

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers

May 14, 2024

6:30 P.M.

AMENDED RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 14, 2024 was called to order at 6:30 p.m. There was a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Autumn Allinson, Craig Fishbein, Thomas Laffin (video call), Christina Tatta, Samuel Carmody, Vincent Testa, Christopher Regan, Jesse Reynolds and Chairman Joseph A. Marrone III. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Town Attorney Gerald E. Farrell Sr., Comptroller Timothy Sena and Town Clerk Kristen Panzo were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Consent Agenda
 - 3a. Consider and approve Tax Refunds totaling \$4,441.78 (#735-#769)
Acct. #1001001- 41020 - Tax Collector
 - 3b. Consider and approve a Transfer of various real estate and personal property to suspense list – Tax Dept.
 - 3c. Acceptance of USPCA AKC REUNITE Grant Funds and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$7,500 from Revenue-Grant, Acct# 2502002-47152 to Expenditure-Police Canine, Acct. #25020050-58830-10127 – Police Dept.
 - 3d. Acceptance of Overtime Reimbursement of Federal Taskforce Funds and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1,491 to Misc. Revenue, Acct. #1009052-47040 and to Police Overtime, Acct. #10020050-51400 – Police Dept.
 - 3e. Acceptance of Federal/State Highway Grant "ARPA Auto Theft and Violence" Funds and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$35,000 to Revenue Highway Safety, Acct. #1002001-45208 and to Police Overtime, Acct. #10020050-51400 – Police Dept.
 - 3f. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$4,200 from Maintenance of Equipment, Acct. #10020050-54325 to Rental of Equipment, Land & Vehicles, Acct. #10020050-54405 – Police Dept.

- 3g. Consider and approve the Lease of Copiers and Printers for FY 2024-2025 – Police Dept.
- 3h. Acceptance of ARPA Summer Enrichment Grant and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$36,335 to Revenue, Acct. #2264002-47152 and to Expenditures, Acct. #22640150-58830 – Y&SS.
- 3i. Consider and approve Appropriation of ARPA funds in the amount of \$25,000 to Revenue-Federal Grant, Acct. #2391002-45200 and to ARPA-Nonprofit, Acct. #23940300-58830-TBD (See Attached) – Law Dept.
- 3j. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$51,500 from Contingency-Accrued Expenses, Acct. #10019000-58821 to Various Salaries and Wages, Acct. # (see attached) – Finance Dept.
- 3k. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$2,000 from Contingency-Misc. Expenses, Acct. #10019000-58820 to IT- Office Supplies, Acct. #10010130-56100 – Mayor
- 3l. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$8,000 – Human Resources
 - \$5,000 From: Professional Svcs. Employ. Exp. Acct. #10012000-56728
 - \$3,000 From: Tuition Reimbursement Acct. #10012100-52962
 - 8,000 To: Office Expense and Supplies Acct. #10012000-56100
- 3m. Consider and approve revisions to the job description for Chemist – Water and Sewer Div. / Human Resources Dept.
- 3n. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver request for BOE – Mayor
- 3o. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver request for EDC – Mayor
- 3p. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver request for Finance – Mayor
- 3q. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver request for Fire Dept. – Mayor
- 3r. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver request for Human Resources – Mayor

- 3s. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver request for Parks & Recreation – Mayor
- 3t. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver Request for Public Works - Mayor
- 3u. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver request for Town Attorney – Mayor
- 3v. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver request for Town Clerk – Mayor
- 3w. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver request for Utilities – PUC - Mayor
- 3x. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver request for Utilities – Electric – Mayor
- 3y. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver request for Utilities – Water/Sewer – Mayor
- 3z. Consider and approve 2024-2025 Bid Waiver Request for Hardware Items, Executive Chevrolet/Dealer only OEM parts and service, Eversource, Frontier Telecommunications Services – Mayor
- 3aa. Consider and approve Appropriation of ARPA funds in the amount of \$1,091,000 to Revenue-Federal Grant, Acct. #2391002-45200 and to ARPA-Municipal, Acct. #23940320-58830-TBD (See attached) - Mayor
- 3bb. Approve Minutes of April 23, 2024 Regular Town Council Meeting and April 29, 2024 Special Town Council Meeting.

**MOTION WAS MADE to approve Consent items 3a-3l and 3n-3ee.
MADE BY: TATTA
SECONDED BY: FISHBEIN
ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR**

Councilor Tatta abstained from item #3i.

- 4. **Items Removed from the Consent Agenda:** 3m was removed
- 5. **PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD**

Eric Carbone of Twin Pines Drive spoke about the Wallingford school system and how it is unique. He also spoke about the demographics that make up the Wallingford school systems and the metrics that the school uses for tests and so forth.

Paul Ciardullo of Bayberry Drive asked if the public will have a chance to speak about the budget before it is voted on. He had hoped with the new Administration and new Town Council that the town would have a different budgeting process than previous years, meaning more transparent and more accurate and more realistic. He thinks with the high tax increase that it would not be a good thing for the town and residents.

6. Discussion of old business – Chairman Marrone

(a) Update on Hidden Brook Lane: Attorney Farrell stated that this is still being worked on by the Law Department and nothing has been resolved. The office has talked to Attorney Fishbein and hope to have this resolved soon.

(b) Update on Technology: Mayor Cervoni stated that Andrew Winters has begun working as the Director of IT starting on May 6, 2024. He said late last week they received the results of the Technology Assessment from CLA in a draft form. They are reviewing it for security issues and as soon as they have isolated security issues it will be published to the council. He said this should be happening any day now.

7. Discussion and possible action regarding Wallingford Board of Education and Wallingford Board of Education Managers (Local 424-Unit 18) Contract – BOE

Danielle Bellizi, Superintendent of Wallingford Schools, Fran Thompson Assistant Superintendent of Personnel, and Dominick Barone, Business Manager for BOE was present to speak about the contract. Mr. Thompson presented the contract to the council. The Manager's Union consists of three members which are the Facilities Director, the Information Technology Director and the Nurse Director. The contract states a 2.5% general wage increase each year. He talked about the health insurance costs rising. He said there are three edits to the health care plan.

Councilor Tatta explained contract negotiations and how the council has nothing to do with the contract negotiations. They usually do not have any knowledge of the contracts before it is presented to them. The contracts are brought to the council after the contracts have already been approved. The council cannot approve a contract, only deny it.

Councilor Fishbein questioned one of the new changes to the contract. One changes states that the employee can receive five (5) sick days for an immediate family member. The contract does not go into detail as to who qualifies as an

immediate family member. He says there should be clear identification as to who is an immediate family member. Mr. Thompson said that other BOE contracts state that definition but this contract does not. There was a question as to how long someone can collect. The language is vague.

8. Adoption of FY 2024-2025 Annual Budget.

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD
Annual Budget Adoption – Council Motions (based on motions approved
5/7/2024)
For the Fiscal Year Beginning JULY 1, 2024

I. Councilmember : ALLINSON

MOVED: TO ADOPT THE TOTAL GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET OF **\$197,417,791, PER THE CHANGES MADE TO THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET ON THE ATTACHED RECONCILIATION DETAIL SHEET,** FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024.

Councilmember: TESTA seconded the motion.

Councilor Tatta is not in favor of the budget. She states that this is the largest tax increase in the past 20 years.

Councilor Marrone states he received a lot of emails in support of Education. He is not opposed to education even though he is not in favor of this budget. He believes everyone needs to work together.

Councilor Testa is in support of this budget and does not believe that the council should be telling the BOE how to run itself or how to or where they should spend their money. He believes the council should work with the BOE on a plan for early retirement of some teachers to cut costs.

Councilor Marrone at this point does not know if they are funding the BOE correctly or not. The same problems meaning lack of money will come up next year and future years if something is not done.

Councilor Allinson takes Councilor Marrone's comment in good faith. She says if no one is taking in interest in what is going on with the BOE and the education and maintaining of the schools until it is too late then that is a problem. She says if people have concerns about anything related to the BOE they should reach out to the BOE to voice their concerns.

Councilor Regan says a council it is their job to work together with different departments and BOE to make sure that everything is running smoothly, everyone is on the same page and if people need help that they get it. He suggested having workshops with the BOE.

Paul Ciardullo of Bayberry Drive feels that the budget is inflated. He went through line items of the budget to prove to the council that indeed the budget is inflated and something needs to be done about it.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: AYE
CARMODY: AYE
FISHBEIN: NAY
LAFFIN: AYE
REGAN: AYE
REYNOLDS: AYE
TATTA: NAY
TESTA: AYE
MARRONE: NAY
6- AYE
3- NAY
MOTION: PASSED

II. Councilmember : ALLINSON

MOVED: TO ADOPT THE TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURE BUDGET OF \$ 197,417,791, PER THE CHANGES MADE TO THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET ON THE ATTACHED RECONCILIATION DETAIL SHEET, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024.

Councilmember: REGAN

seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: AYE
CARMODY: AYE
FISHBEIN: NAY
LAFFIN: AYE
REGAN: AYE
REYNOLDS: AYE
TATTA: NAY
TESTA: AYE
MARRONE: NAY
6- AYE
3- NAY
MOTION: PASSED

III. Councilmember: ALLINSON

MOVED: ESTABLISH THE PROPERTY TAX RATE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024 AT 30.93 MILLS.

REAL ESTATE AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES IN EXCESS OF \$100 SHALL BE MADE IN TWO INSTALLMENTS. THE FIRST OF WHICH IS DUE JULY 1, 2024, PAYABLE ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 1, 2024. THE SECOND INSTALLMENT SHALL BE DUE JANUARY 1, 2025, PAYABLE ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 1, 2025. REAL ESTATE AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES OF \$100 OR LESS SHALL BE PAID IN ONE INSTALLMENT DUE JULY 1, 2024 AND PAYABLE ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 1, 2024 AS PROVIDED BY CONNECTICUT STATUTE, CHAPTER 204, SECTION 12-144.

MOTOR VEHICLE TAXES SHALL BE MADE IN ONE INSTALLMENT DUE JULY 1, 2024 AND PAYABLE ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 1, 2024 AS PROVIDED BY CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTE, CHAPTER 204, SECTION 12-144A. DELINQUENT MOTOR VEHICLE TAXES SHALL BE PAID ONLY IN CASH OR BY CERTIFIED CHECK OR MONEY ORDER AS PROVIDED BY CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTE, CHAPTER 204, SECTION 12-146.

PROPERTY TAXES IN AN AMOUNT OF LESS THAN FIVE DOLLARS SHALL BE WAIVED. CHECKS IN PAYMENT OF PROPERTY TAXES WHICH HAVE BEEN RETURNED BY THE BANK SHALL BE SUBJECT TO A THIRTY FIVE DOLLAR (\$35.00) FEE.

Councilmember: REGAN **seconded the motion.**

Councilor Tatta says one of her goals while being on the council is to keep the mill rate below 30. She went through the past years to point out where the mill rate has been below 30 and why.

Councilor Fishbein talks about last term and the choices that were made. He says this is the largest increase he has seen. He talks about other ideas to spend money in town that would benefit the Town of Wallingford. He says the town is regressing while having one of the largest tax increases and he cannot support the budget.

Councilor Reynolds says the mill rate increase is not in line with what the town is spending. He says part of that is because the town did not invest in things around town to upkeep and that is part of the reason why the mill rate has been low. He talks about the industrial park turning into a municipal campus. He suggests in the following years to maybe do some studies to see how to more efficient in the general government and BOE.

Councilor Testa thanked Councilor Reynolds for what was said. He stated that 10 years ago the contracts for wage increases were 0%, 1% and wanted to remind the council of that. He said over the past couple of years they have seen contracts settled for higher wage increases. He says if you want to cut BOE budget, you are in fact going to be cutting people. He says the expenses are coming because of the fact that the mill rate and salary increases did not go up in past years.

Councilor Marrone agrees with some of Councilor Reynolds topics of discussion. He says the town has starved the general government side so much that now they are in a crisis. He talked about the past administration and how the new administration has done more for the town in the past three months than the previous administration has done in the past three years. He talked about the town charter and how it was written.

Councilor Tatta wanted to talk about Councilor Testa's comment for coming up with a way to not raise taxes. She discussed her plan on how to not raise taxes and keep the mill rate the same.

Paul Ciardullo of Bayberry Drive agrees with Councilor Tatta's comments and likes her way of thinking and likes where she is going with her ideas. He suggested to the council places to cut the budget to decrease the budget.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: AYE

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: NAY

LAFFIN: LEFT MEETING

REGAN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

TATTA: NAY

TESTA: AYE

MARRONE: AYE

6- AYE

2- NAY

MOTION: PASSED

IV. Councilmember: ALLINSON

MOVED: TO ADOPT THE BUDGETS OF THE DIVISIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024 AS HEREIN STATED:

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: AYE

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: AYE

LAFFIN: LEFT MEETING

REGAN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

TATTA: AYE

TESTA: AYE

MARRONE: AYE

8- AYE

0- NAY

MOTION: PASSED

V. Councilmember: ALLINSON

MOVED: TO ADOPT THE BUDGET OF THE CAPITAL AND NON-RECURRING EXPENDITURES FUND FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,739,288 REVENUES, PER THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET AND \$1,739,288 EXPENDITURES.

Councilmember: REGAN

seconded the motion.

There was a voice vote and everyone present was in favor

VI. Councilmember: ALLINSON

MOVED: TO APPROVE SPECIAL FUNDS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE TOWN OF WALLINGFORD FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024 AS ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF (pages A. through C.)

Councilmember: REGAN

seconded the motion.

There was a voice vote and everyone present was in favor except Councilor Tatta who voted nay.

VII. Councilmember: ALLINSON

MOVED: TO APPROVE SPECIAL FUNDS OF THE TOWN OF WALLINGFORD GENERAL GOVERNMENT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024 AS ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF (pages D. and E.)

Councilmember: REGAN

seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: AYE

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: AYE

LAFFIN: LEFT MEETING

REGAN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

TATTA: NAY

TESTA: AYE

MARRONE: AYE

7- AYE

1- NAY

MOTION: PASSED

VIII. Councilmember: ALLINSON

MOVED: TO APPROVE CAPITAL APPROPRIATIONS (IN-FORCE) RESERVE FUND FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$89,734 REVENUES AND \$89,734 EXPENDITURES. THIS REPRESENTS THE AMOUNT AS OF MARCH 31, 2024, WHICH MAY DECREASE AS EXPENDITURES OCCUR THROUGH JUNE 30, 2024.

Councilmember: REGAN

seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: AYE

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: AYE

LAFFIN: LEFT MEETING

REGAN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

TATTA: NAY

TESTA: AYE

MARRONE: AYE

7- AYE

1- NAY

MOTION: PASSED

IX. Councilmember: ALLINSON

MOVED: TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THREE COPIES OF THE FINALIZED BUDGET. TWO TO BE FILED WITH THE TOWN CLERK AND ONE TO BE PLACED ON FILE IN THE WALLINGFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Councilmember: **REGAN**
motion.

seconded the

There was a **voice vote and everyone present was in favor.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Panzo
Town Clerk

Meeting digitally recorded

Joseph A. Marrone III, Chairman

Date

Kristen Panzo, Town Clerk

Date

for effective communication in programs and services of the Town of Wallingford are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance Coordinator at 203-294-2070 five days prior to meeting date.