to reporting requirements, the expenditures are run through the dog fund that receives the transfers. It has to be accounted for separately. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Chief Littell responded that they will make do with what they have.

Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24 for water supply. Mr. Foley responded that this is a CT Water formula. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24 for Emergency Preparedness. Chief Littell responded that it is. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24 for CERT. Chief Littell responded that it is.

#### General Government

Mr. Jones asked about ClearGov and training and development. Ms. Hancock clarified that various savings were used for ClearGov, the digital budget book and capital budget software. Mr. Foley noted that he has started training Ms. Nivison on human resources. The line includes ICMA conference attendance as well.

Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Mr. Foley responded that it is.

#### Town Council

Ms. Murray asked about professional services. Mr. Foley noted that this is clerk services. She asked about the printing line. Ms. Hancock explained that this is for the adopted budget book, the annual report they are statutorily required to report, and explanatory text on the referendum. Advertising is for public hearings etc. Dues and memberships include CCM and CRCOG and training and development are for miscellaneous items. Office supplies cover frames for proclamations. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Mr. Wilkinson replied that it is.

#### Economic Development

Ms. Nuccio asked about professional services. Mr. Foley explained that they are considering hiring a consultant for an economic impact study of low-income housing on businesses.

Ms. Murray asked about dues and memberships. Mr. Wilkinson responded that they have not spent this since 2017. Ms. Murray asked about the online map of vacant commercial and industrial properties, the inventory, and the survey. It was noted that the map and inventory are posted on the Economic Development area of the website. The Commission has not yet completed the survey

report. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Mr. Foley believes that it is and will review the dues and membership.

#### Human Resource Administration Human Resource Benefits

Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Mr. Wilkinson responded that it is.

#### Health Insurance

Ms. Murray asked about the health insurance line. Mr. Wilkinson explained that part of the health insurance is the Teamster union plan. Self-insurance has been done since 2010/2011. Ms. Murray asked if the town could be self-insured without the BOE. Mr. Wilkinson responded that it could not – they need to pool with the BOE. Ms. Murray if the town side has ever run a deficit compared to the BOE. Mr. Wilkinson responded that they generally run a deficit in comparison. It is not examined on an individual basis, but they have 2 accounts. The town is too small to self-insure on its own. Ms. Murray would like to know how much the BOE's contributions have covered the town over the years particularly when the expense for the BOE is a considerable increase for its operating budget. She asked about total savings since the program was instituted. Mr. Wilkinson explained that his understanding is that this year they would have paid \$2M more according to Ms. Waterhouse. Ms. Murray asked why unemployment compensation is down and insurance is up. Mr. Wilkinson explained that a 7-year rolling average is used. Insurance rate renewal is higher and the BOE has some older policies that are full life so there are always claims. Ms. Murray asked about post-employment benefits and employee pensions. Mr. Wilkinson explained that this is an actuarial analysis of what would need to be paid when people retire. There is a partial plan for non-union employees. In terms of pensions, Ms. Hancock explained that they factor in a little attrition. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Mr. Wilkinson responded that it is.

#### Town-wide Insurance

Mr. Wilkinson explained this is coverage for employees and public officials.

Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for town-wide insurance and firefighter insurance for FY24. Mr. Wilkinson responded that it is.

#### Legal

Ms. Nuccio asked about other services and fees. Ms. Hancock explained that this is for bond counsel.

Ms. Murray expressed concern that the budget may not be enough for FY 23/24 given the Road Salt Task Force. Mr. Foley noted that it is a concern. Ms. Hancock explained that if needed, and savings are available this is how it would be addressed; otherwise, they would go to the Council for a supplemental appropriation. Mr. Wilkinson explained that this is issue-based. Ms. Murray asked how many labor contracts are upcoming in FY23/24. Mr. Wilkinson noted that they are starting firefighter at the end of this fiscal year and it will flow into next year. There could be arbitration or grievances – it too is issue-based. Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Mr. Wilkinson responded that it is.

### Probate Services

Ms. Hancock noted that this budget is billed to other communities based on grand list values. It is recorded in the revenue account.

Ms. Murray asked if this budget is sufficient for the department to meet its goals and objectives for FY24. Mr. Foley responded that he believes so.

### Registrar of Voters

Mr. Jones asked about temporary help. Ms. Hancock explained that this is for the deputy registrars they are cross-training for the future. Mr. Foley noted that they do not yet know the impact if any.

Ms. Nuccio asked if anything is planned for early voting. Mr. Foley responded that they do not yet have any information.

### Additional Discussion

Ms. Nuccio commented that she did not see the contingency account under Finance. Ms. Hancock explained that it is what they budget on average. Personnel adjustment decreased and is where they keep non-affiliated anticipated raises. It also includes estimated increases for unions which have not settled (fire and Teamsters) as well as funds for attrition and final benefits (vacation, sick leave etc.). Other items include funding for the town historian if needed and this year they added funds for the Veterans Recognition Commission, the Permanent Celebration Committee, and the Historic District Commission. Personnel adjustment includes how GAAP requires payroll to split weeks/years. Ms. Nuccio commented that every payroll has an increase. Mr. Wilkinson explained that those are raises from FY 22/23. Ms. Hancock explained that only the funds needed are moved. Funds that are not needed are returned to fund balance or go to lines that need to be managed. Ms. Nuccio commented that she would have expected a larger reduction from the contingency for the raises than were paid out. Every year money is returned to the general fund from the budget as a whole.

Mr. Jones commented that he is appreciative of the increase for the Permanent Celebration Committee (PCC) and the Historic District Commission (HDC) and others. Given the percentage increase, and those who have made cuts, perhaps some movement could be made. Mr. Foley agreed that they have identified some increases that they will review. The PCC requested additional funds for the Green and items are needed for the Farmers Market. The HDC reached out and asked for someone to do their meeting minutes and possibly other items.

Ms. Yudichak commented on the \$200K that goes back to the town. It happens with the BOE as well. She asked when Mr. Foley would share the areas where funds could be moved. Mr. Foley explained that he will discuss this with Ms. Hancock when the budget is adjusted. It would have a minor impact.

Ms. Murray commented that the topic of minutes has come up a number of times during the HDC meetings. Their meetings are held remotely and are recorded. She asked if they could be creative and perhaps transcribe the recording or use the Zoom closed captioning rather than paying a clerk. Perhaps a recording clerk could be only for public hearings. Robert's Rules require minutes to be minimal so there may be some flexibility. Mr. Foley commented that he has spoken with the Chair and dependent on the cost of the plaques, he thought having someone do the minutes but will look at other options. Ms. Murray commented that it is difficult to see a substantial increase to the HDC when they are seeing

hesitation regarding Public Safety having enough money. Perhaps they could be creative and meet the needs of the HDC while it serves the town.

Ms. Murray commented that she would like to see a options for a townwide increase of 3% and its impact on the town budget, and services provided, if the Council decides not to pass on a 5.11% but a 3% increase to the town.

3. Adjournment

*Ms. Murray motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:12PM*

*Ms. Yudichak seconded the motion.*

*Discussion: none*

*A roll call vote was taken.*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,



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Lisa Pascuzzi  
Town Council Clerk

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Town Council Chair



## Lynn Bielawiec

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**From:** Steven Jones  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2023 7:14 PM  
**To:** Lynn Bielawiec; SaraBeth Nivison  
**Subject:** Fw: Budget Questions

For Lisa P. to incorporate in the minutes of the 3/16 meeting. Thank you!

Sincere Regards,  
Steve Jones  
Chairperson  
Tolland Town Council

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**From:** Lisa Hancock  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2023 6:59 PM  
**To:** Brian Foley  
**Cc:** Michael Wilkinson; Town Council; Christopher Jordan; Jason Lawrence; Kathleen Pagan; Michele Manas  
**Subject:** RE: Budget Questions

**From:** Brian Foley <bfoley@Tollandct.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2023 5:21 PM  
**To:** Lisa Hancock <lhancock@Tollandct.gov>; Jason Lawrence <jlawrence@Tollandct.gov>; Noreen Botticello <nbotticello@Tollandct.gov>; Kathleen Pagan <kpagan@Tollandct.gov>; Michael Wilkinson <mwilkinson@Tollandct.gov>; David Corcoran <dcorcoran@Tollandct.gov>; John Littell <jlittell@Tollandct.gov>  
**Subject:** Budget Questions

Sorry for the short notice, I just received these. Please see the questions below as they pertain to your department. Please be prepared to respond when asked.

Accounting (pg 300)

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- 
- The salary line increase seems to be more than the union negotiated raises we approved
- earlier in this fiscal year. What accounts for the differential?

You will see this trend pretty much across the board for all payroll accounts. In the original budget for FY 22-23, which is what we compare the change to, it does not include the wage increases for the unions that did not have settled contracts. So for the FY 23-24 budget it will not only include the wage increase for the impact on FY 22-23 but will also include the wage increase for the union negotiated increase for FY 23-24. Essentially, there are two years in the account for the increase. You will also note that the payroll contingency account decreased because that is where the funds were located for the FY 22-23 budget. The increase that you see within the budget does not totally impact the tax increase. It is just a shift of funds from one account to another. Please note this response for future

questions of the same nature. There will be a few areas within other departments of the budget that will also show increases for staff wages that not union associated. This is for the new positions for the fire department and the recreation department that were phased in. So the salary in those areas will now reflect a full year of wages for those positions. Non-affiliated staff did not have wage increases in their original budget for FY22-23 but are now included in the F Y 23-24 request. Raises for these same employees for FY 23-24 are NOT within the department budget. These needs approval by the Town Manager once he prepares his annual raises. Those funds are segregated within the payroll contingency account at an average of NOT more than 2%. The union increase is 3%.

- 
- 
- Printing: what efforts can we as a Town make to be more digital rather than paper oriented?
- 

We have made many changes to do as much printing digitally rather than on paper. 99% of our payroll payments are made by direct deposit and advices are sent electronically to employees. For accounts payable there are several security issues that need to be addressed before paying invoices through ACH or electronically. The Town of Farmington CT had a major incident losing hundreds of thousands of dollars due to this type of payment process. We are upgrading software within the next fiscal year and will review if the process can be accomplished in a safe manner. The other printing items are for 1095, 1099 and W-2 forms that we must print pursuant to federal laws. In addition, we implemented a digital check printing process that allows us to use a lesser cost secure check paper stock.

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- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
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I am hoping so.

Independent Audit (pg 313)

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- This is a substantial increase from the past 3 years. What's going on here? Did the
- Town go out to bid on this contract? If so, for how long are we contracted with this firm and has any efforts been made to negotiate a lower increase?
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The town did go through a request for proposal process 5 years ago. The FY 22-23 audit will be the last of the 5 years. The amount was held solid for 4 years and now this year there is an increase due to the increased firm costs to complete the audit. I negotiated the increase down a few thousand dollars from what they wanted but was unable to get the pricing any lower. There are not many firms remaining that perform municipal audits which is a specialty service. When we did the RFP the two other remaining firms were higher than even this increased fee. We will be going out for an RFP for the next round of audits and I have been advised by colleagues that the pricing is substantially higher than we have seen in past years and we can expect that to continue. Some firms are not even offering to do a proposal because of their limited staffing (inability to hire people) and the costs associated with performing certain town audits. We are fortunate to have this level of an increase compared to what we will be facing in the future.

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- Are you satisfied with the services provided by this vendor?
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I am very satisfied with their service. Our partner and manager are of high caliber and are well versed in the field of municipal auditing and reporting.

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- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
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Yes for this year but future years we will see major increase in the cost.

Misc Support Services (pg. 162)

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- Printing/copying: what efforts can we make as a Town to be more digital rather than paper oriented?
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This is for town wide printing. It includes council and other agendas, minutes, budget books, and various printing needs. We have strived to reduce the amount of printing where possible. I think a great start would be to eliminate the Manager's proposed book for all the council members and send them electronically. This would certainly save a lot of staff time, machine costs, ink and paper. Do you think you all would be interested in discussing that idea? We could also send the final adopted budget in that manner too.

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- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?

Yes.

IT/Telecommunications (pg. 165)

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- 
- Services / software: what efforts can we make as a Town to be more digital rather than paper oriented?

Our services are a collaborative agreement reached with the Town of South Windsor and we benefit greatly from their knowledge and experience with much of the same software, thus saving Tolland the sole expense of learning new technology to keep up with the times in which we live. We believe the budget has been carefully examined and proposed to meet Tolland's needs and we appreciate South Windsor's IT staff members' input to reach that end. Every effort is made to reduce the use of paper. Software costs include things such as fire-walls, spam filtering, server maintenance contracts, printer maintenance, telephone systems needs, etc.

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- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?

Yes

Revenue Services (pg. 316)

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- Printing (and postage): what efforts can we make as a Town to be more digital rather than paper oriented?
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We have implemented electronic billing and payment within our tax software for those taxpayers who have chosen to use that process. This has reduced the amount of bills that need to be mailed, however, a majority still want a paper bill mailed. Delinquent notices must also be sent out.

- 
- Is this a service that could be regionalized

- 
- This is difficult because each town has different tax incentives and allowances, This is something that works in County government because the tax rules are based on the county rules and are standardized. I do not know if it would create any savings because usually the cost of the software increases with the amount of accounts that generate bills. You would need sufficient staffing etc. It would need a full cost benefit analysis to determine if it would be feasible. The other issue is that the assessor database works directly with our tax database for the billing. You would probably have to regionalize both departments which leads to other issues that must be considered.

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- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?

Yes,

Assessment Services (pg. 304)

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- The salary line increase seems to be more than the union negotiated raises we approved earlier in this fiscal year. What accounts for the differential?
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- You will see this trend pretty much across the board for all payroll accounts. In the original budget for FY 22-23, which is what we compare the change to, it does not include the wage increases for the unions that did not have settled contracts. So for the FY 23-24 budget it will not only include the wage increase for the impact on FY 22-23 but will also include the wage increase for the union negotiated increase for FY 23-24. Essentially, there are two years in the account for the increase. You will also note that the payroll contingency account decreased because that is where the funds were located for the FY 22-23 budget. The increase that you see within the budget does not totally impact the tax increase. It is just a shift of funds from one account to another. Please note this response for future questions of the same nature. There will be a few areas within other departments of the budget that will also show increases for staff wages that not union associated. This is for the new positions for the fire department and the recreation department that were phased in. So the salary in those areas will now reflect a full year of wages for those positions. Non-affiliated staff did not have wage increases in their original budget for FY22-23 but are now included in the F Y 23-24 request. Raises for these same employees for FY 23-24 are NOT within the department budget. These needs approval by the Town Manager once he prepares his annual raises. Those funds are segregated within the payroll contingency account at an average of NOT more than 2%. The union increase is 3%.
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- Professional services increased 10.8% in FY23 and now another 7.3% for FY24. What is the professional service? What can be done to keep these costs down?

Jason will respond to this. But this is pretty much contractual.

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- Why are we transferring \$\$ out of this dept to CNRE?
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As you probably recall from last year's budget, this is the same amount for the funds that need to be transferred each year in order to perform the 5 year revaluation. The funds are set aside to perform the revaluation when due. We have been fortunate to have our Assessor perform our process in-house which has saved us 100's of thousands of dollars over the years.



- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
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Yes, Jason can also respond.

#### Board of Assessment Appeals (pg. 308)

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- Advertising - is this for 2 public hearings?
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- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
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#### Town Clerk (pg. 320)

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- The salary line increase seems to be more than the union negotiated raises we approved earlier in this fiscal year. What accounts for the differential?
- 
- You will see this trend pretty much across the board for all payroll accounts. In the original budget for FY 22-23, which is what we compare the change to, it does not include the wage increases for the unions that did not have settled contracts. So for the FY 23-24 budget it will not only include the wage increase for the impact on FY 22-23 but will also include the wage increase for the union negotiated increase for FY 23-24. Essentially, there are two years in the account for the increase. You will also note that the payroll contingency account decreased because that is where the funds were located for the FY 22-23 budget. The increase that you see within the budget does not totally impact the tax increase. It is just a shift of funds from one account to another. Please note this response for future questions of the same nature. There will be a few areas within other departments of the budget that will also show increases for staff wages that not union associated. This is for the new positions for the fire department and the recreation department that were phased in. So the salary in those areas will now reflect a full year of wages for those positions. Non-affiliated staff did not have wage increases in their original budget for FY22-23 but are now included in the F Y 23-24 request. Raises for these same employees for FY 23-24 are NOT within the department budget. These needs approval by the Town Manager once he prepares his annual raises. Those funds are segregated within the payroll contingency account at an average of NOT more than 2%. The union increase is 3%.
- 
- 
- Printing - what efforts can we make as a Town to be more digital rather than paper oriented?
- 
- We cannot, at this time, change the printing costs due to State Statutes governing how we must preserve Town Records.
- This includes digital AND paper books of land records, all Minutes for Council, Boards and Commissions, as well as Mylar Maps.
- 
- 
- OT & Temp Help: what is this for?

- 
- Election season if the need arises due to volume.
- 
- Emergencies (sickness, family leave, deaths) and as this office tightly functions with a 2-person staff, there needs to be a contingency plan in place.
- 
- 
- Service contract went up in FY21 and has remained level. What is this service?
- 
- The vendors for our dog system (BAS) and Onboard (Clerkbase) have not changed their contract costs.
- 
- 
- 
- Code updates went up in FY23. Could we have more details about line?
- 
- There have been more ordinances and code changes to submit for maintenance and preservation of the Town Code.
- 
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?

yes

#### Public Safety Division (pg. 264)

- 
- 
- More info on the increase for Ambulance (~ +\$36k/7.2%) and Fire Prevention (~ +\$3,775/4.5%)
- 
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### Fire Suppression (pg. 284)

- 
- 
- Temporary help line - more info
- 
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### Ambulance Services (pg. 268)

- 
- 
- Payroll line increase seems higher than I was expecting
- 
- 
-

- OT line is almost 2x FY20. What is driving this?
- 
- 
- 
- What's driving the communication cost increases?
- 
- 
- 
- What's driving service contract increase; was <\$500 in FY20
- 
- 
- 
- What's the IMPACT of decreased funding on the training & development line?
- 
- 
- 
- What's driving the increase in computer software?
- 
- 
- 
- Fuel & oil costs seems to be percentage wise much higher than other depts. Why is this?
- 
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### Fire Prevention (pg. 280)

- 
- 
- What's driving the communication cost increase?
- 
- 
- 
- What's the Other Services & fees line? Why the increase?
- 
- 
- 
- Why are books/subscriptions increasing? In FY20, cost was \$1575
- 
- 
- 
- What is in the other equipment category? What's the IMPACT of this?
- 
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### Water Supply (pg. 265)

- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives

- for FY23-24?
- 

#### Emergency Preparedness (pg. 277)

- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### Animal Control (pg. 273)

- 
- 
- What's the IMPACT to the communication reduction?
- 
- 
- 
- What services/fees are included in the Other Services & fees line?
- 
- 
- Machinery & equipment parts, repairs, food/clothing - what's FY23 actual (as this line was previously \$0)?
- 
- 
- 
- What's in "other equipment"?
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### CERT (pg. 289)

- 
- 
- What's driving the communication cost increase?
- 
- 
- 
- What's the increased in Training & Development?
- 
- 
- What is FY23 actual for Machinery & Equipment parts (this line was \$0 in FY20 and FY21)?
- 
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### Town Manager (pg. 148)

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- 
- How was the software previously paid for?
- 
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

Town Council (pg. 144)

- 
- 
- What is included in the professional services line (\$5,070)?
- 
- 
- 
- Printing - what efforts can we make as a Town to be more digital rather than paper oriented?
- 
- 
- Advertising - is this for public hearings? What's FY23 actual?
- 
- 
- Dues & Memberships - what's included here?
- 
- 
- Training & Development - what's included here?
- 
- 
- Office Supplies - what's included here? What efforts can we make as a Town to be more digital rather than paper oriented?
- 
- 
- 
- Program Materials - what's included here?
- 
- 
- 
- I'd like to see this budget reduced as much as possible.
- 
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

- 1.
- 2.
3. I think it's way too high! :)
- 4.

## EDC (pg. 152)

- 
- What are the professional service and why the reduction?
- 
- 
- 
- Printing - what efforts can we make as a Town to be more digital rather than paper oriented?
- 
- 
- 
- What are the dues & memberships?
- 
- 
- 
- What are FY23 actuals for travel reimbursements?
- 
- 
- 
- Office Supplies - what efforts can we make as a town to be more digital rather than paper oriented?
- 
- 
- 
- Accomplishments 2023:
- 

- 1.
- 2.
3. Where is the online map of vacant commercial and industrial property?
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. Is there a report of the survey of businesses in Tolland?
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
11. Where is the inventory mapping?
- 12.

- 
- 
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

## HR Administration (pg. 155)

- 
- 
- Program accomplishments - you forgot to include the hiring of our town manager! :)
- 
-

- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### HR Benefits (pg. 158)

- 
- 
- Why is the health insurance increase only 11.9%, not 16.42%
- 
- 
- 
- Could the Town side be self insured with the BOE side? Has the town side (Town employees only - NOT BOE) of Health Insurance run at a deficit (more expenses than contributions) in any year in the past 5? If so, by how much?
- 
- 
- 
- What is the total savings we estimate achieving using self-insurance as a Town since we started this program?
- 
- 
- 
- Why is unemployment comp down so much?
- 
- 
- 
- Why is life insurance up so much?
- 
- 
- 
- What is "other post employment benefits" and why has it gone up so much?
- 
- 
- 
- Why have employee pensions gone down?
- 
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### Town Wide Insurance (pg. 168)

- 
- 
- What is "Insurance - Public Official"?
- 
- 
- 
- Why is property and liability insurance going up if we have seen a decrease in claims over the past 11 years?
- 
- 
-

- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### Volunteer Firefighter Insurance (page. 171)

- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### Legal Services - Town Attorney (pg. 174)

- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

- 1.
- 2.
3. Especially with Road Salt Task Force?
- 4.

#### Legal Services - Personnel (pg. 177)

- 
- 
- How many labor contracts do we have coming up in FY23-24?
- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### Probate Services (pg. 180)

- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

#### Registrar of Voters (pg. 313)

- 
- 
- Is this proposed budget sufficient for the department to meet the goals and objectives for FY23-24?
- 

- 1.
- 2.
3. Especially in light of EARLY VOTING changes?
- 4.



Katie Murray  
Tolland Town Council  
e: [kmurray@tollandct.gov](mailto:kmurray@tollandct.gov)  
c: 860-874-8060  
she/her/hers

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**From:** Katie Murray  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2023 10:17:33 AM  
**To:** Steven Jones; Brian Foley; John Reagan  
**Cc:** Michael Wilkinson  
**Subject:** Re: Budget Questions

I will do my best to get questions on tonight's sections together, but unfortunately, I don't anticipate having sufficient time to have a complete and organized set of questions emailed to you ahead of tonight's meeting.

Thanks,  
Katie

Katie Murray  
Tolland Town Council  
c: 860-874-8060  
e: [kmurray@tollandct.gov](mailto:kmurray@tollandct.gov)  
she/her/hers

\*Brevity and errors aided and abetted by my phone

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**From:** Steven Jones <[sjones@Tollandct.gov](mailto:sjones@Tollandct.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2023 8:30 AM  
**To:** Brian Foley <[bfoley@tollandct.gov](mailto:bfoley@tollandct.gov)>  
**Cc:** Michael Wilkinson <[mwilkinson@Tollandct.gov](mailto:mwilkinson@Tollandct.gov)>  
**Subject:** Budget Questions

Good Morning Councilors,

After last night's meeting, it was requested by staff that if there are any questions for the 3/16 and 3/20 meetings that could be shared in advance, it would be helpful for them to know so they can prepare and provide answer on either night. Please share these questions with Mr. Foley so they can be disseminated to the appropriate department head. Thank you.

Sincere Regards,  
Steve Jones  
Chairperson  
Tolland Town Council