

TOWN OF WALLINFORD, CONNECTICUT  
**SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers  
**MONDAY**  
**APRIL 29, 2024**  
**6:00 P.M.**

**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**FY 2024-2025 BUDGET**  
**AGENDA**

**RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES**

The Special Meeting of April 29, 2024, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Councilors in attendance were Samuel Carmody, Thomas Laffin, Chris Regan, Jesse Reynolds, Vincent Testa, Jr., Vice-Chair Christina Tatta, Chairman Joseph A. Marrone, III. Councilors Allinson and Fishbein were absent. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Town Attorney Gerald Farrell, and Comptroller Tim Sena were also present.

**Board of Education**

Anne Varrone-Lederle – 344 Main St., commented that the BOE proposed budget has fixed costs that do not impact students but will impact their education (i.e. Health Insurance). She feels 66 fewer people, across all departments is devastating. She has concern about class size and feels we need to continue to fund our public schools.

Lisa Taylor – 94 Saw Mill Dr., School Nurse at Pond Hill Elementary, feels students are more medically complex and fragile compared to years past and roll of School Nurse has changed. Student needs include diabetes, feeding tubes, life threatening allergies and seizures, as well as mental health issues, such as anxiety. Since COVID, anxiety, behavioral and mental health needs has increased. Physical complaints are manifested from mental health issues that children are unable to verbally express. School nurses are the first line of treatment. Schools need to be properly staffed to provide the best services to students. Highland School and Pond Hill School do not have Health Service Assistants.

Amy Stewart – 17 Wall St., Schools should be at the forefront of importance. Education is an investment in the future of Wallingford. Strong schools keep families living in town and draw new families to the town. By allocating sufficient funds to education we ensure our children receive quality schooling, equipping them with the skills and knowledge. Schools are increasingly in need of support services. The buildings are in need of many upgrades to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century. She feels amount of money cut does not contribute to the overall success of teachers, students and the Town of Wallingford.

Jason Michael – 81 Meadow St., asked if we go from two high schools to one, does this allow the Town and Board of Education to come together and create a new starting point? He asked this question last year and is asking again. Superintendent of Schools, Danielle Bellizzi stated she will get him an answer.

Bill Comerford – 5 Broadview Dr., Budget does not show where or what the percentage of the cuts is. Danielle Bellizzi, Superintendent of Schools explained the BOE's process of requesting funds for the budget. He also commented on the need for rental of boilers to heat the schools.

### **Emergency Management**

Bill Comerford – 5 Broadview Dr., asked what the Capital Expenditure: Station 5 Generator is for. Acting Chief, Sam Wilson explained the switch panel needs to be replaced, auto switch is not working, but generator can be turned on manually. Generator is from early 90's and parts are hard to obtain. Station 5, located at 143 Hope Hill Road, is an emergency shelter that can house approximately 40 people. This project is currently scheduled to be funded with ARPA funds.

### **Engineering**

Bill Comerford – 5 Broadview Dr., Is a new Sidewalk Inspector included in the proposed budget? Alison Kapushinski, Town Engineer, stated that staffing request has not changed from current year and we do not currently have a Sidewalk Inspector.

### **Government TV**

Bill Comerford – 5 Broadview Dr., Government Access TV page on [www.wallingfordct.gov](http://www.wallingfordct.gov) states one of its duties is "assists with management of Town website". Mr. Comerford wanted clarification of this description. Tom Caneshi, Audio/Video Tech, advised he uploads recorded meetings to YouTube. He does have access to the website but only uploads the meetings to YouTube.

### **Insurance Property and Casualty**

Bill Comerford – 5 Broadview Dr., proposed budget states \$230,000 increase. What caused the increase? Kurt Treiber, Risk Manager, stated that there are a number of factors that go into the insurance renewal. We do run a competitive bid process.

### **Law**

Bill Comerford – 5 Broadview Dr., when the Law Dept. sues an entity, does that go into the General Fund or does it make up part of the Law Department budget? Town Attorney Gerald Farrell stated that the funds go into the General Fund and that the Town Council is provided a report of how many suits and funds recovered.

### **Parks and Recreation**

Bill Comerford – 5 Broadview Dr., budget states \$12,000 for picnic tables. How many and where are those located? Parks and Recreation Director, Kenny Michaels stated that on average 80% of the picnic tables are swapped out. He cannot give quantity as it needs to go out for competitive bid. Mr. Comerford is asking for additional picnic tables, in additional locations

## **Police Department**

Bill Comerford – 5 Broadview Dr., asked if retired police officers can come back for staffing issues. Chief Ventura stated that is the Supernumerary Program, which was a program from many decades ago and has since ended. Once the Police Dept. has been moved to their new building, Chief Ventura would like to look at restarting this program. Mr. Comerford inquired about obtaining Harley Davidson's to be used for funerals and applicable circumstances which would free up use of the Police Interceptors. Mr. Comerford asked about Atlas One. Chief Ventura stated that a grant for the student violence prevention grant will be utilized to pay for the entirety of the Atlas One Program and will ask the Grant Coordinator for assistance if needed.

## **Program Planning**

Bill Comerford – 5 Broadview Dr., asked how many Grant Administrators are on staff. Mayor Cervoni responded that we currently have one on staff and Ms. Dravis-Cosgrove replaced the previous full-time Grant Administrator. Mr. Comerford stated that he feels we should have more Grant Administrators to apply for additional funding for the Town.

## **Public Works**

Bill Comerford – 5 Broadview Dr., asked about weekend trash pickup and cost to pay overtime vs. subcontracting. Director of Public Works, Rob Baltramaitis stated he would like to keep the job in-house. Mr. Comerford asked about a Town Arborist. Mr. Baltramaitis stated we have been able to gain access to an arborist with a current vendor. Discussion regarding road maintenance and possible alternatives to road treatments and sealers. Mr. Comerford inquired about retirees returning to part-time service.

## **Town Council**

Jason Michael – 81 Meadow St., asked questions regarding the new Budget process and asked for Councilors names to be added to the questions that are posted to the Town website.

## **Youth and Social Services**

Bill Comerford – 5 Broadview Dr., inquired about Memo sent to organizations applying for grant funds. He feels organizations should only receive funds if they supply the requested documentation. He asks the Town Council not to issue any funds to Center Street Cemetery Association.

**Board of Education**

Melanie Rosacci – 9 Platt Dr., asked how funding is determined for Board of Education. Mayor Cervoni explained that the general government does not have the authority to set priorities for the Board of Education. ARPA funds will be used to fund Board of Education Capital Projects.

**General Public Questions**

Jennifer Woods – 135 Knollwood Dr., inquired about the changes to the budget process and “additional funds” discussed in the meeting. Chairman Marrone explained the process, clarified ARPA and explained how the budgets for each department are submitted.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

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Kristen Panzo, Town Clerk

Date

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Joseph A. Marrone, III, Chairman

Date

In accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act-Individuals in need of auxiliary aids 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.

Wallingford Town Hall, 45 South Main Street