

Wallingford Town Council

Budget Workshop

Thursday, April 25, 2019

6:30 p.m.

Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers

Town Hall, 45 South Main Street

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Vincent Cervoni; Vice-Chair Tom Laffin; Councilors Craig Fishbein; John LeTourneau; Joseph Marrone; Gina Morgenstein; Jason Zandri; Chris Shortell (arrived at 6:40 p.m.); Mayor William Dickinson; Comptroller Jim Bowes.

Chair Cervoni called the Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Board of Education

Appearing in front of the Council was Schools Supt. Sal Menzo; Roxane McKay, Board of Education; Dominic Barrone, Business Manager. Supt. Menzo told the Council the continuing challenge is the uncertainty of funding from the State, especially in Special Education costs. He noted the number of Special Education students continue to rise.

Supt. Menzo noted that last fall, the idea of taking the unencumbered fund balance from one year ago and putting it aside for Special Education overages, was brought in front of the Council. He said that fortunately, the Dept. hasn't had to tap into this fund, but believe the monies have to be kept there because this is a volatile line item. Supt. Menzo noted the Dept. receives an Educational Excess Cost Sharing Grant which allows the Dept. for students who have higher average expenditures based upon their educational needs. He said this Grant reimbursement percentage is not always a reliable number. Supt. Menzo noted three years ago, the State cut the Dept.'s budget in October, approximately \$330,000 which had to be made up in that year.

Councilor LeTourneau asked about the budget message summary, noting the removal and replacement of 8,000 gallon oil tanks. He asked how the \$75,000 figure was arrived at. Supt. Menzo said the Dept. has done oil tank replacements in the past and stressed these are estimates and based on past history and the prices can go up or down. Councilor LeTourneau said he believed the figure was enormously high. Supt. Menzo said these are prices that have to go out to bid. He said this is not in the operating budget, but a special request Mayor Dickinson had to approve in order to utilize capital funds.

Regarding Special Education, Councilor LeTourneau asked if there was a way to get parents to contribute. Supt. Menzo stated that would be against the law noting there is Federal Law which dictates and governs the responsibilities of a school district which is to offer the "Least Restrictive Environment" which he noted sometimes requires the District to add additional staff or look for a different facility for the student to utilize. He said there is no burden on the parent. Supt. Menzo said the threshold is \$75,000 and if a student goes out of District for \$100,000, the State will pay 25% for example of the \$25,000 cost above the \$75,000. He said there isn't ability under Federal law to transfer any of these costs to the family.

Councilor LeTourneau said over time, he sees more students with emotional needs. Councilor LeTourneau said he didn't want to see any student left out, but wondered if some children needed more parental guidance. Supt. Menzo emphasized that no parent goes into having a child and hopes their child may have a disability. He said this is a sadness. Supt. Menzo said the majority of families see what we can do for them as a positive gift for their families. He said he doesn't see this as an abuse to the system. He said if there is any discussion about concern, it's about the resources that have to be procured for individuals.

Supt. Menzo said on Monday, he and his Business Manager are meeting either in person or doing conference calls with all of our outplacement facilities to understand how they develop their budgets and how they develop increases in their tuition rates. He noted that by doing this, a few years ago, the facilities held their prices for us recognizing there is a need to do this for communities. Supt. Menzo said he is trying to suggest there needs to be balance in the equation. Councilor LeTourneau said this is ballooning and stated he believes the schools were going from an institute of education to a health care facility. He said there has been some good done, but with good there are bad and wondered how this could be balanced.

Councilor Fishbein said he has an autistic niece and is basically non-verbal. He said he can see a brilliant child inside of a shell. Councilor Fishbein mentioned a recent court decision which stated monies shouldn't be spent on special education children. He noted his niece through the process is transported every day, approximately 50 miles from where she lives, to a school that gives her attention. He said all people want to do is to be productive. Ms. McKay said she appreciated the sensitivity of the subject matter. She said Councilor Fishbein raised a good point about the transportation costs. Ms. McKay said there are many components for us to service appropriately the student population. She said these are costs we need to absorb which are not always known. Ms. McKay said this is complex for the families and the school district to do all the right things for the right reasons. Councilor Fishbein said he has been pushing for regionalization for special education.

Councilor Fishbein asked where substitute teachers are in the budget and how they are forecasted. Supt. Menzo said there are a variety of different substitute teachers, traditional substitutes who fill in for teachers out sick and long-term substitutes, based on long-term disability, maternity leave. He said a three, five and a ten year trend analysis looking at how many substitutes have been employed by the School District by school, by level and District-wide. He said from there the projections are calculated.

Supt. Menzo said the contract in Wallingford is unique, noting that when a teacher is out for a long period of time, in most Districts, a substitute goes on the teacher's schedule at a certain point, but in Wallingford, the substitute stays on a substitute level, but on a higher rate of pay. He said the trend analysis is looked at and calculate the figure from there. Councilor Fishbein expressed concern about the State Family Leave program which he noted could impact this budget. Supt. Menzo said he didn't add money in the line item to anticipate this increase, but he did consider this with contingency. He said a percentage of the long term number to figure out what the percentage might be. Councilor Fishbein pointed out all of these people are potentially at 12 weeks, which would put Wallingford at the highest scale of substitutes. Supt. Menzo said a conservative route was taken if an adjustment has to be made in the budget.

Councilor Fishbein asked about the 1% account. Supt. Menzo said they were concerned when the State said they were cutting the \$330,000 a few years ago in October, so last Fall, we came to the Council stating they wanted to take the \$700,000 that we had carried over from the 1% from the prior year, an allocate that for Special Education overages if we happened to see them. He said we were trying to proactive in this regard. Supt. Menzo said there was money which was left over from the other 1% accounts, and approximately \$50,000 was taken from the \$700,000 to make up the \$100,000 and change to offset the insurance. He said the present unencumbered fund balance is approximately \$650,000. He said this is still there, and the purpose could change, but currently we want to hold steady with Special Education.

Councilor Fishbein commented that he thought the Council passed an Ordinance giving some sort of guidance on what this money could be used for. Supt. Menzo said it was agreed when the original Ordinance was passed in 2013/14, that the monies would not be used for reoccurring expenditures, but for one – time expenditures. He noted the Statute provided by the State in 2012 stated a Town could allow for reoccurring expenditures, but the Wallingford Board of Education decided not to go down this road, because then the budget for the following year would be underfunded. Mayor Dickinson clarified Supt. Menzo's statement pointing out an annual resolution was passed, not an Ordinance. He noted once this is passed for the Board, they can use it for whatever purpose desired.

Mayor Dickinson said there is no control on the spending and no one is bound by anything; the Board of Education determines how this money is used. Supt. Menzo stated that every year, the Board of Education has to request that the monies be carried over. Councilor Fishbein stated the State House of Representatives changed the one percent account to a two percent account. He said he was concerned about this. He said he was told there has to be a local Ordinance and will look into this. Councilor Fishbein asked where the money was coming from to fund the oil tank removal and the roof which he stated wasn't in the operating budget. Supt. Menzo said when he meets with the Mayor in each March, the Board has offered him Capital Items off the strategic plan to consider over the past several years. Mayor Dickinson said wouldn't be funded until there are bid prices.

Mayor Dickinson also noted funding on the health insurance mentioned by Supt. Menzo. He said this was money indicated in the letter the Council has, approximately \$250,000; \$100,000 from Education;

\$100,000 from Education and \$50,000 from the Utilities, in order to reduce the Health Insurance increase from 10% to 9% which he noted was a separate category. Chair Cervoni asked Mr. Bowes where the 1% account and the reserve that was created from an earlier 1 percent account to potentially fund Special Education, would be found in the audit. Mr. Bowes said this is part of the assigned fund balance. Councilor Zandri asked about transportation, noting he didn't realize the Town didn't have the ability to have students removed from the bus routes; students who turn 16 or 17 and get their drivers license. He asked if there were any savings.

Supt. Menzo said the savings would be nominal noting the contract is based on the elementary runs noting most elementary students take the buses. He said a bus or two may be saved at a cost of approximately \$90,000 (\$45,000 a bus). He said the Dept. already owns the buses and they will be used. Supt. Menzo said it would be difficult to write a new contract with a new bus company telling them we only want the elementary runs. He said it would be difficult to get a few people to work a portion of the day. Councilor Zandri asked why the buses seem to stop at every other house.

Supt. Menzo said there are a variety of issues noting there could be medical issues with a student or issues in the neighborhood that need to be monitored. He noted it isn't clear cut. Councilor Zandri noted that drivers get irritated when a student doesn't wait at the bus stop instead choosing to wait inside the house especially when it is nice weather. Supt. Menzo said he receives several calls a year about this issue. Councilor Zandri asked about the tuition line 560 on page 65. He noted that actual number for this present year at 4.5 goes up to 5.3 which is an 18 percent increase. Mr. Barone said this figure has increased because of additional outplacements, and the anticipation of increases in certain tuitions. Councilor Zandri asked what this tuition applied to. Mr. Barone said it is Wallingford students going to either private or public placement at a different school, i.e., Aces, Benhaven, etc. He pointed out the transportation is on a different bus line. Supt. Menzo noted the estimate increase for Special Education outplacements will be \$300,000. He said there are also private outplacements which he estimates will increase \$192,000. Supt. Menzo said he has tried to work with families in an attempt to transition with family support from private outplacements to public outplacements.

Councilor Zandri asked about pupil costs and students who split their time between other towns. Supt. Menzo pointed out that oftentimes there are challenges where a student has parents in two different communities. He said the District refers to the Legal Custody Agreement, which states it has to be more than half the time where the student is sleeping during the week. He said the District identifies whether the student is a Wallingford resident, or a resident of another town. Supt. Menzo noted there is Statute which dictates this. He said there is also another Statute which dictates that if a student lives with another family member in another town with the sole purpose only being for education, this cannot be done. Councilor Zandri asked if there was recourse. Supt. Menzo said an affidavit is required which has to be notarized, and if the affidavit and notarization is deemed to be illegal, this can be taken up with the court. Supt. Menzo added the Police Dept. is also utilized to monitor residency of students. He said between five and ten investigations are done each school year.

Supt. Menzo said he has tried to find people homes back in Wallingford and was actually helpful in getting housing. Supt. Menzo noted there are students who are helpful and are eligible to receive \$30,000 a year to help these students. He pointed out that if the student's original location was Wallingford, but they ended up in Meriden, their nexus to come to school is the Wallingford schools. He said they share the transportation costs with the other town or district. Supt. Menzo said the principals and secretary do a great job addressing this and revamping registration procedures for families. He said State Statute is followed and if the law is broken, there will be prosecution.

Councilor Shortell asked about the unencumbered balance which is \$650,000. Supt. Menzo said that was the figure for the previous unencumbered account. He said the current balance for the 18/19 school year is \$829,081. He said most of the items that the unencumbered funds will be used for, as has been the case in the past, technology, i.e., server replacements, student computers, Chrome books, elementary devices, projection systems, musical instruments, the voicemail system classroom production, teacher laptops. Ms. McKay said there sometimes are facility upgrades that wouldn't be met under the Capital Expenditure. Supt. Menzo said they are looking to recommend an efficiency study in terms of energy efficiency to the Board of Education for additional cost savings especially at the eight elementary schools.

Councilor Shortell asked about the number of hours the school resource officers work. Supt. Menzo said the officers work daily three to four hours. He said they go between the Middle School and High School campus. Supt. Menzo said the resource officers collect data which is shared with the Board of Education on a regular basis. Ms. McKay noted the resource officers attend athletic events and are entrenched in the school culture. She also spoke about the deterrent factor of these resource officers just by conversation. Councilor Shortell asked how much of a percentage is grant funded regarding Special Education. Supt. Menzo said it depends, noting the IDA (Individual Development Account Initiative) Grant is approximately \$1.3 million which offsets some of the staff costs. He said there are also excess cost funds which was \$2.1 million for a total of \$3.4 million.

Supt. Menzo said there is other funding based upon Medicaid, which could be approximately \$100,000. He said generally he is talking between \$3 million to \$5 million. Councilor Shortell asked about the STARS (Skilled Teachers Achieving Results for Children) Program. Supt. Menzo said this is separate and explained that STARS is a K-2 predominately autism program and a grade 3-5 program in the elementary schools. He said the students in this program receive a tremendous amount of support depending upon allocation. Supt. Menzo noted that once the \$75,000 threshold is met, the Board of Education can receive monies back from the State. He said often times the in-house programs don't meet the thresholds and that is why they are in-house. Supt. Menzo said there is also the INSPIRE depending upon the students' needs for middle and high school students. Councilor Shortell said we have to guard against the "just say no" mentality with drugs, pointing out if a parent has a child who is non-verbal, no amount of parenting will help; that child needs assistance.

Councilor LeTourneau asked about the busing. He said some of this is getting blown out of proportion noting that when he leaves for work in the morning on the east side of Wallingford, the bus stops at

house after house picking up Jr. High School students. He noted that when he goes down S. Elm Street and there are a cluster of students who come out of public housing getting on the bus all at once because the buses don't go through those neighborhoods. He also pointed out when he goes downtown, the buses also don't go through these neighborhoods and the students have to get on the bus in clusters. He asked why they have to cluster, but the students in the outer districts can walk 50 ft. to 100 ft. to cluster. Supt. Menzo said he wasn't familiar with those neighborhoods and stressed that everything is taken into consideration, pointing out the School System reroutes every year and this can be looked into.

Councilor Fishbein said spoke about a school tour of the Capital by Lyman Hall students. He said there was an adult conversation by the students regarding marijuana, tolls and Family Leave which he said was awesome. He said the Alternative Schools came in afterwards and he brought them over to see his office. Councilor Fishbein said he had a conversation with a student who told him how this program saved her. He said this gave him some hope. Councilor Zandri spoke about the bus situation reiterating that the constant stopping is holding up traffic. He said something has to be done noting at times there are 15 cars lined up on S. Main Street backed up to Elm Street. He said this will become a safety issue. He emphasized the drivers are in the wrong and wants to look for an overall solution.

Councilor Morgenstein asked about rentals and wondered if there was a way to own something rather than rent. Supt. Menzo said the rentals cover a variety of items and at this point the Board of Education doesn't have ability to own anything. Councilor Morgenstein spoke about equipment rental. Supt. Menzo said the rentals are a combination of items including hockey rinks, golf courses, Special Education equipment and the Board of Education office. Councilor Morgenstein wondered if a hockey rink could have been built by now instead of renting a facility for over 30 years. Supt. Menzo said he has discussed building an indoor sport facility with community members. He noted the District is spending \$47,000 each year, between the two ice rinks; \$17,000 for the Choate rink and \$30,200 for the Northford rink. He said this amounts to \$400,000 over a 10 year period of rental costs.

Councilor Morgenstein stated she was happy that Capital funding was used for oil tank removal, but noted evening facility security charges repair and maintenance. She asked with the aging California-style buildings, maintenance and various costs, not education, would it be reasonable to have this handled by the general government side noting there is a sizable elderly population that doesn't pay fully into the education budget. Supt. Menzo said this is a delicate balance, and noted he will do whatever asked. Councilor LeTourneau said he wanted to make clear that he was in favor of Special Education. He said Councilor Fishbein brought up a good point that his niece utilized the program and benefitted including his own family members. Councilor LeTourneau said he is frustrated because the program gets blended with Special Needs and discipline. He cited the example of two Junior High School students who could not be tutored at the Library because of behavior. He said there was no discipline from the parents whom he said he knew. Councilor LeTourneau said situations like this come back to the budget noting that someone has to pay for this and stated this isn't an isolated issue. Supt. Menzo emphasized that Councilor LeTourneau put out statements that are potentially very charged; he said in his conversation

with Councilor LeTourneau, no names were ever mentioned. He said he has strict guidelines he has to follow under the law; Councilor LeTourneau said he also never mentioned names. Supt. Menzo said as an educator, he knows everyone that comes into our buildings has the same mindset or the same resources at home and this is why we do what we do. He said he appreciated Councilor LeTourneau looking at this situation from a financial end, but the reality is that we have to balance this and the educators do a fantastic job. Councilor LeTourneau said he also appreciated the educators work. Supt. Menzo said we have to be cautious, because every situation with a child has a variable which we don't know even exists.

Councilor Fishbein went over the cafeteria budget noting it is running at a \$34,980 loss and asked what this would be attributed to. Supt. Menzo clarified this was not running at a loss this year, it was break-even. Mr. Barone pointed out the \$34,000 loss was because lunch sales went down. He stated in the prior year, there was an \$18,000 profit. Councilor Fishbein said this is money that could have gone towards education; noting the one full year he has in his book is the year ending June 30, 2018 and this is what he is looking at.

Councilor Fishbein said when he first joined the Council, there was a significant amount of monies in reserve; taking \$100,000 and \$125,000 and supplementing this budget to keep it whole. He said he was correct when he stated this money would disappear. Mr. Barone clarified this is not an enterprise fund; it is a Special Revenue fund. Councilor Fishbein noted that this is not a sustaining enterprise fund. Mr. Barone said this is more like a hybrid. Councilor Fishbein asked the goal for this fund. Mr. Barone said the goal of this fund is to break even and not lose money and recoup operating costs through sales. Councilor Fishbein noted that a "c" graded fiscal year there would be a zero on the net income or loss. Mr. Barone said it would be zero or better but added he didn't expect this fund to make \$100,000 a year.

Councilor Fishbein noted that last year the figure was minus \$34,000 and asked what this was attributed to. Mr. Barone said there was a lot of turmoil in this fund, there was a retirement and transition and this impacted sales which were down. Supt. Menzo noted the previous history showed \$1,400 for unemployment benefits and last year the figure was \$16,400 so this is a clear indicator. He said there was a previous interim director which was not re-hired and he filed for unemployment and we are required to pay. Mr. Barone said we pay when we are assessed and noted most business pay a percentage of payroll and if no one files for unemployment for the entire year, the whole number would be zero.

Supt. Menzo spoke about the number of full-time employees in food service, noting that in the past there was never a full staff which was a problem and risk with the union and Labor Dept. because a lot of substitutes were being paid. Supt. Menzo with the new Director, all the full-time employees that were needed were hired rather than doing a hybrid of substitutes and this is why there was an increase cost. Councilor Fishbein said he had to question the business decision to do this noting there are down trending sales. Supt. Menzo said this wasn't a business decision, but a legal decision. He said he didn't want to open up a situation where the union believes we aren't utilizing the necessary resources by

offering full employment and could only go so far before having an unfair labor practice. Counselor Fishbein pointed out the full-time employee line increased the part-time line decreased. He said he was talking numbers not bodies. Supt. Menzo explained if there were two part-time people doing a full-time position when it should have been a full-time position to begin with, we are losing bodies in the part-time position, but losing money. Councilor Fishbein said if we lose \$25,000 and increase spending on the full-time employee line but decrease spending by \$25,000 on the part-time employee line, the net effect is zero. Supt. Menzo said there was the increase in benefits and pension contributions to consider.

Councilor Fishbein asked about the health benefits, noting a \$2,000 decrease, noting what was appropriated was \$99,357 and the actual was \$97,248. Mr. Barone said this was an increase over the prior year. He noted revenues are almost \$100,000 lower. Councilor Fishbein asked where in the green book, where it showed the actual expended as of Jan. 31, 2019 for the cafeteria. Supt. Menzo said this would only be shown in the monthly reports. Councilor Fishbein asked about the "banquets" and "other" category. Mr. Barone said there is a big decrease projected for next year because there were work camps, a group came to Wallingford, stayed here and worked on houses and they will not be back this year. He said they brought in approximately \$23,000 in revenue.

Councilor Fishbein said last year with the cafeteria budget, approval for \$16,224 was requested which was rounded down to \$16,000 and was approved. He said this year the request is again at \$16,224. He noted the year before the request was approximately \$14,000. He asked for an explanation of the "banquets" and "other" category. Supt. Menzo said this involves catering events paid for by the basketball team, i.e., senior night; an ice-cream social; and field days at the elementary school. He said this is a profitable venture. Councilor Fishbein asked on page 88 about kitchen maintenance and wondered if this was an infrastructure expenditure or a personnel expenditure. Mr. Barone said this is equipment, i.e., fixing the stove or oven. Councilor Fishbein asked if this was under a maintenance contract. Supt. Menzo acknowledged there is a maintenance contract, but this is for items that have outlasted the maintenance contract and is still working.

Councilor Fishbein pointed out that under the kitchen maintenance line, Education asked the Mayor for \$22,000 but last year through a full-year, less than half that money was used. Supt. Menzo explained the reason for this was because more maintenance contracts were added to new equipment. He said over the past three years, monies have been received from the Mayor, money from CRA to install combination ovens at the school so cooking can be done on site. He said all the elementary schools have received at least one combi-oven so most often there is a one, two or three year agreement and this is the reason for the increase. Councilor Fishbein commented on kitchen supplies, noting the request is \$43,546 for this year, but pointed out last year, \$10,342 was expended. He noted the number has tripled and is in excess of the loss. Mr. Barone noted that last year, the Dept. spent \$44,500. Supt. Menzo explained that the previous person in the position pre-purchased materials to be used in that year. He said when a consistent purchasing process isn't implemented, one gets into the hills and valleys. Supt. Menzo said a consistent purchasing process needs to be created but over time, this number should decrease and should find a spot between \$25,000 and \$30,000 and this will maintain the

product. Councilor Fishbein asked what controls were being put in place to ensure this doesn't occur again. Supt. Menzo said all the controls were put in last year. He said there are six different documents which cover the supplies, free reduced lunches, the percentages. He said there are internal controls and inventory controls. Mr. Barone noted there is also a monthly comparison which compares to the prior year's month. Supt. Menzo pointed out that food costs have become a challenge this year partly because food has gone up in price and because food is being prepared that is more desirable to the student. Councilor Fishbein discussed the "miscellaneous" item in the budget, pointing out that last year, Education requested \$10,963 which was allocated, and \$38,243 was spent by the end of last year.

Mr. Barone said he believed some certain items were classified as supplies one year and miscellaneous the next year. He said he is trying to get consistency with the recording of items. Mr. Barone also noted over the past three years, there were three different directors. He said he is trying to get this standardized. Councilor Fishbein noted a point of sale system which Mr. Barone said the school system had. Councilor Fishbein asked how kitchen supplies could be categorized as miscellaneous from one director to another. Mr. Barone said the POS (point of sale) is on the sale side and is tracking sales. He said some of these items were probably categorized as miscellaneous instead of kitchen supplies. Mr. Barone said there are different inventory controls and there is refrigeration and other storage. Councilor Fishbein asked if there is a list based upon of projected sales for the amount of inventory needed to run this facility over a period of time. Mr. Barone said there is a list and have managers who know what is needed for their schools and there is inventory done monthly on what is left whether it is food or supplies.

Mr. Barone noted that last year, there was a \$52,000 deficit and made up approximately \$14,000 by the end of the year. He said currently, there is a \$27,000 deficit as of the end of last month. Mr. Barone said the big driver this year is that the reimbursable lunch sales are up approximately 10% and the A La Carte sales are up approximately 5% to 6%. He said revenues and costs have also increased. Councilor Fishbein said he has heard that food sales usually go down during the spring. Mr. Barone said every month is looked at individually and collectively and noted last September, there were 20 sale days and September of this year there were 21 sale days.

Mr. Barone noted that last May was probably the strongest sale day. He said there is State reimbursement expected for next month. Councilor Fishbein said he was very concerned about this expanding to breakfast. Supt. Menzo said breakfast won't be done unless we can break even. He said the breakfast program is difficult and spoke about a scathing letter he received from the former Governor about not feeding the students breakfast. He said all the data was given to the State and they were told to have us break even. Supt. Menzo said he received a call a few weeks later from the State they couldn't make that happen.

Supt. Menzo said he knows how many meals that have to be served at every school to break even. He said he doesn't believe he has to serve 30 breakfast meals to break even. Supt. Menzo noted that every Director contributed to the role they had with food services. Councilor LeTourneau spoke about the quality of the food. He said a lot of this came down to State and Federal mandates. He asked what the

status was with the mandates. Supt. Menzo said the mandates are beginning to ease, noting there is a new grain waiver that we have taken advantage of; there doesn't have to be as many whole grain opportunities. He said a lot of this beyond the grain waiver, is the portion size which is difficult especially for the high school students. Councilor Zandri asked about the accuracy of Point of Sale tracking. He noted he had a few concerns. He said his own son was buying a school lunch and then an A La Carte lunch. He said he was concerned his son was being charged twice.

Councilor Zandri said an item his son was buying at 85 cents was coming up as a small four-ounce fruit drink but was actually Rice Krispy treats. He asked why there isn't an accurate counting of what is being sold. Mr. Barone said it is accurate as far as items sold and dollars collected and suggested possibly tweaking the description.

Councilor Zandri pointed out a fruitable and a Rice Krispy Treat are entirely different products. He spoke about the big push to eat healthier but noted on one stopped his son from buying two Rice Krispy Treats every day. He said he can't monitor this if the system is wringing food items up incorrectly. Supt. Menzo said these aren't the normal Rice Krispy Treats, they have to be on the healthy certified list for snacks by the State. Councilor Zandri said this may not necessarily be true noting the fruitable and the Rice Krispy treat was the same price. Supt. Menzo said he will ensure there will be this matching up.

Councilor Zandri asked how many lunches are sold on average during the school year. Mr. Barone estimated 240,000 lunches are sold during the school year. Councilor Zandri noted that suggested the lunch prices be increased 15 cents to bring the \$34,000 loss to a \$10,000 loss. Mr. Barone said this may discourage people from buying. He said we may be forced to increase but it would be based on the cost adjustment factor required by the Federal Government and this is based on the monies received for the free and subsidized lunches. He said there is no penalty for going over. Supt. Menzo said the money to subsidize, if needed, is in the cafeteria account, not in the Board of Education budget.

Councilor Zandri asked if the increase could occur during the middle of the school year. Supt. Menzo said some parents couldn't afford this increase. He said Councilor Zandri's points were well taken. He said it may not be the 15 cents; it may be five cents or 10 cents in order to close this gap. Supt. Menzo said there were some food cost increases that threw everything off. Councilor Zandri said he would like to see us be just as marginal on the positive side or closer to zero because this becomes more of a balance because we don't want to see the fund dry up. Supt. Menzo said if we can make \$50,000 a year this would be fantastic.

Councilor Fishbein said he looked at the math, noting that certain people don't pay for education, but now we have an opportunity for those who send their children to school, to pay to feed their children. He said 15 cents a day, one child, is 75 cents a week and is \$3.25 a month. He said if this was a 12-month calendar, it would be \$39 for a year if it were five days a week. Councilor Fishbein said this is a business decision, but noted this money got into the Reserve Account and noted 10 years ago, there was \$500,000 in the account. He said this money got there not from a contribution from the taxpayers, but from selling just lunches. Councilor Fishbein said this was a business. Ms. McKay noted at that time,

French fries and hamburgers were being sold. Councilor Fishbein asked the financial impact if the Government was told "no". Supt. Menzo said the Town would have to cover the cost of all the free and reduced lunches. Supt. Menzo said the cost would be approximately \$785,000. Mayor Dickinson pointed out the menu has changed because of nutritional issues, but noted there is now 1,000 fewer students so there is no longer the number of people there tempted to buy lunch. Councilor Fishbein said there has to be some sort of delta on increasing the price by pennies. He said he can't fathom this would decrease the amount of sales to have any net fact. He said this reserve fund will be gone in a few years and taxpayers will be paying. Supt. Menzo said it was investigated and decided against, to go with a company that guarantees a profit and this doesn't become a taxpayer problem.

End of Board of Education Workshop

Parks and Recreation

Appearing was Parks & Recreation Director John Gawlak and Kenny Michaels, Recreation Program Specialist. Mr. Gawlak went over his cover letter noting this year's spending is \$2.38 percent over last year's spending; noting a large part of the increase is because of some items for Wallingford 350, otherwise the increase would be 1 percent over last year. He highlighted a few projects including the Grand Street Park redevelopment and the Pragemann Park quad. He said this Park needs serious rehabbing since football was moved out of Westside Field. He said the backfield hasn't been finished by Public Works, so there has been concentrated use inside the quad. He said the new field should be finished and completed by the summer. Mr. Gawlak said consideration for this item would be appreciated for this year or next year. He spoke about the parking lots at Community Lake Park, Lufbery Park and Woodhouse Park, one and two, has been discussed with Steve Palermo of Public Works. He said he believes these projects are in their budgets and are in need of repair.

Mr. Gawlak noted the multi-use court at Westside Eagles is used by the neighborhood. He said he hoped this would make it into the Public Works budget. Mr. Gawlak noted that the storm a few years ago, damaged the backstop on the ballfield at Lufbery Park which he said was not regularly used, so the decision was made not to repair. He said there is also a Pavilion at this park which needs to be upgraded or possibly moved. He said Public Works said this is not salvageable, so down the road he is looking to redevelop this park.

Mr. Gawlak spoke about the Doolittle Park fieldhouse and possibly taking it down and keeping the restroom, plumbing and making it another open air pavilion. Councilor Shortell asked about the current Community Pool and how much it would cost to keep it open through Labor Day. Mr. Gawlak said if the pool is open for three more weeks would be \$20,000. He said he would have to check with Public Works. Mr. Gawlak said he believes it costs \$2,000 to \$3,000 for chemicals but didn't know the cost for the management of the pump house. He said he wasn't sure about the management because this is out of the Public Works Department. Mr. Gawlak said that checking with the Pool Supervisor, the pool would be able to be staffed fully for one more week if funding was obtained for the three weeks.

Councilor Morgenstein asked Mr. Gawlak was waiting for an Ordinance from the Council to allow advertising in parks. Mr. Gawlak said this has been discussed at their meetings, and is something they are working towards. Councilor Morgenstein said she believed this would be beneficial. Councilor Fishbein asked about personnel requests, noting a request for 101 individuals was requested, but pointed out the Mayor approved no staffing. Mr. Gawlak said he just noticed this. He said as far as he knows, all requests for personnel were met by the Mayor. Councilor Fishbein said within the request, there appears to be an increase in personnel. Mr. Gawlak said this was a housekeeping issue which was discussed with the Mayor and Comptroller Bowes. He noted in previous years, this should reflect the 16 employees, who are part-time. He said this has been ongoing.

Councilor Fishbein asked about purchased services-custodial, noting last year \$2,500 was requested which was appropriated, but pointed out nothing was expended through the end of this year. Mr. Gawlak said back when there was a lot of different baseball/softball programs the money was in there for requests on weekend games which was an overtime issue with Board of Education, the request was made so the fields could be prepped and safe. He said there wasn't a request for the past fall season and this spring as of yet. He noted the travel program begins the end of May. Mr. Gawlak said the number has decreased over the years because fewer teams are making the request.

Councilor Fishbein asked about the Symphony, noting it appeared the number has doubled. Mr. Gawlak said this is part of the Wallingford 350 celebration. He said this is an increase of \$8,885 which is the typical contribution annually, but the increase is because of the Wallingford 350 celebration Gala Ball on June 27. Mayor Dickinson said the monies are available, but it is unclear whether or not the Symphony will be doing this. He said one concert is on July 4th and the remaining money, if they are part of the 2020 celebration, there is money for this, but the Symphony may not be able to do this. He said the Wallingford Symphony won't receive the money if they don't perform.

Councilor Fishbein said it appeared to him the Town would have a concert for Wallingford 350, but not for the July 4th celebration in 2020. Mayor Dickinson said this is correct and the Town wouldn't be budgeting fireworks for that July 4th either, but noted there will be fireworks for the Wallingford 2020 celebration. Councilor Fishbein said he believed it was an administration decision to cancel the July 4th concert that has been ongoing for years. Mayor Dickinson said this is correct because of the expenditure of funds. He said he didn't believe it was proper to be funding the symphony orchestra twice and then another time a week later. Councilor Fishbein asked if the Town was still going with the concept of having a \$150,000 parade around the Wallingford 350 event. Mayor Dickinson said the parade is part of a week-long series of events.

Mayor Dickinson said there is \$70,000 in this budget in combination for \$45,000 which was budgeted in the current year and would be money for the parade. Councilor Fishbein said he didn't understand why \$8,000 and have the Symphony. He said these are things we find out at budget time which are disturbing. He said he is totally opposed to canceling the Independence Day free concert. Mayor Dickinson said it may be the Wallingford Symphony will not be part of the 2020 Celebration. He said they probably will not be, so the Town would budget again for the Symphony for the following budget

year for July 4th. Councilor Fishbein noted it was represented to us that this concert will replace the July 2020 concert. Mayor Dickinson said this was not accurate. Councilor Fishbein asked about line 58243 in the budget, which he said appeared to be a new line – girls fast pitch softball. Mr. Gawlak noted that for years, they were receiving \$3,000. He said participation has been down for the past several years, so the President at the time didn't request, so money was taken from the budget. He said the league has been experiencing a growth, so the league wasn't fully subsidized at \$3,000, but \$1,500 was budgeted. Councilor Fishbein said he has asked for years that any entity not affiliated with the Town would have to submit a budget and correspondence and what the monies would be used for and the impact of the monies weren't used. Mr. Gawlak said a letter request was made.

Councilor Fishbein asked what the impact would be to this entity if the Town didn't make this donation. Mr. Gawlak said they would have to do with less and noted they get donations and fundraise. Councilor Fishbein asked about line 58735 in the budget which has to do with "operating expenses". He noted last year, \$21,000 was requested and allowed and this year the request was \$3,800. Mr. Gawlak explained there has been a considerable amount of ordering and encumbrances in the amount of \$18,234. He said there are still a few things planning to be purchased for a few programs and then there will be \$69 left in the account. Councilor Morgenstein noted that it was represented to us that a lot of the expenses for the Wallingford 350 celebration would be coming in from donations. She asked the mechanism for budgeting the big numbers if they come in as donations.

Mr. Gawlak said he has one role which is Friday Youth Day. Mayor Dickinson said the concert and parade are the only two areas of funding in the budget currently. He said until the Committee in charge comes forward and request either seed money and then get reimbursed, he doesn't know how to budget this. Councilor Morgenstein said we are budgeting to cancel one concert and have it a few days later, and giving a certain amount of money for the parade, if funding comes through to cover this, what would be the mechanism. Mayor Dickinson said to his knowledge, there is no money coming in to cover the \$70,000 for the parade in the budget or the Symphony Orchestra. He said the Orchestra might be part of the 2020 celebration, but probably will not be. Councilor Morgenstein went on the record siding with Councilor Fishbein regarding the July 4th celebration. Mayor Dickinson noted the 2020 parade is in June, the July 4th parade will be in the 2021 Fiscal Year.

End of Parks and Recreation Workshop.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Fishbein made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 9:40 p.m. Councilor Shortell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Kleist

Recording Secretary

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 5-1-19
AT 10:00 AND RECEIVED BY
Barbara Hamilton TOWN CLERK