

**BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING
LIBRARY PROGRAM ROOM OR ZOOM**

March 16, 2022 – 7:00 P.M.

Members Present: Steve Jones, Chair; John Reagan, Vice Chair; Lou Luba (Zoom), Katie Murray, Tammy Nuccio, Colleen Yudichak

Members Absent: Sami Khan

Also Present: Lisa Hancock, Interim Town Manager; Bev Bellody, Director, Human Services; Kim Kowalyszyn, Director, Senior Center; Maureen Flanagan, Assistant Director, Human Services; Barbara Pettijohn, Director, Library Services; Mike Wilkinson, Director, Administrative Services (Zoom); Bruce Watt, Director, Recreation (Zoom); Scott Lappen, Director, Public Works (Zoom); Kevin Eklund, Resident State Trooper (Zoom)

1. Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04P.M.
2. Consideration of the Town Manager's Proposed FY 2022-2023 Budget

a. Overview

Ms. Hancock provided an overview:

- Proposed 2022/23 budget: \$60,106,207
 - General Fund Expenditure Budget: \$55,150,237
 - Board of Education: \$42,040,614
 - Town Government: \$13,109,713
 - Debt Service: \$4,700,000
 - General Fund share of the Capital Improvement Plan: \$255,880
 - Incorporated into revenue:
 - Unassigned fund balance: \$200,000
 - Committed fund balance for debt: \$68,000
- Town's grand list grew 3.8% (highest in 10 years); other revenues increased as well
- Proposed mill rate: 36.87 (reduction of .65% or -.24 mills)
- Board of Education
 - Adopted budget: \$42,095,614 (increase of \$1,276,325 or 3.13%)
 - Town Manager reduced requested budget by \$55,000 (\$42,040,614; increase of \$1,221,325 or 2.99%)
- Review of 3-year revenue and expenditure comparison
 - Percent change 2021/22 to 2022/23
 - Town Operating Budget: 3.98% increase
 - Board of Education Operating Budget: 2.99%
 - Capital Improvements: 85.49%
 - Debt Service: 1.08%
- Review of Historical and Proposed Budgeted Revenues
 - State/Federal Grants; investment income/other; licenses, permits, fees; charges for current services; education grants
- Review of Historical and Proposed Budgeted Expenditure Percentages
- Review of Historical Grand List Growth
- Review of Historical Mill Rate Increase
- Impact of Governor's Budget on Tolland

- Governor's Proposed Revenues
- Governor's Proposed Motor Vehicle Cap
 - Reduction of current CAP of 45 mills to 29 mills
 - If approved, mill rate would need to be adjusted for real estate/personal property to 37.04 mills and motor vehicles would be 29 mills
 - Governor's budget proposes additional \$1,217,117 in additional revenues to offset; shortfall: \$311,636
- Town Revenues
 - Projected decreases/increases from non-tax revenue sources (2022/23)
 - Fund Balance (\$200,000 is recommended to be used as revenue)
 - Review of Trends in General Fund Revenue Sources
- Town Expenditures
 - Town Departments, Capital Expenditures, Debt Service, Board of Education
 - Town Operational Cost 2010-2023
 - Board of Education Operational Cost 2010-2023
 - 2022/2023 Expenditures Budget: \$60,106,207
 - Board of Education Operating: \$42,040,614; 69.94%
 - Town Operating (Total): \$13,109,713; 21.81%
 - Debt Service: \$4,700,000; 7.82%
 - Capital Improvements: \$255,880; .43%
 - Review of Spending Distribution and Town Operating Expenditures Allocation
 - Review of Town Expenditure Drivers
 - Cost of utilities decreased: \$12,204
 - Debt service increase: \$50,000 (mainly due to impact of Birch Grove Project and Fire House)
 - Capital improvements supported by General Fund: \$117,934
 - Addition of 2 new and 2 reinstated positions
 - Review of Expenditure Revisions
- Mill Rate Impact of the Financial Plan
 - Mill Rate: 36.87; decrease of .24 mills
 - Tax Impact/Revaluation Impact and Review of 6-year average

Questions/Discussion

Ms. Murray commented on the budget of the Board of Education (BOE). She explained that that Board worked to develop a budget that aligns with the goals of the Tolland Public School system (TPS). The budget presented recommends less and she asked why. Ms. Hancock responded that she wanted to get it under 3% to be reasonable in percentage growth and she is aware of some savings the town learned of after the Board's budget was proposed. The Board was unaware of the savings to be realized at the time its budget was proposed. Part of the savings is from the OPEB contribution (actuarial calculation). Ms. Murray noted that the BOE requested 3.13% and confirmed that Ms. Hancock is seeing savings that the BOE will not have to spend to bring the increase to 2.99%. Ms. Hancock explained that she tried to balance the request with the needs of the community and not increase the mill rate. The Council may adjust the number. Ms. Murray asked if there is \$55,000 less in expenses that will be charged to the Board. Ms. Hancock responded that \$55,000 was cut and a portion is due to OPEB (approximately \$15K-18K). The remainder will need to be adjusted in the Board's budget. Ms. Murray commented that this

concerns her – the Board did its job to come up with a budget and it troubles her that it was not accepted in the budget presented. Ms. Hancock responded that she reviewed the budget and the questions posed by Council members at the joint meeting but did not go line item by line item. Ms. Murray commented that the Board went through its budget line item by line item. Ms. Murray asked about the motor vehicle cap and Ms. Hancock's recommendation if the proposal passes and there is a gap in revenues. Ms. Hancock responded that it is dependent on when it passes and if it follows the assumptions presented. Variables include if extra revenue is coming in in which case she would have to come before the Council to discuss allocating some of it to cover the shortfall. She added that an operational budget freeze may need to be put in place or they may need to work with the BOE. Ms. Murray asked if the Council votes to send a budget to referendum and the legislature acts in a way that leaves the town with a shortfall, if Ms. Hancock will come to the Council with a recommendation on how to address the shortfall. Ms. Hancock responded that she would. Ms. Murray asked about the slide indicating that the mill rate would need to be adjusted. Ms. Hancock explained that if the proposal is approved, the impact based on the presented scenario is that the mill rate would have to be approved at 37.04 mills. Ms. Murray asked if there are other options. Ms. Hancock responded that there are. Ms. Murray asked about revenue as listed in the Budget Book on page 82 (bb pg82) - prior year's levy and motor vehicle supplement. The Department Proposed Budget is different than the Manager Proposed Budget and she asked what accounts for the difference. Ms. Hancock explained that the Department Proposed Budget total expenses between the BOE and the town was about \$61M. Between all of the available revenues and the information at the time, the numbers were based on an estimated grand list and the impact of the higher expenses in the budget that were reduced through the budget process. The grand list was completed by the assessor and now a better value is available. Ms. Murray referenced Contribution from Fund Balance (bb pg 84). An audit showed that a considerable amount of money from the fund balance was used in FY21 and asked why this was not reflected. Ms. Hancock explained that this will not be seen as a revenue item. When an actual, it is total revenues minus total expenses on a GAAP basis. Fund Summaries shows the impact on fund balance each year based on budgetary and GAAP basis. She referenced bb pg113. Ms. Murray asked about Donations – Sports Organizations (bb pg84) and if this was going to continue. Ms. Hancock responded that they have not traditionally budgeted for this because it is never a known revenue source. Thus, they err on the side of conservatism. If received, it helps with the fund balance or offsets other revenue shortfalls. She noted that this year they know at least 1 league will not participate. Ms. Murray commented that the Governor's recommended budget includes a town aid road grant and LoCIP (Local Capital Improvement Program) but she did not see it in the budget book. Ms. Hancock responded that it is listed under capital.

Ms. Nuccio asked about Salary Increases and FICA (bb pg9). Ms. Hancock noted that a revision was sent to the Council and reviewed the information in tonight's presentation. The cost increase is \$243,196. The \$67,036 increase listed is for the impact due to FICA, Medicare, and the Employee Deferred Contribution Plan. Ms. Nuccio commented that \$243,196 minus \$174,076 is about \$70K in increases. Ms. Hancock explained that this is not all an increase for this year. Funds are put in contingency for non-affiliated staff or when a union is in negotiations. While reflected in the proposed budget, it is in the current year salary. For example, her salary is in the 21/22 budget and does not include a raise if she was to receive one in 21/22 – it only includes last year's salary. Once the Council approves wage increases for 21/22 for non-affiliated staff, the monies are moved from another account into the Salaries account. It appears Salaries are

increasing but it is due to the impact of moving money from another account. It is not an increase in the budget overall. Thus, the number presented includes wage increases from the union that has settled and increases in non-affiliated wages for the current fiscal year. Personnel contingency is the anticipated increases for union negotiations and other wage-related increases. Ms. Nuccio explained that the actuals personnel contingency is always significantly less due to the funds being moved and is evident when viewing the trend. Ms. Nuccio commented on the grand list and referenced bb pg46. It lists 20 residential units in 2021 (construction) come on but 21 homes with crumbling foundations came back on the books. She noted that bb pg49 says the growth of 2021 to 2022 is 4 units and 147 single family homes. She asked which is correct. Ms. Hancock responded that she would check with the assessor. Ms. Nuccio commented that the actual growth for homes is .5% and she would like to know the breakdown of new homes and getting those with crumbling foundations back on the assessment. She explained that the major area where they are seeing growth in the grand list is in regard to motor vehicles. She is concerned because this is a temporary bubble and cited Kelly Blue Book which is indicating the cost of used vehicles will be decreasing. She would like to understand the value of the 147 new vehicles compared to the inflated temporary Blue Book value. Ms. Hancock noted that in the 5-year projection there are other items that she cannot discuss at this point that may help with sustaining the numbers. This is related to the \$1M growth listed under new construction in the upcoming year. Ms. Nuccio asked about net taxes collected \$32M from \$46M the prior year (bb pg34). Ms. Hancock noted that this is for partial collection through the end of December. Ms. Nuccio asked about assumption for 20 new non-residential units and 20 residential units (bb pg46). Ms. Hancock explained that this is for FY21/22 and is from the assessor's grand list system. Ms. Nuccio referenced bb pg65 and Charges for Current Services which is increasing 17%. She asked if this is permitting etc. Ms. Hancock explained this is mainly for property conveyance taxes and recording fees. They have seen substantial revenue due to property transfers etc. She trended it and is comfortable increasing these revenues. Building permits are under Licenses, Permits, & Fees with detail on bb pg83 and increased \$30K. Ms. Nuccio discussed a conversation about permit fees she had with a developer. Ms. Hancock noted that she believes she is aware of the discussion, and it was about planning & zoning fees which are separate from building permit fees. A number of fee types are listed under Charges for Current Services. Ms. Hancock noted that she has asked for a study to be done on this so they can see where Tolland is compared to other communities. Ms. Nuccio commented that if the town has additional revenues, it should not be using the fund balance – revenues should be used. Ms. Hancock responded that it is the Council's decision. The money needed would have to be raised through tax dollars. Ms. Nuccio asked why Temporary Help is increasing (bb pg72) when they are hiring 4 more heads. Mr. Jones believes it falls under the Registrar of Voters because of the elections. Ms. Nuccio asked about Open Choice grant dollars – they do not enter the budget the same way as the ECS. She asked why. Ms. Hancock explained this is a special grant on the BOE side. It is recorded and managed through the special education grants fund. Ms. Nuccio asked for a high-level understanding of what is in the assigned fund balance (bb pg112). Ms. Hancock noted that more detail is in the annual financial report. The majority is money to be set aside for fund balance in the next budget. The other portion is related to year-end encumbrances for the town and the BOE.

Mr. Reagan commented that the grand list grew 3.8% - the highest in 10 years or so. Many years it grows less than 1%. He asked if this is a trend that they can expect to continue. Ms. Hancock explained if the motor vehicles and other items happening in town were taken out, they would be under 1% based on only residential. She noted that some development is going on in town,

however. Mr. Reagan explained that he is looking at it as a windfall for the town as well as the biggest ask/increase for the town and BOE budgets over the past 6 years. He noted that they have not discussed the impact all of this could have on town residents if they go lower. If they go lower, they can help someone fill their oil tank, gas tanks etc. He is not saying what to cut but supports a lower budget and when the Council is reviewing the budget again next year, the bar will be lower. Ms. Hancock noted that the 3.8% is now the grand list – the only way it will drop is if items fall off or legislation is passed before the next revaluation. Mr. Reagan commented that it is prudent to budget as though the increase in the grand list did not happen. He asked about debt service (\$4.7M). Ms. Hancock explained that the Birch Grove Project and the fire houses are the 2 largest pieces. Mr. Reagan commented that they previously discussed keeping debt service at \$4.5M. He asked if Ms. Hancock sees a scenario where they can get back down to \$4.5M or lower. Ms. Hancock responded that she does but in the debt management plans presented to the Council, she noted that for a certain period of time, due to the additional projects, it would increase. At a point in time debt will start falling off the books unless something major comes up. Her recommendation is when they reach that point that they discuss the option of doing more pay-as-you-go and entering into less debt with the Council. Funds would be set aside into a capital reserve for the future. Mr. Reagan explained that he is uncomfortable supporting a budget with the windfall and the increases presented when they could go lower, make next year's budget easier, and impact residents this year by lowering the mill rate.

Ms. Yudichak commented that she would like people to listen to the departments before wanting to reduce items. She commented that the numbers have a lot of scenarios and is concerned about fluctuations. Ms. Hancock explained the only scenario discussed was that of the mill rate and the motor vehicle tax cap. The proposed reimbursement is not 100% of the tax cap. If it is, the town will be in good shape because the revenue will substantiate the shortfall. Ms. Yudichak commented that 21 homes with crumbling foundations are coming back online and asked how many still have crumbling foundations. Ms. Hancock noted this will be on the Council's next agenda for discussion.

The Chair recognized Mr. Luba. Mr. Luba experienced technical difficulties and did not speak.

b. Community Services – Human Services, Library, Recreation

Ms. Hancock reviewed the Human Services Budget.

- Increase of \$5,820 (1.61% vs. prior year)
- Impact of wages for non-affiliated staff
- Program budget decreased \$2,185
- Transfer of cell phone to Senior Center budget (\$540)
- Travel Reimbursement reduced \$198
- Visiting Nurse & Health Services reduced \$1,447 (health screening is being provided at no charge)

Ms. Yudichak asked Ms. Bellody if more residents are applying for services – particularly in the area of mental health. Ms. Bellody responded they are seeing an increase in the number of people seeking fuel assistance, renters' rebates, referral services, and information on resources for those with sick spouses in their homes or those being discharged from nursing homes. Ms. Yudichak commented that she is concerned that it seems there has not been a lot of long-term planning in the area of mental health services and they may need to be prepared to hire someone. She does not know if the town will need this position or if they are waiting to see what

Hockanum Valley Community Council (HVCC) or The Village can offer. Ms. Flanagan explained that there are 2 populations in town. In terms of the youth population, as a community some repair needs to be done given what they have been through the past couple of years. Some of this is specialized work that she is researching and includes linking those with mental health and behavioral needs to services. The broader need for youth is connecting and having fun. The community has a responsibility to make this happen. Ms. Flanagan highlighted that the Rec Department does an excellent job of this as does the Children's Librarian and she is working to make the programs less siloed. The adult population has different needs and Ms. Flanagan is working with community providers to help educate the community on what is available and break down some of the self-imposed barriers to seeking help. She highlighted the grant application to address opioid use. In the short-term they need to tackle the immediate need and reconnect people to joy and good mental health. Partnering and collaborating with agencies is investment in the long-term. This could be working together to apply for grants etc.

Mr. Reagan asked about the H.V.C.C. line item. Ms. Bellody explained this is Dial-A-Ride which is subsidized.

Ms. Nuccio asked about the Program Materials increase from FY20 to FY21 actuals. Ms. Bellody explained that this is from grant funding. For clarity, it was moved from Other Services & Fees. Ms. Nuccio asked about Dues & Membership (FY21 actual \$904 to FY23 budget \$1,903). Ms. Bellody is funding for Amplify and \$100 for an ADA coordinator to join the organization. Ms. Nuccio asked if they are seeing a greater need for the H.V.C.C. Dial-A-Ride. Ms. Bellody responded that she speaks with the organization often and they admit that Tolland has a lower usage. In part this is due to many in the community driving their own cars and being able to get rides. That said, she is looking ahead to determine the future needs of the community. Ms. Nuccio asked if the \$56K meets the current needs. Ms. Bellody responded that it does. The number has not jumped because they have not seen an increase in use. She noted that residents have not been turned away. Ms. Nuccio asked about bb pg226 and when they can expect to see things like Coffee House and Summer Theater return. Ms. Flanagan responded that Summer Theater is not a sustainable model to be run by 1 staff person. People have volunteered and it will be discussed for next year. If possible, there will be limited programming for this year. Ms. Nuccio noted that they are looking at using ARPA money to fund some summer programming to get people back together in person. Ms. Bellody noted that they have spoken with Mr. Watt but there has been some difficulty in hiring people for such items, but they are looking at the future. Ms. Bellody confirmed that they will not see Summer Theater this summer but noted that Mr. Watt has several summer programs.

Ms. Murray asked Human Services what services are being provided to the residents of Tolland that they are most proud of. Ms. Bellody responded that it is the department's staff and how they rise to the occasion for everything. Every day in the office is different because different calls come in. They treat people with respect – there is no poverty-shaming or guilt when services are needed. She asked if Human Services can meet the service needs with the budget proposed. Ms. Bellody responded that they can now but need to look to the future at the model for youth services. She noted that with the senior population expanding and its desire for education and services, she has requested the Senior Center position (administrative secretary, 25 hours/week) – her first request for a position in 33 years.

Senior Services

Ms. Nuccio commented that they are looking for an administrative position (PT) for the Senior Center as well as one (PT) for the Rec Department and asked if they could be combined into a single full-time position. Ms. Hancock explained that the Senior Center position is a 25-hour position, and the Rec position is 24 hours. Ms. Nuccio commented that the \$4K for programming is "ridiculous". She asked what Ms. Kowalyshyn would like offered for seniors. Ms. Kowalyshyn explained that she needs to be creative and have people volunteer. A number of programs could be offered – the sky is the limit when they can pay people. Mr. Jones noted that they collaborate with the Rec Department and the Library as well. Ms. Kowalyshyn noted that these programs are included in the newsletter. A lot of programming is offered but much is done for free. Mr. Jones noted that while the Senior Center is the central hub, there is a network of departments with budgets targeting seniors as well. Ms. Nuccio asked if there is any new programming Ms. Kowalyshyn would like to add or anything she would like to change. Ms. Kowalyshyn responded that she would like to provide Tai Chi and perhaps a nutritional program as well as educational programs. Ms. Bellody explained that Ms. Kowalyshyn can only do so much during the day. Ms. Kowalyshyn explained that she takes 35-40 calls per day, assists people with signing in, and enjoys talking with people but it can be difficult to get other items done. While the seniors bring ideas, she needs time to think about them and programming. Ms. Nuccio asked if there a need to address mental health issues with the senior populace and if so, how they can be looped in with what the town is looking to do with the ARPA funds or if programming for mental health for seniors should be provided. Ms. Kowalyshyn responded that every generation has people with mental health issues, and she is sure there are some seniors who need assistance but for the most part, getting seniors back out and interacting with each other is very helpful. She does not see a lot of mental health issues in those who visit the Senior Center. Ms. Nuccio asked what outreach is being done for those seniors they cannot get in touch with. Ms. Bellody responded that Rebecca Ellert addresses these people. She added that having an administrative assistant would allow there to be someone to welcome and greet the seniors when they visit the Center. This also provides an opportunity to assess people.

Ms. Yudichak commented that she is pleased to see the administrative assistant position in the budget. She asked about the salary difference for this position (\$50,593) and that of the Rec Department (\$8,307). Ms. Hancock explained that the positions were phased in. The administrative assistant position at the Senior Center would start July 1st whereas the coordinator position at the Recreation Department would start April 1st to prepare for the summer. Ms. Kowalyshyn noted that when she started, the Senior Center membership list was 294 and now there are 452 members as of March 3rd.

Ms. Murray asked if Ms. Kowalyshyn could fulfill the program objectives with the proposed budget. Ms. Kowalyshyn explained that she can as long as she has volunteers to run the programs. If the requested position is filled, it will give her more time to be creative and try to add to it. Mr. Jones clarified that the Grants Administrator could coordinate with the person in the new position and possibly bring in more funds if federal or state dollars are available.

Library

Ms. Nuccio referenced Training and Development (bb pg229) and asked what is driving the increase. Ms. Hancock explained that there have been staff limitations over the past few years due to retirements and COVID and the funding was not used. Ms. Nuccio commented that a resident reached out to her. She would like to know if it would be possible to open the library earlier one day a week. Ms. Pettijohn explained that in her experience, consistency in hours is important. The library is open 54 hours/week (Monday through Thursday 10AM-8PM; Friday & Saturday 10AM – 5PM) which is more than many libraries its size. She added that they are trying

to become less of a book warehouse and more of a community hub with groups going in. If the hours were shifted, the library would close earlier, and she does not believe this would be useful for others who want to visit. Ms. Nuccio explained the resident was a senior who would like to visit the library before 10AM. She is not suggesting that hours be added but perhaps shift the hours 1 day/week. Ms. Pettijohn explained that she is in her office at 8:30AM and if she sees someone at the door, she will ask what they need but the computers are not up at that time and there have not been many people knocking on the door before 10AM. Ms. Hancock added that depending on how the hours are shifted they would need to look at the union contract and agreed that there needs to be consistency. They would need to learn the demand before changes are made. If it is only 1 person, perhaps there is a way they could be serviced.

Ms. Murray asked about the line item for furniture in the department's proposed budget that is not in the town manager's proposed budget. Ms. Pettijohn explained that this was pushed back to this year. Funds were available and it was purchased this year. Ms. Murray asked if the recommended budget is sufficient to provide the programming they would like to offer. Ms. Pettijohn responded that she is pleased with what they have but the \$1,500 for Program Materials is all for the children's/teen department. She noted that she has the support of both the Friends and the Library Foundation which hold and support programs. She also does a lot of programs herself which are at no cost. If there is something she really wants to do, she can ask the Friends or the Foundation.

Mr. Jones asked what Ms. Pettijohn expects to be the biggest hurdle in the 3 to 5-year plan budgetary-wise outside of this fiscal year. Ms. Pettijohn responded that it has been staffing and when she speaks with other library directors there is often discussion about the amount of staff turnover. Mr. Jones asked if training and development reflect on the retention of employees. Ms. Pettijohn explained that it is important that people be able to network, and they have not been able to do so due to COVID and staffing. Given the current staffing, she is now able to have people go out. Mr. Jones asked if the kiosks are being used at a greater rate. Ms. Pettijohn responded that they were invaluable during COVID and are still used regularly; however, staff still would like to talk with people. Staff also assist with computer help, Ancestry, and programs as well as finding books. She wants the library to be a warm, friendly, and inviting place.

[Mr. Jones noted that Mr. Luba is having issues with his audio. He messaged Mr. Jones that he had questions regarding Revenue Services, but his questions were answered and he thanked the Councilors for raising his points.]

Recreation

Ms. Nuccio asked about the repairs listed for the rec center. They recently received a grant and addressed the floors and other items. She asked what else is in need of repair. Mr. Watt responded that all of the program rooms could use an upgrade – particularly the floors. There is a moisture problem and tiles are popping up in the rooms with old floors. Additionally, they would like to have the chalkboards taken down so there is more of a community center feel than that of a school. The water fountains also need to be addressed and replaced with water bottle fillers. Mr. Watt noted window replacement as well for energy efficiency. Ms. Nuccio asked about the \$3K for Professional Services. Mr. Watt explained that this is for Celebrate Tolland. Fundraising covers the balance. Ms. Nuccio asked about the increase in utilities and if the Rec center funds 100% of this. Ms. Hancock responded that the rec center pays for some of the utilities. The rec programs charge to accommodate anything in excess of the \$44K. Ms. Nuccio asked if the increased head count will eventually be covered by programming fees. Mr. Watt responded that anticipates a revenue increase. He hopes the person will be able to focus on summer camp and

present new ideas. Ms. Nuccio asked how Mr. Watt feels about summer programming this year. He explained that he has been pushing summer camp on social media and opened it up earlier. To date they have 72 registrations, and the summer program brochure has not yet been released. They will have summer camp and many programs have been added but he noted that staffing in late August can be difficult. A specialty Slime Week has been added as well. A brief discussion about staffing took place.

Ms. Murray commented that she is excited to see a new staff person. Mr. Watt requested the position for a July start, but the proposed budget has it listed for April. She asked how this will affect programming. Mr. Watt responded that he does not believe there will be a negative effect but when the person starts more programs will be offered and he will have more time to address community needs.

Ms. Yudichak commented that she is pleased they are adding the position.

c. Law Enforcement

Ms. Hancock explained that after the budget was prepared the town was notified that that state is increasing the cost of the program more than was anticipated. The new estimate would require an additional \$19,552 to be added to the proposed budget of \$759,505 for a total of \$779,057. She is looking for ways to manage the increase, but it may need to be added to the budget.

Ms. Murray commented that in the budget book under Program Objectives & Goals FY23 it says DUI enforcement is continuing through September 2022. She asked what happens after this time. Trooper Eklund explained that this is a state grant of which they receive a portion. This portion will be completed in September 2022 and then they will reapply for the grant. This is a fully reimbursed state grant for DUI enforcement. It is up to the Department of Transportation if the grant is awarded. Ms. Murray asked how the programs and trainings are selected. Trooper Eklund asked which program she is asking about. Ms. Murray cited the D.A.R.E. program. Trooper Eklund explained that he decided to bring this back to Tolland due to the changes in the marijuana laws. They will send 3 people to training to become D.A.R.E. Certified Troopers (at no expense to the town) and teach the drug awareness program in the schools. Trooper Eklund explained that he felt it was important to institute the program back into the schools to reach the kids, especially in the lower grades – 5th grade range. Ms. Murray commented that the budget book notes Fines and Citations, but she does not see where the funds collected go. Ms. Hancock responded that they go into the general fund under Miscellaneous Grants. Ms. Murray asked if based on the presented budget Trooper Eklund can fulfill the service needs of his department. Trooper Eklund responded that he can.

d. Public Works

Ms. Yudichak asked about Street Lights & Traffic Control (bb pg239) and the difference of -21.7%. Ms. Hancock clarified that the reduction is from last year and reviewed the expense objects. Ms. Yudichak asked if the town is locked into fuel costs. Ms. Hancock noted they locked into a rate that was .10/gal more than was budgeted. If it trends high, they will have to manage the costs. Ms. Yudichak asked about the Objectives and Goals, Streets and Roads Program listed as a Council goal (bb pg258). Ms. Hancock explained this was a prior council's goal and included use of social

media. The Council's goals this year included increased interaction with the public, so it still applies.

Ms. Nuccio asked why overtime is being added if they are adding to the head count. Mr. Lappen explained that they expect the payrate for the maintainers to increase in the next contract. Thus, the line item was increased based on this. Ms. Nuccio confirmed it is not an increase in usage but with the additional head count she would expect a net reduction in overtime. Mr. Lappen explained that a previous town manager eliminated the outside contractors for plowing so the positions had to be backfilled. In turn, they are pulling people from Parks & Facilities and he explained the assignment of personnel for snow cleanup. The position noted will get the department where it should be, but they will still need 2-3 people from Parks & Facilities on street routes. Ms. Nuccio commented that in the past they have used the Cemetery Fund to pay for seasonal help. She asked why the budget has been increased and why it is not coming from the Cemetery Fund. Mr. Lappen explained they budget for 5 total – 3 from the cemetery budget and 2 from the operating budget. Minimum wage goes up significantly annually and is included in the budget. Ms. Nuccio commented that the trend for Other Services & Fees is about \$20K/yr and this year it is \$45K. Mr. Lappen responded that in every detail in the budget they carried a line item for generator maintenance and HVAC. These were consolidated into a single account. It is coming out of the other accounts. Ms. Nuccio asked about building materials. Mr. Lappen explained that this is due to the increase in the cost of materials. Ms. Nuccio asked about the contingency which is never more than \$19K but it has significantly increased. Mr. Lappen noted that the buildings are aging, and they do not budget for items such as boilers. Additionally, the sidewalks at Birch Grove have doubled and outside services are being used to assist the department. Ms. Nuccio asked if budget includes money to address the issues with the Jail Museum. Mr. Lappen responded that it does not. After reviewing the items with the building official, the cost is estimated to be close to \$100K not including the architect or learning of other issues during the process. Ms. Hancock noted that they met at the facility with Ms. Bach, representatives from the Historic Preservation Society, the building inspector, and staff. They are trying to determine the best way to address the situation and the goal is to apply for a grant to assist with the cost. It would be a major capital project and in turn, is not in the budget.

Mr. Reagan asked about the PCI. The goal is to have a rating of 75 or higher and asked where the town is now. Mr. Lappen responded that 20-25% of the roads are 60 or below. Mr. Reagan asked about the need for another 5-year bond package. Ms. Hancock explained that this is in the capital improvement plan. The town has twice gone out for a 5-year bond package for road repair in the amount of \$5M. Mr. Reagan asked about the TAR grant. Ms. Hancock explained that the department can manage about \$1M in road repair per year. She takes any TAR or LoCIP funds and offsets the \$1M/year to stretch out the ability to bond later.

Ms. Murray asked if the town is pre-purchasing almost \$13K of treated salt for next year (bb pg255). Mr. Lappen explained that they encumbered \$60K in a purchase order for treated salt that they could not take last year because the salt shed was full. This was utilized this year in addition to what was budgeted for salt. The price of salt significantly went up so they kept the budgeted amount close to the same because they had the \$60K of salt. They have enough salt to get through the balance of this winter. Ms. Murray noted that Parks & Facilities (bb pg246) requested \$12K more for payroll than the town manager's budget recommended. She asked what accounts for the differential. Ms. Hancock explained that she started the laborer position on

October 1st rather than July 1st. Ms. Murray asked how this delay impacts the services provided by Parks & Facilities. Mr. Lappen commented that it would be beneficial to have someone on board earlier, but winter is the crucial time. If they started July 1st, they would receive more training on mowing and field maintenance. Ms. Murray asked about the \$18K reduction in Road Materials & Markers (bb pg257). Mr. Lappen noted that the salt is included here and signs were reduced as well as the regulatory signs. The town started an aggressive sign replacement program a few years ago and has inventory. Ms. Murray asked what accounts for the reduction in Equipment Rental and road Material & Markers (under Street Lights & Traffic Control). Mr. Lappen explained the reduction includes the removal of the line item for Traffic Light & Siren Repairs. They are all DOT traffic lights and the only siren is at the intersection of Old Post and Route 195 which was addressed 2 years ago. The Equipment Rental is the contractor who paints the lines and they have been trying to cut back on line painting by painting roads the year following the initial paint which improves longevity. Ms. Murray asked about the Streets & Roads Program Objectives and Goals and highlighted the first goal. She asked what impacts to services Mr. Lappen anticipates with this budget. Mr. Lappen responded they are looking to do the cleaning of the catch basins inhouse when the town receives the VacAll. The purchase order has been submitted. This past year they rented a machine for a little over a month and 2 staff people cleaned 550 catch basins. When working off the state bid, they cleaned 20/day at \$150/hr so this will improve efficiency as does the heated garage, so trucks are ready to address winter roads. Ms. Murray asked if Mr. Lappen can meet the service needs with the recommended budget. Mr. Lappen responded that he feels confident that they should be in pretty good shape but noted that it is dependent on what comes up and cited examples.

Mr. Lappen noted that they have teamed up with the Town of South Windsor's IT Department. By using maps and plot plans they have done an overview of Valley View and South Cemetery and are working on East Cemetery. They are putting the plots on a map and using a free site that allows people to find information and a photograph of the marker. The IT Department has asked for the town's permission to showcase the work. Mr. Jones recommended adding this to a future agenda.

3. Adjournment

Ms. Nuccio motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:43PM

Ms. Murray seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

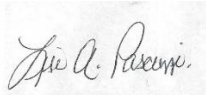
A roll call vote was taken.

In favor: Jones, Reagan, Murray, Nuccio, Yudichak

Abstentions: Luba

Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Pascuzzi
Town Council Clerk

Town Council Chair