

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers

MONDAY

APRIL 11, 2022

6:00 P.M.

PUBLIC HEARING

FY 2022-2023 BUDGET

AGENDA

The Special Town Council Meeting on Monday, April 11, 2022, 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, Sam Carmody, Thomas Laffin, Joseph A. Marrone, III, Christina Tatta, and Chairman Vincent Cervoni. Mayor William W Dickinson, Jr., and Comptroller, Timothy Sena, were also present.

1. Moment of Silence
2. Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call
3. **PUBLIC HEARING**

At the request of the Council Chairman, all available departments will be in attendance at the Public Hearing to answer questions from the public on the department's budget.

Jared Liu, Curtis Avenue,

Mr. Sena replied that the salary request was cut in half but they are getting the same they got the prior year. During Reval years it goes up but in non-revaluation years it's the 8,000. Mr. Sena clarified that it's a stipend to the position based on the number of hours and so based on the hours they are putting in it's going to be a lower stipend.

Economic Development Commission

In attendance was Timothy Ryan, Economic Development Commission

Jared Liu, Curtis Avenue, asked if there is full-time staff now. Mr. Ryan replied that the new budget reflects that he is retiring at the end of June and it will be a full-time position for 30 hours. He stated that he has been working 35 hours. Mr. Curtis asked what Mr. Ryan's perspective is on additional staff. Mr. Ryan explained that it's a very active role that engages with local business and regional economic development groups and the state groups that develop business relationships. Our goal is to stay in

conversations whenever there are development opportunities that we may be interested in. Mr. Liu asked how he was able to increase the position from part-time to full-time. Mr. Ryan spoke of the digital channels for marketing that were established with Quinnipiac University.

Bill Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive, asked if the secretary for the grant administration falls under Economic Development. Mr. Ryan replied that she does not. Mr. Comerford referred to item 55405, promotional expenses, and asked for an explanation of the \$30,000. Mr. Ryan replied that it is all outreach and gave examples of business journal digital products that they will be using to promote Wallingford. Mr. Comerford noted that the Desk of Joe articles are written by Steve Knight and he gets paid for it. Mr. Ryan confirmed and stated that this is a very common practice. The commission determines what they want to say in the column. It allows us to speak to groups beyond Wallingford as well as to let Wallingford residents know what the commission is thinking about and working on. He clarified that all the ad copy for other publications is done by the publications. Mr. Knight is only paid by the Commission for the Desk of Joe column. Mr. Comerford noted that the entire budget is only \$116,000 which is a pittance and they need more to do this important work.

Electric Division

In attendance was Richard Hendershot, Director of Public Utilities, Tony Buccheri, General Manager, Electric Division

Jared Liu, 59 Curtis Avenue, asked about late payments. He asked about the demographics as he was concerned that those being assessed these fees are those who can least afford them. Mr. Hendershot replied no, they don't collect demographics, but that it is likely businesses or industrial customers. Mr. Liu asked how easy it would be to run that analysis. Mr. Buccheri stated that customers would have to volunteer to provide that information. Mr. Liu noted that there is money in the budget for underground wires and asked if there is a plan to have more underground wiring. Mr. Buccheri replied that there is a project to extend an underground cable to a neighborhood for more capacity. It would then rise up to the overhead wires. Mr. Liu asked why we don't move toward more underground wires. Mr. Buccheri replied that we don't have any underground transmission in town. In new residential construction, there is underground residential distribution. To underground anything existing is a significant cost. They have determined it is not economical. Mr. Liu asked if the cost of maintaining overhead lines is going down (line 593). Mr. Buccheri noted that that line has actually gone up from FY 22 to FY23 due to labor allocation adjustments. Mr. Liu asked for clarification of budget item 392, transportation equipment. Mr. Buccheri replied that that is the fleet and that typically they budget for the replacement of either a line truck or a digger derrick every year. Mr. Liu asked if we had online bill payment and how it would affect staffing. It looks like it costs \$1M a year to collect payments. (903 customer records and collections) Mr. Hendershot replied that that is where the clerks and customer service office of the Electric Division charge their time. It's more than just the collection of payments. He stated that he doesn't know what the number would be on a per-payment basis. They have not looked at using online bill payments at this time. Mr. Liu asked if the increase in the conservation fund is state-mandated. Mr. Hendershot replied that the rate is changing in anticipation of sales of more kilowatt-hours and might reflect increased regional greenhouse gas initiative payments. Mr. Liu asked if there were plans to expand what's eligible such as solar panels, EV charging stations at home, etc. Mr. Hendershot replied no. The bulk of what is collected is spent on true energy reduction efforts. The PUC has control of what is eligible.

Bill Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive, referred to page 68 maintenance line 596. He asked what the \$500 for street lights and signals is. Mr. Hendershot stated that that is a placeholder amount for labor and

materials for the maintenance of town traffic signals. They don't maintain the crosswalk signals. He stated that to the best of his knowledge the crosswalk lights are maintained by public works. Mr. Comerford asked about the ornamental street lights. Mr. Hendershot replied that they would not be in this line item of the budget. That would be line 585. Mr. Comerford asked if the ornamental street lights will be painted. Mr. Buccheri replied that there is no current program to paint them. Mr. Hendershot noted that in the past there have been programs to inspect and maintain them, but it's not currently in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Comerford stated that he has been asking for this for 10 years. He asked how it was decided that the flags on the poles are aiming out into the road. Mr. Hendershot stated that he didn't know but thought that the posts had the flag brackets. Mr. Comerford asked why only half the posts have flags. Mr. Hendershot noted that changing the flag brackets on street light posts is not in the budget. Mr. Comerford asked for an explanation on page 69, number 932 maintenance of the general plant and the \$142,000 under administrative. Mr. Hendershot replied that that is the maintenance of electric division buildings and structures. Mr. Comerford asked for an explanation of the increase on page 72 line 26 Community Welfare. Mr. Buccheri replied that the change was due to a redistribution of labor internally. Community Welfare covers the cost of the newsletters, the WEEP program, hanging banners, project graduation, Celebrate Wallingford, and anything for the community. It's not a fund to help people that need assistance. Mr. Hendershot noted that the Wallingford Energy Assistance Program, administered by Youth and Social Services manages that. The funds that Utilities contribute to that are in that account. Mr. Comerford asked for a report on the history of the painting and maintenance of the light poles and a breakdown of the community welfare fund. He also asked for a breakdown of line 142, maintenance of the building.

Water Division

In attendance were Richard Hendershot, Director of Public Utilities, and Neil Amwake, General Manager, Water & Sewer Divisions

Bill Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive, asked where monitoring of leaks is reflected in the budget. He asked if we buy water from anyone. Mr. Hendershot replied there are customers in Wallingford that are connected to the Meriden water system but are considered Wallingford customers, so we buy Meriden water to serve them. He added that there is a mutually beneficial emergency interconnection with the regional water authority at the southern end of the system.

Chairman Cervoni asked for questions and received none for the following Departments:

Sewer Division

Animal Control

Board of Ethics

Building Department

Capital Appropriations Reserve

Capital Non-recurring Fund

Conservation Commission

Contingency Account

Debt Service

Emergency Management Civil Preparedness

Employee Insurance and Other Benefits

Health Department

Human Resources/Risk Management

Inland Wetlands

Insurance Property and Casualty

Law Department
Library
Planning & Zoning
Probate Court
Six-Year Capital
Literacy Volunteers
Emergency Shelter/Columbus House
Public Celebrations Committee
Quinnipiac River Watershed Association
Wallingford Transit Authority Subsidy
Wallingford Center Façade Improvement Program
John J Nerden RTC Camp
Masters Manna
Wallingford Committee on Aging
Committee on Aging Bus
ARC of Meriden/Wallingford
352nd Celebration
Historic Program Matching
SCOW
Town Clerk
Veterans Center
Zoning Board of Appeals

Engineering Department

In attendance was Alison Kapushinski, Town Engineer

Bill Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive, referred to page 49 Program, where it says ‘inspects and administers that portion of the sidewalk ordinance’. He asked if the ordinance supersedes the Charter. Mayor Dickinson replied that the Charter prevails. Mr. Cumminford stated that nowhere does it say that Engineering is responsible for defects. Mayor Dickinson replied that the Charter doesn’t have to cover all details. Work assignments occur through delegation administratively or by ordinance. Mr. Comerford stated that the Charter specifies Public Works, not Engineering is responsible for sidewalk inspections and maintenance. Mayor Dickinson stated that the Charter doesn’t say that only Public Works can do it. Ms. Kapushinski stated that the sidewalk installation and maintenance is covered under the six-year capital so perhaps it can be answered under that portion. She added that there is no line item under Engineering Operating and Maintenance for sidewalks. Inspection is part of their normal job. Mr. Comerford quoted from the Charter, under duties of the Public Works “and of the planning surveying, construction, reconstruction, altering, paving and repairing, maintaining, an inspection of highways, sidewalks”. He noted that engineering provided him a list of only three sidewalks that need repair. Ms. Kapushinski stated that they provide temporary patches on a complaint basis. They also have a permanent replacement, permanent repair program funded through the same line item on the six-year capital that is based on zones. Right now we are finishing up zone 11 and this budget also covers zone 12. They work with a vendor to replace any trip hazards or anything that’s been temporarily replaced throughout the years with a new concrete sidewalk. Mr. Comerford clarified that no one creates a proactive list of all the problems. Ms. Kapushinski replied that they do complete that on a zone basis. She stated that under the six-year capital they request enough money to keep replacing sidewalks and keep up with temporary repairs. Mr. Comerford referred to page 50, item 57944, and asked what s-walk snow reimbursement small projects are. Ms. Kapushinski replied that it’s the sidewalk clearing we do in

conjunction with the Police Department. Mr. Comerford asked if Wooding Kaplan lot paving project is still under the Engineering budget. Ms. Kapushinski replied not in the budget being discussed tonight.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked about the Wooding Kaplan project that was in the budget for FT21-22. He asked if there was money left over from the Simpson Court project. Mayor Dickinson replied yes. The money is still in the account but it's not part of tonight's agenda. We are dealing with the new fiscal year budget. Mr. Gross asked if there is a plan to pave Wooding Kaplan's lot. Ms. Kapushinski replied that they are working with Public Works to get everything scheduled but are expecting a spring construction. The bids were opened. Mr. Gross asked if the bids were higher than last year. Ms. Kapushinski couldn't answer. Mr. Gross asked if the leftover money can be put into this account. Mayor Dickinson replied not in the 7023 budget. This budget does not include that money. Mr. Gross asked where the unused money from the 2021/2022 budget goes. Mayor Dickinson replied that it remains where it is, in capital accounts, unless it is appropriated to some other place. Mr. Gross asked if the Council could ask for that money to be transferred. Mayor Dickinson stated that that could happen in the current year.

Finance Department

Jared Liu, Curtis Avenue, asked what microfilming is. Mayor Dickinson replied that to meet archival requirements, it can either be paper or microfiche. Digital electronic does not cut the mustard for archival purposes for governmental records. Mr. Sena explained that that line item is to scan invoices that are taking up a lot of space. Mr. Liu asked what 'software sup' is. Mr. Sena replied that it is software support maintenance agreements for the use of the software for four divisions. He listed the systems and the software used for each. Mr. Liu asked what falls under Operating Expenses. Mr. Sena replied that that is mostly the mailroom and essential services. It includes the agreements for the mailroom machines, postage, general supplies, and banking fees. Some of the increase is for the increased banking fees.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked how the assessment for cars affects the budget since cars have jumped in value. How much has it increased? Mr. Sena replied that it is part of the increase on the grand list and he didn't have it broken down. Mr. Gross asked for the breakdown next time. Mayor Dickinson noted that the grand list showed a big increase that was mostly attributed to motor vehicles, so it would be reflected in what we would expect in taxes from motor vehicles. Mr. Gross asked about telephone line 653000 with the amount of zero. Mr. Sena replied that new phone systems were put into the building last year and the telephone for the Town Hall is now paid out of the Public Works budget just like all the other utilities. He estimated that the telephone cost for Town Hall is around \$1,600 a month. Mr. Gross asked if the Town uses VOIP or copper line or fiber optic and if they have explored less expensive options. Mr. Sena stated that he didn't know. Mayor Dickinson promised to find out how much the town is paying but added that the Frontier has provided excellent service and there is no plan to change vendors.

Jared Liu, Curtis Avenue, asked for clarification that the town is expecting a 1.8% increase in the grand list for the current year? Mr. Sena replied that he didn't have that with him but can bring it to the next meeting. Mayor Dickinson stated that they are using the October 2021 grand list, affecting the taxes due July 2022 and January 2023. Mr. Liu stated that other town budgets mention the grand list increases from a previous year to the current year and projected the increase in creating their budget. Many realized in the range of 3 – 5% in the previous year and what they were projecting forward. The 1.8% is discordant with what other towns are experiencing. Mr. Liu asked for a breakdown of the taxes line for the percentage that is residential, commercial, industrial, and personal property? He noted that we've

slowly been shifting the burden of taxes onto the residents when it used to be borne much more by commercial and industrial property. He'd like to see if that trend is continuing. Mr. Sena agreed to have that on Thursday.

Fire and EMS

In attendance were Joseph Czentnar, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director, and Samuel Wilson, Deputy Fire Chief

Jared Liu, Curtis Avenue, asked regarding the Fire Department Line, (page 2) for 2021/2022 an adjusted difference of \$9,000. He asked if this is the true-up after all the times the departments come back during the year. Mr. Sena replied that the 2021/2022 appropriation original is what the Council approved in the budget last May. The adjustment is any transfer or additional appropriation. Mr. Liu asked for clarification that they only came back for \$9,000 more over the course of the year. Mr. Sena confirmed. He offered to show Mr. Liu his record of everything the Council has passed during the budget season. Mayor Dickinson added that if there is a transfer of money between lines in a department budget and it's not new money for that department, it would not be an increase, so there's no adjustment. A new appropriation would be an adjustment.

Tim Wall, Volunteer Fire Chief, 864 North Farms Road, stated that he doesn't see the length of service awards program in the budget. Chief Czentnar clarified that the LOWSAP program is in the pension budget. Mr. Wall asked the Council to support the Wallingford Fire Department budget.

Government Access TV

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked if Mr. Hanley is going to be replaced and we have only part-time employees. Mayor Dickinson replied that there is no money budgeted for a director at this time. Chairman Cervoni noted that the technical problem this evening was fixed about 15 minutes into the meeting and the full system is up and running. Mr. Gross noted that Mr. Hanley also did other outreach to community programs that are all going by the wayside. Mayor Dickinson stated that he didn't think they were letting anything go. The staff has performed well. Mr. Kaneshi has taken over the direction and he's heard no complaints. He knows they are pursuing some improvements to the equipment and capabilities. Given the needs in other areas, he doesn't think there is a need for increased costs associated with the television government access. Mr. Gross referred to a line item in last year's budget for \$116,391 and \$43,000 in this year's budget. He asked if that was for the part-time staff. Mayor Dickinson replied that some of the spending last year was on capital and the capital is being carried over. Mr. Sena replied that through January about \$23,500 has been spent in the regular salary and wages line. Mr. Gross asked where the leftover money goes. Mayor Dickinson replied that if it's not spent it will fall out at the end of the year and goes into the general fund. Mr. Gross asked how many phone lines are there at Government TV because it looks like we are paying \$200 a month for one phone line. Mr. Sena noted that the telephone expense includes data. Mayor Dickinson noted that the internet was upgraded to a commercial grade with Comcast due to problems with data capability. There is a higher cost. Mr. Gross asked if YSS has its own line item. He stated that Council should look at this as commercial internet service should be less expensive.

Jared Liu, Curtis Avenue, clarified that the full-time management is not being replaced and they expect no degradation of service. He asked how they will assess when they need to go back to full-time management. Mayor Dickinson replied that so far it's worked smoothly and the current staff believes it can continue. He stated that we are going to continue to provide the services that have been provided

but are not adding new services. He continued that if there is an indication of a problem or it needs to be done differently, they would initiate the process of changing the budget. If there was a degradation of service, that is a problem that would need to be dealt with. Mr. Liu noted that this is a critical piece of infrastructure for the town and government transparency.

Debbie Gross, Long Hill Road, stated that the staff does a tremendous job and it sounds like they've taken on additional responsibilities. She asked if they have been recognized financially for these additional responsibilities. Mayor Dickinson replied that there are increases in what is being paid.

Mayor's Office

Jared Liu, Curtis Avenue, asked if the Council proposed a significant increase to your salary would you veto it. Mayor Dickinson replied that he has never vetoed a budget over the Mayor's salary issue. When vetoes have occurred it was due to questions of far more substance. Mr. Liu asked if there was a cap at which he would say that's an obscene level of increase. The Mayor said that the Mayor's salary is not a driving cause of whether the budget is vetoed or not, it would depend more on where the money is coming from to allow such an increase. He stated that he looks at how sustainable the funding of the budget is in general. Chairman Cervoni commented that the way our charter is written, we can't increase elected official salaries in the 22/23 budget.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, noted that there is no breakdown for Government TV, there is just a line item. It's not any different than the year before. He stated that if the employees are taking on added responsibilities, they should see either a bonus or an increase in wages.

Parks and Recreation

In attendance, Ken Michaels, Superintendent of Recreation

No questions

Pension Funds

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, stated that the Mayor commented that there was an additional \$500,000 that's going toward pension payments. He asked for an explanation of the rationale. Mayor Dickinson stated that it reflects an increase in the pension payment by the town and it follows the actuary's recommendation, as we do every year. He added that in 2008 the financial crisis caused the town to go from fully funded to something slightly under 70% and we are gradually building that back. We are over 70% now and are now at 24% of salary. Mr. Gross asked if we are still playing catch up because our investments aren't capturing the opportune gains of the recent bull markets. Mr. Sena noted that we aren't here to talk about how the pension is invested. The \$9.6M is the employee's salary times the actuarial percentage of payroll that the actuaries told us to use. He added that the amount appears on page 27. Mr. Gross asked the Council to look at the way it's invested so it's not so onerous on the citizens.

Police Department

In attendance, John Ventura, Chief of Police, and Anthony DeMaio, Deputy Chief

Jason Liu, Curtis Avenue, asked what the difference is between management versus management supervisory bargaining. Chief Ventura replied that the only two managers that are out of the Union are he and the deputy because their salaries are lower. The additional management sworn is the captain's position that we added with the elimination of a lieutenant spot. He added that we added one supervisory spot which would be the highest sworn manager spot that you can get in the Union. Mr. Liu

asked if we lost the Community Service Officer due to a promotion. Chief Ventura explained that they converted the Traffic Lieutenant spot to a Captain. Now that additional captain will be in charge of professional standards to head internal affairs and some of the accreditation issues. So they just made that one position a higher rank. He added that community policing is now under the Community Impact Unit. He confirmed that it is hourly bargaining and is under Sergeant Brangy. It was always staffed by a Sergeant. He explained that they took the Narcotics Division and the Community Policing Division and combined it into one larger unit. The only change was in name and function. Mr. Liu asked, regarding overtime, if there is a calculation to determine how many staff they could get for that amount that would lower the overtime. Chief Ventura stated that he has asked to add three positions which should help reduce overtime. This brings the total up to 78 officers. Mr. Liu asked how many officers would be needed to zero out overtime. Chief Ventura stated that he'd love to get to sworn 85 officers. The 96 in the budget includes civilian staff.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked if they were granted 85 positions in the budget, could you find the additional officers. Chief Ventura responded that they are at the mercy of the police academies. He expects to get to the 78 by the end of the calendar year. Mr. Gross asked if they were funded for 81 would they keep hiring. Chief Ventura replied that if they keep running entry-level tests and academies we'll keep hiring. Mr. Gross stated that he hopes the Council will approve the 85 positions.

Bill Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive, asked for an explanation of the Outside Contractor's pay. Chief Ventura explained that the officers doing traffic for companies are paid by the department and the department bills the company which pays the Department. So the Police Department has to front the money. The revenue would come from cruiser rental and the booking. He estimated that they generate revenue of almost \$200,000 each year for cruiser rental. Mr. Comerford asked for an explanation of the maintenance of buildings and grounds. Chief Ventura replied that would be anything that incurs an issue within the building that they have to contract someone to fix. He added that they will need to look at the new building to account for maintenance and janitorial services. Maintaining the new building would fall under public works. Mr. Comerford asked for the status of the website since Facebook was shot down. Chief Ventura replied that web solutions are almost in stage 3. The home page and masthead have been approved. He hopes to go live in the next month. The only part of this budget is the \$35 a month maintenance fee for the website. Mr. Comerford mentioned a recent shooting and asked if the information on something like that would be on the website. Chief Ventura replied that they will be able to post a message on the front banner to give information and updates. He added that they can't do an email blast. There is a program used in Rocky Hill but it's very expensive at \$36,000 a year.

Program Planning

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, clarified that this is the grant writing department. He asked if there are plans to hire a Grant Writer. Mayor Dickinson replied that we have a Grants Administration Secretary. He stated that we apply for many grants and the individuals working for us do an excellent job, despite the job title. There is no intention to hire a Grants Administrator. Mr. Gross stated that a Grant Writer would be worth the expense.

Jared Liu, Curtis Avenue, noted that towns of similar size show the amount of the budget that is the taxpayers, that is business revenue and that is grants. He stated that we look to be about 75% of our budget on the backs of taxpayers. Many of the towns he looked at are well under 70%. He stated that grants would help reduce that percentage.

Bill Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive asked if the Grants Administration Secretary is the Program Planner. Mayor Dickinson replied that there is no one with the title of Program Planner. The offices fall under the Mayor's Department, so you could say that in some way I fill that role. Mr. Comerford read the definition of Program Planner and asked which duties are done by the Grants Administration Secretary. Mayor Dickinson stated that his office oversees the Economic Development Commission. The Grants Administration Secretary oversees the Work-Study Program. Mr. Comerford asked who is responsible for Downtown Revitalization, which is listed as part of the Program Planner description under special projects. Mayor Dickinson replied that it is handled by Wallingford Center Inc. as well as the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Comerford stated his concern that we should get as many grants as possible with the strongest team possible in that office. The small budget may be the reason for the poor results.

Public Works

In attendance were Robert V. Baltramaitis, Director of Public Works, Stephen Palermo, Superintendent

Bill Cumminford, 5 Broadview Drive referred to page 54 asked for an explanation of "use ARPA". Mr. Baltramaitis replied that we made several capital items requests, and two of the approved requests were proposed for ARPA funds. Mr. Comerford asked if the Council was informed. Mayor Dickinson replied that it is part of the budget that the Council will review and make decisions on. He clarified that these funds have restrictions on how they can be used. Mr. Comerford asked if there are any other items in the budget that are destined for ARPA funds. Mr. Sena confirmed there are only the two in the Public Works budget and offered to look to see if there were any others elsewhere in the budget. Mr. Comerford referenced a Cap & Non item, particularly the Town Hall roof and HVAC units. Mr. Baltramaitis replied that in the three years he's been director, he's replacing approximately two units per year. Those are capital items, so he's looking to budget for those going forward. He explained the delay in the roof repairs is because it's not that old and there were recent repairs. He wants to maximize the money already put into those repairs. Mr. Comerford stated that this building needs a major overhaul and asked if that deferred maintenance would be this department and if any of it is in the budget. Mr. Baltramaitis replied that that would be under Maintenance of Buildings and Grounds on page 52, line 54315. He noted they have asked for \$260,000, which is a slight increase over last year. He noted that with the increase in the cost of gas and diesel as well as 10% in electrical consumption. If he didn't have those, he'd happily ask for more for maintenance of buildings and grounds. He plans to use any funds left toward the end of the fiscal year to do some refreshing of this building. Mr. Baltramaitis explained that Public Works maintains 6 of the town buildings. Mr. Comerford stated that it seems like Public Works functions on a shoestring when it comes to maintenance and is always behind the eight ball. He added that the way the Charter is written, the Director of Public Works takes his orders from the Mayor, so your hands are tied. He suggested using some of the ARPA money to do some of these projects. Mr. Comerford referred to the Center Street Cemetery wall and asked if the Town maintains that. Mr. Baltramaitis replied that since we own the wall, yes we maintain it. Mr. Comerford asked if the maintenance of the gates also falls under Public Works. Mr. Baltramaitis replied that since the gates are now separate and slightly inside the property, he suspects the Cemetery would maintain them but offered to check. Mr. Comerford asked if the maintenance of that building falls under Public Works. Mr. Baltramaitis replied that we do not maintain that building on Prince Street. He believes that according to the lease, the Cemetery Association maintains the buildings on the grounds. If there is a substantial repair or renovation proposed, they are to notify Public Works. He that in the three years he's been here, Public Works has not put any money into that building.

Lucille Trczinski, Southview Drive, stated that a year ago she was informed that money had been appropriated for the Gazebo and the repairs were intended to happen this year. She noted that she is embarrassed to have her name, as a contributor, associated with it as it is in horrible repair. It has rotted from lack of maintenance. It is unsafe. She has been told that it has to be completely redone and the town is hoping to incorporate it into a grant for the reuse of the railroad station. She asked what happens to the money that was appropriated for the rebuilding of the gazebo and when will be able to do something. Mr. Baltramaitis agreed that it is not part of this budget. He explained that last year, \$50,000 was put into Capital and Non-recurring which was both to rebuild the gazebo and make improvements to the brick pavers at Fishbein Park. Since then the EDC has initiated a project with Council support and hired a design team and architect to look at the historic railroad building renovation and the park. That could affect how the gazebo is located or configured. He shares her concerns and promised that they will do something this year to spruce it up and make it safe in the meantime. Ms. Trczinski noted that the train station building is separate from the park and gazebo. Mr. Baltramaitis agreed but added that the professional design groups are looking at the entire parcel. Ms. Trczinski noted that in the meantime the gazebo continues to deteriorate.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked how the decision was made to use ARPA money for Public Works instead of CRA money. Mayor Dickinson replied that we traditionally have used CRA money, but there is now ARPA money available and it fits the purpose. Capital items are major expenses and this is an appropriate way to reduce the taxes for everyone. Mr. Gross asked if all town departments were given the option of using this ARPA money and if there was a wish list. Mayor Dickinson replied that his method of budgeting is what we really need and is necessary, not a wish list. It has to be something that is a serious need and not a one-time unsustainable thing. Mr. Gross noted that Public Works has 41 workers and asked if he needed more help. Mr. Baltramaitis replied that he could certainly use more workers. Mr. Gross stated that more workers would help make the downtown look better. He suggested using ARPA money for projects to make them look better. Mayor Dickinson stated that the prime purpose of the ARPA funds was to assist people who were harmed by the pandemic so we have some constraints in what we use them for. We need to wait until we know how much is needed to assist the people, organizations, and businesses that were harmed. Mr. Gross stated that yes you can use the money and that there is more coming for small businesses, mental health services, schools, etc. Some of it is grant money that you have to look for.

Brian Lemmon, Stegos Drive, stated that the overall appearance of the roads and curbing in Wallingford has depleted in the last 10 years. He doesn't think Public Works can keep up. He asked if there is money from the state to get fresh pavement on North Farms Road and in the center of the town among others. He stated that we need some beautification money. Mr. Baltramaitis stated that he would look into some alternative maintenance methods to extend the life of payment, such as crack sealing.

Bill Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive, asked if Wooding Kaplan would be done in this budget. Mr. Baltramaitis replied that it's not in his 22/23 budget. He added that it is their intention to complete the Wallace parking lots this construction year, using a portion of the monies allocated last year. He added that this year we are reconstructing the Brothers lot with our staff and the vendors that we have. They plan on doing the Wallace lot the same way. It will be a Public Works project. They bid out the Electrical and concrete curbing. Those bids have just been opened. They will determine if additional funding is needed. Mr. Comerford asked if the lighting has been added to that project. Mr. Baltramaitis replied yes, they are supposed to install parking lot lights at Wallace. He added that Engineer will have the plans including the lights. Mr. Comerford noted that the ARPA money could be used for this project too. He asked why we are not doing Wooding Kaplan as a showpiece downtown. Mr. Comerford asked about

the status of the Animal Shelter and if there is money in the budget or are we up to speed with the air conditioning. Mr. Baltramaitis replied that it was funded this year out of the maintenance of buildings and ground lines. They scarified and repainted the concrete surfaces in the kennel areas. They also put out a public bid and he thinks installation starts next week for the heating and air conditioning system. Mr. Comerford stated that he thinks public works are grossly understaffed and suggested they be given more employees.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked if EV charging stations will be installed in the Wooding Kaplan parking lot, or the wiring for it. Mr. Baltramaitis replied yes, they are planning on installing conduits or sleeves for future use in both parking areas. He gave an update on the RFP for a company to install, own, operate, and maintain electric vehicle charging stations. He is in talks with Livingston Energy Group out of New York. The current proposal has no cost to us. Mr. Gross asked if the Brother's lot will be done first. Mr. Baltramaitis replied that if he had to pick, he'd do Wallace first due to the 350th celebration this summer, but ideally they will be done at the same time. He added that this department can use more people.

Registrar of Voters

In attendance, Robert Avery and Joan Parisi

No Questions were asked.

Wallingford Center Inc.

In attendance were Kathy Lilley and Joan Parisi

Lucille Trczinski, Southview Drive asked what the \$50,000 for the streetscape design is for. Ms. Lilley replied that this includes the wreaths for Christmas or the banners and flags for an event. It's usually a long-term item for the Town. Ms. Trczinski asked for a list of those items and how much they cost and why we need to purchase them. She asked if the payroll includes every person who works for you, including a few hours a week, and would tax be deducted from those paychecks. Ms. Lilley replied that they have two part-time employees that are receiving payroll that is taxed. She added that she has several volunteers that help. Ms. Trczinski noted that the payroll taxes were not paid into the state in 2018, 2019, and 2020, though they were taken out of the paychecks. This resulted in a series of fines. She asked how that happened. Ms. Lilley replied that by the time the IRS recorded our payments, especially during the pandemic, they didn't catch up with each other. Chairman Cervoni asked if these questions impact the 2022/2023 budget. Ms. Trczinski replied no, but she is wondering if there is a pattern and it will happen again. Ms. Lilley reported that that piece has always been consistent and clear and if ever we did get a notice from the IRS, the accountant would make us compliant.

Bill Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive, asked why they did not comply with Chairman Cervoni's letter of February 1st. Ms. Tilley replied that they did comply. Mr. Comerford stated that Chairman Cervoni said he had not received it. Chairman Cervoni apologized and stated he was only asking about the Center Street Cemetery. He asked the Town Clerk if we received Wallingford Center Inc's compliance with the letter. The Town Clerk replied no. Mr. Comerford noted that he doesn't have a budget to refer to. Ms. Tilley asked what was not provided, as she submitted a package to Finance. Whatever was not provided, she will make sure it is provided. Mr. Comerford asked what constitutes part-time? Ms. Tilley replied anything 30 hours and below. Mr. Comerford asked for more on the signs for parking and getting sponsors. Ms. Tilley replied that we have a parking lot sign program. We can get sponsors for signage for public parking areas. She added that there are some questions with the Law Department about the

advertising. Mr. Comerford asked if that is part of the budget. Ms. Tilley replied yes. Mr. Comerford asked if they budget purchasing the flags for the light poles and asked why half of them are missing. Ms. Tilley replied that that comes out of our streetscape budget. She added that almost all the flags are there and if any have fallen, they are picked up and brought to her office. If there are flags that are missing, she would have to see why. Mr. Comerford noted that around Wallace Park and Hall Avenue there are no flags. Ms. Tilley said she will check with Public Works to see what happened. She confirmed that they purchase the flags. Mr. Comerford asked if the grant to do work at Simpson Court is reflected in her budget. Ms. Tilley replied that the cost of work at Simpson Court would be in the budget under Program and Operations. The plan is to redo the five circle gardens. Mr. Cumminford asked about bicycle racks at the Wooding Kaplan lot and if they were asked for input to that project. Ms. Tilley replied that that would come out of the Streetscapes budget and no they were not asked for input. She added that they will do the same for the Brother's parking lot, put in what they think is appropriate in the way of benches, etc.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked about the sponsored parking lot signs and if she knows why the Law Department has questions. Ms. Tilley replied that she understands that the signs are not allowed to have any marketing on them.

Bill Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive, suggested checking with the Law Department to see if you can receive a grant or a donation for private property as an arm of the town without getting permission from the Town Council. Ms. Tilley replied that those parking signs are in a cycle and they are in the process of renewing the two or three-year program.

Center Street Cemetery

In attendance, was Bob Gross, President, Center Street Cemetery

Bill Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive, asked why he did not comply with Chairman Cervoni's request for information. Mr. Gross replied that the Council has a copy of the contract. We are a private contracted agency, not part of the town. We have a job that we need to perform to maintain the Center Street Cemetery and that's what we do. Mr. Comerford noted that this is the same group that didn't want to comply before. He agreed with their stating that anyone who wants our money has to comply with certain criteria and they still refuse to. He stated that as taxpayers we should be bothered by this. He asked can a Wallingford resident take a designated spot and put up a headstone before their death. Mr. Gross replied that he doesn't get involved in marking graves or selling plots. Mr. Comerford clarified that he was asking if they sell perpetual care as part of their program, as a revenue source. Mr. Gross replied that they don't sell perpetual care. Perpetual care is a fee that you pay to the cemetery to maintain the grounds of the cemetery. Right now it is \$500 for a full body and \$250 for cremation. He continued that you are charged to put the headstone in and charged for perpetual care. That money is segregated in a separate account for maintenance only. He explained that their budget shows the perpetual care as a separate item based on State law. Mr. Comerford asked about the gates and if they maintain them. Mr. Gross replied that they belong to the Town. They maintain as much as they can but if there is something major wrong with them, they would look to the Town to repair them. Mr. Gross confirmed that the wall and gates are not in their budget. Mr. Comerford asked if there is anything in the budget for ground-penetrating radar and will it take place. Mr. Gross replied that there is nothing in the budget but it may happen. Mr. Comerford asked for a list of assets. Mr. Gross replied they are a private agency. He stated that he would have a discussion with Chairman Cervoni regarding what he needs and the Board would determine if it's something that they feel they can provide to the town.

Youth and Social Services

In attendance was Amanda Miranda, Director

Bill Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive, noted that the line for Purchased Services, Mental Health was reduced by \$5,000. He also noted the Youth Projects line that was reduced by \$7,000. He asked how much better it would be if it was fully funded. Ms. Miranda replied that during COVID everything shut down and got quiet. Now things are opening up and we're doing a lot of the programming again and providing additional services such as in the schools. When she submitted her budget request she didn't have anything specific that she was asking for, just to add to what she had. She is always looking for new program ideas that would help. Mr. Comerford stated that the extra \$12,000 would probably make a pretty good impact. He asked the Council to fully fund this.

Town Council

Jared Lui, Curtis Avenue, asked if the addition of one part-time staff corresponds with the increase of \$24,000 or is there an increase to the council stipend. Chairman Cervoni replied that there is no increase to the Council stipend. Mr. Liu asked if the Council had to cut 1% from their budget where would be done. Chairman Cervoni replied, part-time staff.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked if there is diversity training in the budget. Chairman Cervoni replied that they do not. He added that he has discussed this with the Law Department. It would actually be for more than just the Council. He stated that he will explore it again. Mr. Gross stated that it would be beneficial and hoped that it would happen soon.

See no further questions, Chairman Cervoni declared the Public Hearing closed and adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl-Ann Tubby
Recording Secretary

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AT 4:55 p.m. AND RECEIVED BY
Deborah McKernan TOWN CLERK