



TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hicks Municipal Center  
Council Chambers  
Tolland, CT 06084

REGULAR MEETING

7:30 PM

### VISION STATEMENT

*To represent education at its best, preparing each student for an ever-changing society, and becoming a full community of learning where excellence is achieved through each individual's success.*

### 2018-2019 GOALS

- *Support and encourage specialized programs that can serve as alternatives to outplacement*
- *Support and encourage the development of tuition programs*
- *Support the implementation of Mastery Learning and Responsive Education initiatives*
- *Support and encourage Curriculum Development, and Teaching & Learning best practice*
- *Engage in the Strategic Prevention Framework*
- *Engage the Superintendent to explore and research shared service opportunities*
- *Engage Town, State, and Federal officials to discuss and advocate for education*
- *Foster the continued development of instructional technology*

### AGENDA

February 26, 2020

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- February 10, 2020 – Special Meeting
- February 12, 2020

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit)

*The members of the Tolland Board of Education welcome members of the public to share their thoughts and ideas at this time. When appropriate to do so, members of the Board and the administration may respond to comments during "Points of Information". However, in consideration of those in attendance and in an effort to proceed in a timely manner, follow-up discussion may need to take place outside of the meeting setting.*

E. CORRESPONDENCE

F. POINTS OF INFORMATION

G. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT – Fisher Thompson and Alexandra Costa

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- H.1 Healthy Food Certification Approval
- H.2 Curriculum Committee Appointments (no enclosure)
- H.3 Goal Setting Initial Discussion (no enclosure)
- H.4 Recognition of TPS Students and Staff (no enclosure)

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

K. BOARD ACTION

K.1 – 9060 Second Read and BOE action.

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2-minute limit)

*Comments must be limited to items on this agenda.*

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION

Town Council Special Meeting Minutes – February 11, 2020

Town Council Meeting Minutes – February 11, 2020

Capital Budget Public Hearing Minutes-February 13,2020

N. FUTURE

Dr. Willett will set up:

- School rounds / tours / starting with TIS (briefings/tours/debriefings)
- Mental Health Services Initiatives (presentation and discussion)
- School Bus Stop Safety (presentation)
- Portrait of a Graduation / Visioning (presentation and discussion of initiatives)
- Pathways and Lighthouse Programs
- Understanding By Design (presentation and discussion)
- Regionalization (presentation and discussion)
- Board of Education Goal Setting (working session and establishment of goals)

O. NEW BUSINESS

P. ADJOURNMENT

## Summary of Board Meeting 2.10.20

February 11, 2020

### Board Members present:

Tony Holt

Kate Howard-Bender

Karen Moran

Approximately 5:33 p.m.

Meeting called to order.

Motion to go into executive session made by K.Moran, seconded by T.Holt- Approved 3 - 0.

Moved that the Board enter executive session to discuss a confidential student matter.

The Board invited the following individuals (in addition to Board members and its counsel, Jessica Ritter) into the executive session:

Walter Willett, Superintendent

Attorney Elissa Bartlett for the Administration

Student who is the subject of the hearing and his mother

Mrs. Fox, Principal

Mr. Poland, Assistant Principal

Officer Salkeld, SRO

Approximately 6:15 p.m.

Everyone excused for Board deliberations, except for Board counsel, Jessica Ritter.

Approximately 6:25 p.m.

Meeting resumes. All meeting participants return. K.Moran makes the following motion in open session:

MOVED that the Tolland Board of Education finds that the Student who is the subject of this hearing did, on or about January 29, 2020, intend to sell and/or distribute a controlled substance to another student on school grounds. The Student was also in possession of a controlled substance on school grounds. Such conduct violated a publicized policy of the Board and was seriously disruptive of the educational process. As a result of the above findings, the Tolland Board of Education concludes that the student who is the subject of this hearing did commit an expellable offense.

Approximately 6:27 p.m.

K.Moran makes motion to reconvene into executive session to discuss a confidential

student matter, seconded by T.Holt.  
Approved 3-0.

Approximately 6:40 p.m.

Everyone excused for Board deliberations,  
except for Board counsel, Jessica Ritter.

Approximately 6:45 p.m.

Meeting resumes. All meeting participants  
return. K.Moran makes the following  
motion in open session:

1) As a result of the student's conduct on or about January 29, 2020, the student shall be expelled for a period of one calendar year, through and including January 29, 2021. During the period of the expulsion the student who is the subject of this hearing shall not be allowed to enter any school property and/or participate in any school-sponsored events and activities, except to attend his alternative educational program, where applicable.

2) The expulsion shall be subject to the following conditions:

Prior to June 30, 2020, the Superintendent will determine, in the Superintendent's sole discretion, whether the Student shall be readmitted to school on or about July 1, 2020, provided that the Student has met the following conditions:

- a) The Student regularly participates in his alternative educational program and earns passing grades.
- b) The Student avoids any serious or drug related disciplinary incident that would result in an out of school suspension or expulsion as determined by the Superintendent;
- c) The Student avoids any action that results in an arrest.

If the student is readmitted early, he remains on a probationary status and the above conditions remain in place through the probationary period. If the Student violates any of the conditions of this probationary period, the Superintendent is authorized to reinstate the remaining term of the expulsion without the necessity of any further action by the Board.

Seconded by K.Howard-Bender

Motion approved 3-0.

Approximately 6:50 p.m.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Ritter, Shipman & Goodwin Attorney

# **TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Hicks Municipal Center  
Council Chambers  
Tolland, CT 06084

REGULAR MEETING – February 12, 2020

Members Present: Ashley Lundgren, Chair; Christina Plourd, Vice Chair; Anthony Holt, Secretary; Renie Besaw, Christine Griffin, Kate Howard-Bender, Jacob Marie, Karen Moran, Dana Philbin

Members Absent: none

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools; Mark McLaughlin, Business Director

Others Present: none

## **A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Ms. Lundgren called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## **B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Plourd motioned to move item H3, Birch Grove Drawing Package Approval, to the position of H1. Ms. Besaw seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

## **C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- January 22, 2020 – Special Meeting
- January 22, 2020
- January 28, 2020 – Special Meeting
- February 6, 2020 – Special Meeting

Edits:

January 22, 2020, Special Meeting: Board Members Present, Dana Philbin, strike "(on phone)"; item 3, 1<sup>st</sup> bullet, strike and replace with, "Ms. Philbin motioned to exit executive session at 7:33 p.m."

January 28, 2020, Special Meeting: page 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> to the last paragraph, strike 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence and replace with, "She is in favor of hiring an Assistant Superintendent and adding all reduced staff and programs and necessary resources for students back in."

Ms. Plourd motioned to approve all minutes as amended. Mr. Holt seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

## **D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Amy Raccagni, 21 Woodfield Drive, thanked everyone including Dr. Willett for the long hours they have spent looking at the budget. She believes it is ok to question where money is being spent. Asking questions is how we learn and grow. Not asking them makes us stagnant and complacent. It is more than acceptable to also provide answers to those questions and it is ok to listen to and to believe the answers provided by experienced and expert personnel. She knows many people here tonight feel emotional and passionate about the budget. She can relate to that because she is too and has supported every budget for the twenty six years she

has lived in Tolland. She prefers that there not be any cuts however Tolland's voters made their voices heard loudly and clearly in November's election. It is time to start listening to them no matter how unfavorable that may be to some. As a result of that election, the current Town Council has said it wants a zero percent increase. She does not want a zero percent budget. She feels this Board can convince their fellow majority peers to accept a 1.5% vs. the 1.87% that Dr. Willett originally proposed. Some members of the Board and people in the audience did not live in Town when they voted 6 times one year on a budget referendum to the cost of \$12K to the Town. She never wants that to happen again. It was embarrassing to read this in the JJ. Her point is why start too high knowing this Town Council has said it wants to see a zero percent increase. While she agrees the Board's job is to advocate for Tolland students, she disagrees with the speakers who spoke last week who said the Board's job is not to also consider all taxpayers. She believes it is, in respect to presenting a budget the Board believes the Town Council will approve, rather than to go back and forth with the Council and risk the zero percent.

Kate Vallo, 80 Tolland Green, commented that she really hopes the Board will restore the THS art position as without it it will negatively impact course offerings and the quality of education in addition to positioning the high school poorly for the upcoming accreditation process. She also hopes the Board will do everything possible to ensure a minimum of 7 teachers in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade next year and that the needs of TIS are fully being met particularly in regard to staffing and retaining the quality of education. She asked that the Board please prioritize the opinions of the educational experts such the ELA coordinator and the Superintendent when making any decisions and in particular, retain RAZ kids at TIS so it can enhance the curriculum and provide additional resources for the students and teachers. Ms. Vallo thanked Dr. Willett for his obvious care and dedication to the high quality of education for the students of Tolland. He was dealt a difficult hand by being asked by the Town to reduce a budget that did not have room for reductions. It is clear that he has brought a budget to the table that will have the least negative impact on the district. Ms. Vallo hopes that it is clear to the powers that be in Town that this community overall does not support the directive that was given insofar as it limits the Board's ability to retain good schools. She would like to empower them to stand by a budget that does not harm and continues to move the district in a positive direction. She thanked everyone for all of their hard work.

Nicole Pagan, 433 South River Road, commented that she will soon graduate from Tolland High School. Her time at the school has been full of struggles, joy, discovery, and a passion for subjects that inspire her interests. Despite her experiences in a multitude of other classes, her life as an art student has shaped her views the most. It was, and still is, her outlet and expression – a chance to release hidden tears with a dash of a pencil and fears with a slash of color of paint in the right location testing her development through analyzing a still life or testing her creative abilities by formulating ideas and composition. Although she will be leaving THS soon, she has family who is or will be at THS that has different minds, interests, and creativities. As an older sister and a cousin, Ms. Pagan wants to ensure that those who come after her will have the same, if not different and better, experiences at THS as she did. Without the experience, she knows having one art teacher in this fine establishment of the school will not mold their worlds. The joy of having more than one teacher taking command of a single subject is in the diversity. The subject may be the same but the method of educating and the educators themselves are what make students enthusiastic about the subject, despite not liking it in the first place. What does not work for some may work for others. Art, like other subjects, calls for different methods, techniques, and equipment and it takes time to teach such things. A

lack of personnel will not be enough to expose students to a multitude of categories that art contains. However, with the current system in place, it could work today. She thanked the Board members for their time.

Mary Rose Duberek, 37 Ryan Road, commented that in addition to the restoration of programs and educational tools this Board so thoughtfully agreed upon during last week's meeting, she supports restoring the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, the high school art teacher, RAZ kids at TIS, and freshman boys' basketball and baseball. She and her husband moved to Tolland eighteen years ago. It is a beautiful community and they heard the school system was top-notch. They moved here prior to having a family and for over a decade they supported the Tolland Public School budget including all of the educational and athletic programs that went with it long before having a child. God blessed them with a son who is now in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. It is their turn. Who knows if some day he will make the winning shot for the state championship or wow visitors at an art festival? Ms. Duberek feels "gypped". Last week a member of the Board was happy to share that they recently moved to Tolland because of the schools. When they moved here they had the instant benefit of the schools and all the community has to offer. Ms. Duberek read through Dr. Willett's budget and knows the process was not easy for anyone. The budget mentions that they are ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> out of 169 towns for household median income. That shows people in Town work extremely hard. The Superintendent's budget also shows what they spent per pupil – they are ranked 132 in per pupil expenditures. This means 131 towns spend more per child than Tolland does. Ms. Duberek would rather rank higher on that list. She asked that the Board please restore the items she mentioned and when the process is done that it looks to the future. The children's education is in the Board's hands.

Sam Pope, 23 Sage Meadow Drive, commented the he is speaking for his daughter on behalf of the art position at THS that he would like the Board to restore. It is easy to see that art is not done for art sake. It has a wider benefit. When looking at society, over 90% of adults agree that a broad based education is important for developing useful and civic leaders. There is scientific proof that art education results in higher test scores, more engagement in school systems, and higher graduation rates. Mr. Pope cited two studies that were done on younger students. Loyola University, 2009 – 2011, did a controlled study with 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade students that resulted in an 11.5% absolute increase in composite test scores and eleven points higher than their cohort of students that were in the control group who did not benefit from the additional art education. Another controlled study was done by the Brookings Institute (Houston) with ten thousand students, 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade. They spent an additional \$14.67 on each student. The results were a 3.6% reduction in disciplinary infractions, 13% improvement in standardized writing scores, and an 8% increase in scores concerning compassion for others. It is easy to think there is not benefit to art – it isn't math, science or English. The problem is that there is empirical evidence in adults that it increases civic engagement and greater social tolerance. If they allow a broader base of art education for all students, it probably pays more benefits than even football, soccer, or other sports' teams. It builds better human beings and that is what the goal is. The tree does not grow alone – it takes light, water, and soil. To build a good human being takes all of these things including art.

Sandra York, 383 South River Road, commented that she is a teacher who values education. She inquired if the Board and the Superintendent were given a guideline for the budget this year based on the Town Council and the Town Manager's budget based on what the Town could afford. If so, and from what she has heard it was a zero percent increase because the Town is

facing some significant challenges financially this year considering the loss of \$5.6M of the grand list due to crumbling foundations which can be recouped once the houses have been repaired. What that says is if they are facing such a hardship this year, which can be recovered another year, they know the majority of the budget revenue comes from property taxes at an 80% average based on last year's budget. The majority of the budget comes from taxes and the majority of the Town budget area in terms of what they pay for in Town is education. Thus, if there is a significant increase then it is likely that everyone's property taxes will increase to support it. She would love for the district to be able to keep all of the positions but if there is a reason it cannot do so, and it is possible that they could be brought back later, that would be great but they do know that some residents are saying that they are struggling with their taxes and with making ends meet. This is why certain decisions were made and she hopes that everyone is included in the picture knowing that the budget is a lot of money.

Rebecca Risley, 103 Mountain Spring Road, commented that if one does some research and compares the Tolland BOE budget with surrounding towns and looks at the way the Board is trying to "whittle" down the budget even more it is shortsighted. It is not focused on growth. Most towns are requesting a 2.5% - 4% increase. There is only one nearby town requesting less and it has 650 fewer students to educate and more businesses to pick up the additional tax burden. They even offer programs such as Chinese III at the middle school level. If the Board reduces more this year, the likelihood of getting it back in future years is slim to nil. The Board is not looking to the future, just looking to cut more. In a lot of ways the Town is still riding the coattails of being known as a great school district. As they continue to cut into this and gouge it will fall away. Coupled with the crumbling foundation issue which she knows is a large issue in Town, these concerns are making people look elsewhere to buy their homes. She has had 3 separate families who are new to town share with her that they came to Tolland for the reputation of the school system and are very disappointed in a lot of ways and regret their choice due to what is no longer offered and the continued threat of what they stand to lose. Ms. Risely requested that the Board add back the proposed cuts at a minimum to bring a level services requested number to the taxpayers at referendum.

Sam Adlerstein, 164 Pine Hill Road, commented on public input. He attended a few of the workshops but unfortunately public participation was too late and he had stayed late enough. The Board has had over one hundred people write in. This is unusual. When one has that many communications coming though one should carve out time in a meeting to address it. He asked that the Board carve out time to discuss what people are writing about. Additionally, when asked to speak during meetings, Dr. Willett has spoken of a "lesser harm budget". Mr. Adlerstein wants to ensure everyone is aware that this is not a level services budget. This is not a no-harm budget. This is a lesser harm budget where Dr. Willett felt compelled to have to go through and create something that he did not want to do but is lesser harm. If anyone disagrees or sees it differently and thinks they are offering what is in the students' best interests, Mr. Adlerstein asked that they make that case – he has not heard it being made. Further, the ECS grant is the largest state grant the Town receives for education. Mr. Adlerstein explained that in this budget it is actually increasing. He has heard the Board talk about the ECS grant being one of the reasons it feels that the budget needs to be cut but by his calculations it is increasing \$239K. In regard to the history of the ECS grant, there is \$1M of additional reserve money due to the way ECS was handled over the last 2 years. This is important to discuss. Lastly, in regard to respecting expertise, Mr. Adlerstein commented that Dr. Willett has not spoken much at the meetings and when he has he has apologized for talking and listening to the conversation at the



table is almost painful because the Board really needed Dr. Willett's expertise. Some of the decisions were made based on elementary students.

George Ulrich, Fish and Game Road, commented that he is of the school of thought for a 0% increase because he does not think a lot of people realize that a 0% increase still increases taxes. This is due to the foundation issue as well as higher sewer costs and other items. The district is losing students but he does not see the ratio between students and teachers as compared to 10-12 years ago when they were at the maximum student population. Mr. Ulrich would like people to realize that there are many people in the community like himself who are on fixed incomes and with a 0% increase they will have less money to spend. They need to think of what can be cut and if something is cut is it because possibly the class sizes are smaller? If they lose a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher is the class only going from 18 to 20? All of the numbers need to be examined. He agrees with the 0% increase but there will still be a tax increase.

Annamarie, 23 Sage Meadow Drive, is a sophomore at Tolland High School. She is an art student and she really enjoys doing art and it has been a class where she can explore things about herself and where she might lie in the future. Annamarie wants everyone to consider how really important art is not just for people in the future who would be in a job related to art but for those who experience emotions in art class. It is an outlet for people to have a voice without saying words. Art is taking what you see in your head and putting it figuratively outside of your hands. You are creating it. It is really a way of taking what is in your head and creating true expression. It is probably the most expressive one can be in school because you take what is in your mind and put it into real life. Additionally, art classes are good because everyone is doing the same – taking what is in their head and putting it out there and students are exposed to what everyone else is thinking. It is a unique look at what others are thinking and experiencing in their lives. By taking art away it is also taking away a bit of the social aspect of the school.

Andy Powell, 21 Clearbrook Drive, noted that he is speaking as a private citizen and in regard to the conversation on the budget. In deference to those on the Town Council, it is their responsibility to set tax policy. They put forward the referendum for approval and in deference to Ms. Raccagni, it is not embarrassing for a public to go through the democratic process of determining how much they are going to spend. Yes, there were components of the budget and budgetary items were part of the election but in reality the Board does not have the same constraints. The Board can put forth a budget that it feels will effectively and efficiently provide a level education to the students. If that budget, as it goes to the Town Council, is rejected and the numbers are returned to the Board, then the Board would need to reflect on cuts. The Board does not have to start at zero. They can start the budget higher but need to have a plan for if the numbers are returned to them for reduction. At least the Board can they say that it tried to add. The public is then given the choice to make the determination about how much it wants to spend on education. The Board's published goals do not include budgetary reduction. Specifically, it states, "to engage the town, state, and federal officials to discuss and advocate for education". Mr. Powell advised the Board to be brave and take the step forward. If they start at zero, they will not get it back. He has not seen it come back in his sixteen years in Tolland. He appreciates everyone's time, effort, and dedication and thanked them.

Colleen Yudichak, 12 Blueberry Hill, commented that she is in full support of everything including art and sports. Like someone else said it is painful to watch the Board members. There is no bipartisanship. Further, there is no vision. Ms. Yudichak has not heard any more

than three people ask to look into the future. She thanked the Board and Dr. Willett. This is a lot of hard work.

Amy Raccagni, 21 Woodfield Drive, commented that she is a Democrat who can accept the election results. Where were all of the education supporters and fans during the election? Election results matter. Is she happy about it? No. Will she accept it? Yes, because her fellow residents have spoken. Ms. Raccagni would like Dr. Willett to address the art teacher component tonight. She attends all of Dominique Fox's Parent Teacher meetings and on Monday evening she said a couple of thing which are not what people are speaking about tonight regarding the cuts. Two teachers are retiring and unfortunately 1 graphic arts teacher passed away. Ms. Fox said it was not possible to find someone to teach the higher level graphic arts class. Also, photography has changed so much over the years and is not how Mr. Blais teaches it so it may be difficult to staff. Ms. Raccagni does not believe retirements and deaths are actual cuts. Also, she disagrees with her friend and colleague Mr. Powell. Every time there is a referendum it costs the Town \$2K. That is money that could be put toward freshman baseball or basketball.

Kate Vallo, 80 Tolland Green, thanked the students who presented so passionately in regard to the art program. Ms. Vallo truly hopes the art position will be reconsidered and noted that it should be recognized that it impacts the high school as a whole. The course offerings in general will be reduced. She is concerned about students' educational opportunities. Ms. Vallo inquired in regard to the Budget Q&A on the website and the class size averages; specifically, she asked about pre-K. The average is class size is shown as twenty six which is far from best practice for that grade level. She would like this to be addressed and if indeed this is the level she would like there to be a discussion and consultation with the experts. She added that there are experts in this area in the community, including herself, who specialize in early childhood and could share information.

Colleen Yudichak, 12 Blueberry Hill, offered the suggestion that if the Board does choose to cut the art position then perhaps it could create a Google poll and ask the students what they like and what is most important to them.

Gary Lotreck, 12 Holly Road, noted that the Board members have a thankless job and thanked them for doing it. It takes a lot of hours, thought, and interaction and has been contentious. He appreciates fiscal responsibility and what people have been looking for. The forward thinking, the programming, and the bigger picture should be looked at rather than nickel and diming. Dr. Willett explained that there is a program that is saving a lot of money because the program is available in the district and students do not have to be outsourced. As Mr. Powell noted, it is the Board's job to advocate for education and programming. The voters did speak but the Board is not the Town Council. Mr. Lotreck would like to see more educational discussion - not that someone's child did not like a reading program so why does the district have it. A lot of good things are going on but when they are lost they will not be returned. Mr. Lotreck appreciates everyone thinking about taxes. It is the only taxes people can vote on and he understands people are on fixed incomes.

#### E. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Holt reviewed the correspondence (attachment E1).

Mr. Holt noted that a couple of e-mails were received offering constructive criticism of the correspondence report and he appreciates this.

Ms. Moran read the following e-mail from Diane Clokey into the record:

"Dear Members of the BOE, I am writing to encourage you to restore all items that were not included in Dr. Willett's original proposal to you in light of the favorable adjustments to insurance estimates. If I am reading the minutes correctly restoring all items still amounts to only a 1.84% increase over last year's allocation. This feels like a win to me especially after the excess ECS allocation from last year that was not spent on our students. To be able to go to the Town Council and our community with this very minimal increase and not lose any of the services and programs we expected to lose when insurance costs were higher, that is an accomplishment that this Board of Ed and Superintendent should be very proud of. Consider the increases proposed in surrounding communities also afflicted with crumbling foundations, you are still quite frugal by comparison. Insisting on something even lower than this before the budget leaves the hands of our education advocates would be short-sighted. In contrast the remaining positions set for elimination are costly for our schools and our kids. I'll speak to the one I understand best – the art position at THS. I am sure that you are familiar with the research regarding the impact of the arts on learning. Locally the THS art department and graphics program, also affected by this position, have been extraordinarily influential for students. Many have found a career path, a new passion, sometimes scholarships cause we have had the resources, human equipment, and supplies to offer upper level opportunities that are at risk with the loss of personnel represented by this cut. Others have simply found balance with the opportunity to think and create in ways that the core classes don't provide. I understand why this was included in the original proposal. A serious consideration should be given to its restoration. We talk about mental health a lot nowadays. The art department provides a form of expression for our students not available in other disciplines. It is a source of pride for our schools and our students and offers Tolland students a reason to stay in district when this is their passion. I speak to this because I have been a THS parent since 2011 and value this tremendously. I am not advocating for this position over others because as I stated above I believe all should be included when you send this budget forward. Thank you all for your service."

Ms. Philbin requested that the e-mail that was signed by 102 people that was read into the record at the February 6, 2020 Special Meeting be attached to this evening's minutes.

#### F. POINTS OF INFORMATION

- Dr. Willett noted that the video of the January 22<sup>nd</sup> BOE meeting has been posted online.
- Dr. Willett noted the posted number online for pre-K is the correct total but explained that there are different sections pre-K 3 and pre-K 4; not all 26 students are present with one teacher at the same time.
- Dr. Willett explained that when there are retirements and a position is reduced it is true that a person does not lose their livelihood which is preferable but you lose the sections that the person taught. However, it is split, there will probably be a loss of some art and some graphics. Further, if a teacher from the business department is going to take a graphics section then some section the business teacher was teaching will not be taught. He will be discussing this with Ms. Fox. Dr. Willett clarified that a total of 6 sections will be lost.

- Dr. Willett thanked the students for participating in Public Participation. It takes a lot of courage and the students' voices are the most important because they are the ones receiving the education.
- Ms. Griffin read the following, "In his memo dated 11/7/2019, Town Manager Michael Rosen asked that each department submit a baseline budget that should not be significantly greater than what was approved in the current fiscal year. We should all understand that the BOE is a very large part of that total Town budget. We can debate whether or not a 1.5% BOE budget increase should be considered significantly greater than last year, but I think we have presented here an appropriate budget with a \$615,000 increase, which when it reaches the Town Council, will be combined with an expected \$300,996 reduction in ECS State funding. I think we have a good budget here, and I am hopeful the Council will see it as such. A budget with a much higher increase will not benefit students if it is rejected by the Town Council or citizens of Tolland.

Is everyone happy with this budget? Of course not. But I feel we added back in programs that will have the greatest impact on our students' education. However, after attending the instructional rounds I realized how important these reading programs were for our youngest students. I tried and tried to find alternative cost savings in the SPB. I looked at possible reductions in items like legal expense, door hardware, paving, course reimbursement, interactive displays, table and chairs and even postage. I was told these could not be reduced to save other programs and positions. I was disappointed and will continue to explore these possibilities in the future. But we were able to find \$49K in reductions with a detailed line item review of the budget, as well as other items that I think will be possible savings in future years.

I understand that there are many in the community who feel their voices are not being heard. All the voices were heard, and I am sorry those people just didn't like what the answers were. I was told recently that people would love me if I brought back the art and freshman sports. I decided to run for board of ed not to have people love me but because I felt I would offer a fair and balanced approach to the budget process. The answer cannot be to always add more money to the budget. We need to identify efficiencies in the budget and sometimes make tough decisions. Dr. Willett prepared his budget with what he felt would still provide a quality education to our students. I trust his expertise, and we were able to increase student-facing spending from his original proposed budget.

When the budget is behind us, I look forward to the discussions this Board will have in the future to carry out our vision for Tolland's Schools."

- Mr. Holt thanked Dr. Willett and the staff of TIS for the instructional rounds. He went expecting to learn something but it was so much more than that. Being able to see both the teachers and the students in their environment, to see the size of some of the classes, and to see how the paraprofessionals interact was eye opening. The opportunity at the end to sit down and have an open conversation and ask questions of those teachers and get their opinions was something spectacular. He asked that this be passed on to them along with his appreciation for their time.
- Mr. Marie made the following statement: "The budget we have tonight is not the one I would have made myself, but nevertheless I believe it is a solid document that I can support in good faith. In this proposal, there is funding for a variety of programs. It provides adequate support for special education, particularly the LEAP program. It continues to fund the Tolland Business Academy and the Personal Finance workbooks at

the High School, which I can say from personal experience is invaluable to our graduating seniors. Furthermore, it invests in our teachers with programs like Literacy How. I could go on, but I won't in the interest of time. Bottom line is that this budget does support our students and will help provide them with a quality education.

I understand that there are calls for more spending, and we've been asked to include those requests and let the Town Council decide what we can afford. I respect the sentiment, but I can't do this. Tolland Schools are facing financial constraints on two fronts – ECS cuts from the State and a devalued grand list in Tolland. The Board must take these factors into account when budgeting. They are too large to ignore.

Thus, the Board has spent the past month looking for efficiencies and savings to create a budget that serves students and teachers while also accommodating fiscal constraints.

This is never an easy task, but I feel comfortable saying that we came close to accomplishing our goal. Through the efforts of the Board and Dr. Willett, we were able to identify a large amount of savings that allowed us to put back in several items that were slated to be cut, while still coming under the initial budget request. I want to thank my fellow Board members and Dr. Willett and all the staff for all the hard work they've done to help make this happen. In closing, I feel comfortable submitting this budget to the Council knowing that we've done our work." Mr. Marie added that due to timing they have not had an opportunity to have a goal setting session. Once they have this opportunity, in the next budget season they will be able to provide a comprehensive vision of where the Board wants to see the schools go. Also, in regard to the increases in other towns, one cannot make an "apples to apples" comparison.

- Ms. Howard-Bender inquired about the points of information. She asked if it was in the purview of the Town Manager and the Town Council to tell the Board what it needs to do. *Dr. Willett explained that under 10-222 the board of education has the responsibility of determining what the students' needs are, not specifically the bottom line. The latter is the town council's purview. The Town Manager did ask the departments to do this and in the general sense keeping this in mind is part of the process.* Ms. Howard-Bender commented that there are 14,655 Tolland residents. Of those 11,152 are over the age of 18 and are presumably able to vote. The highest vote getter got 2,052 votes and 29.3% of the residents are under the age of 18 for a total of 3,503 children who cannot vote. This is something the Board needs to remember. Further, 68% more or less of the households in Town have children of school age (between fifty five and sixty eight percent). This is something to think about in response to the comment about the voters speaking.
- Ms. Plourd addressed the question as to if the Board was given direction. On November 7<sup>th</sup> a memo was sent to Dr. Willett saying that all departments, while the Board is not a department, were given the direction of 0%. In response to Mr. Adlerstein, she thanked him for his e-mails. In regard to "lesser harm", she has not yet heard this comment made by Dr. Willett. In regard to Ms. Vallo, it looks like the class sizes are as follows: morning 9, afternoon 11, morning 16, and afternoon 16. She asked Ms. Vallo to share with her at a later time if these numbers are acceptable.
- Ms. Philbin thanked everyone for their e-mail correspondence and conversations. When out in public it has been enlightening to see how passionate many people are no matter what side of the aisle they are on. She has been listening to all voices. To the high school students, she wishes she was as put together as they are when she was their age and added that this was not at all to sound condescending. The students are phenomenal and she was impressed with their composure when speaking of what they

are passionate about. Ms. Philbin has heard from a lot of folks with great wisdom, passion, thoughts, and ideas who have had conversations with her and she liked the words used by Mr. Powell, "the guardians of education". CABE taught the Board members that they need to be ambassadors and advocates of education. Some things Ms. Philbin has tried to bring to the table are the vision and what the vision could be for the future of the students along with supporting the students and staff. She wants to ensure those thoughtful conversations continue in regard to being guardians of education and advocates for education.

- Ms. Besaw shared some of her reflections from the last meeting. From her perspective the Board has engaged in healthy discussions about the budget. It may not be how it has been done in the past but it was done in public which several people, including past Board members, requested. Those former Board members said that all work should be done in public yet during this process the current Board has been criticized for going through the budget and asking questions during the public special workshop meetings. At the last Board meeting, the Board collectively worked on coming to a decision regarding the budget that should be sent to the Town Council. Many had asked both in person and via e-mail that they restore items that the Superintendent's proposed budget had eliminated. The Board did just this – it restored most but not all of those items. The Board even added something that was not a cut but moves the district forward by adding support to the youngest readers and all students. Yet, at the end of the meeting during Public Participation the Board faced extreme criticism, angry and aggressive outbursts, and people disregarding clear rules pertaining to public participation. Is that how they want to teach their children to behave? The meetings are televised and posted online. Education is everywhere including outside of the classroom and in a board meeting. Ms. Besaw is disappointed that there appears to be no room for compromise for some. Personally, she saw some Board members who may have had one perspective listen with an open mind and change their thought process over the course of the meetings. She was, and has been, surprised by the lack of acknowledgement that Board members have in fact been listening and responding to both the public and the Superintendent. At the last meeting some hashtags were displayed. Tonight, she shared hers: #bekind, #berespectful, and #worktogether. This is her hope for everyone and she is looking forward to moving past the budget conversations and having the visioning and larger discussions.
- Ms. Moran commented on the "do no harm" budget. She has heard Dr. Willett say during budget meetings that this is the least amount of damage. This least amount of damage is still damage. They are not asking for "pie in the sky" with 1.84%. This is not even a level services budget.

G. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT – Fisher Thompson and Alexandra Costa

- Finals were held on January 29<sup>th</sup> and January 30<sup>th</sup>
- Mid semester day was held on January 31st
- Second semester has started at THS
- The dates for Mental Health Week are still to be determined. Mr. Thompson will e-mail the Board with the dates when they are available.

Mr. Thompson spoke in regard to Policy 5190 which covers Student Representatives. It outlines that they are accountable for the student body via the Student Council and consult with the

group on a regular basis. This is something they do. The Student Representatives were elected by them and they are their constituency. Mr. Thompson is also the Secretary of the Student Council and he e-mails them regularly to keep them updated on the Board meetings. He commented that students are scared. While Dr. Willett prefers to use the term "young adults", many consider them to be kids and uneducated. Mr. Thompson reminded the Board and the public that these students include AP Calculus students, Tolland Business Academy students, and national award-winning DECA students. They know finance, what the budget will do, and have experienced staff and program cuts. Another item mentioned in the Policy is Special Meetings. The representatives try to attend the sessions when possible but the Policy does not require their attendance. Mr. Thomson addressed the students who spoke during Public Participation. He thanked them and commented that it helped put more faces to more numbers. They have heard, "students not dollar signs". This is not trite but reality. In regard to art, Mr. Thompson cited the CT Legislation Public Act 15-237, "Graduating classes 2021 and on should have 1 credit in the Fine Arts and 8 credits in STEM including 1 STEM elective to graduate." Mr. Thompson believes limiting their opportunities in both arts and STEM would be detrimental to their progression as students. They need to think about academic return on investment. If they put money into programs now it will not only help students now but later. It will cut costs in the future. In regard to Ms. Moran's comments and to paraphrase what Dr. Willett has said in the past, if the budget goes lower than the current number, it will cause irreparable damage to the student population. He has difficulty believing the budget is going from "no harm" to "irreparable damage" and thinks they are in the grey area of it causing harm even if it is not a lot.

Ms. Costa added that they have both seen the success of Tolland Public Schools and she hopes that students in the future will be able to enjoy the same success. With this budget they hope they will be able to include everything those students will need to do so.

#### H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

##### H.1 Budget (BOE FY21 Budget)

Dr. Willett read the updated narrative with budget changes made as were directed to him by the Board: Board of Education Budget, FY 2020-2021, dated February 12, 2020, Introduction, Board of Education Budget 2021 Overview available at the following site: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xVuibrdZcQSIlgUfijQCO0e\\_BWerwA81/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xVuibrdZcQSIlgUfijQCO0e_BWerwA81/view)

Ms. Philbin thanked Dr. Willett for drafting the document. She commented that she did not agree with everything in the budget, wanted a level services budget, and would like to have used the \$220,880 that was recovered from the insurance reduction to reinstate all cuts in the initial 1.87% Superintendent's Proposed Budget. She would still like to have an assistant superintendent or director of curriculum included. It is the Board's responsibility to advocate for education and ensure quality education in the school system. Ms. Philbin was pleased they were able to recover the \$220,880 as it provided some relief so some items could be added back. She acknowledged that they added some items however there are items that she believes would be detrimental if not added back in. Specifically, those items are the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and the Unified Arts position. Education and enrollment is always evolving and ebbs and flows and they need to be prepared for this. Faculty and staff cuts are discussed and it is concerning that they are losing educators in this process. It does not just affect a single area when

teachers are moved from other areas of concentration. She would like these items discussed and potentially added back in as a guardian of education.

Ms. Moran commented in regard to the instructional rounds. She thanked Dr. Willett for making the arrangement and noted that Mr. Holt, Ms. Plourd, Ms. Lundgren, Ms. Griffin, Ms. Philbin and she were in attendance. She appreciated the staff giving their time. Five educators and the Principal were with them. Collectively, they have approximately 150 years of teaching experience. She hopes that through the members' observations they trusted and valued what was said because the educators know what resources they need to get through a day with 25 students in a classroom. After the session, Ms. Moran inquired about when TIS lost their health teacher as part of the cuts in 2017 – they do not have one now. Without this teacher, the requirements of the state fall back to the teachers and guidance counselor. It is likely that some items fall through the cracks. Third through fifth grade students go to school with issues and trauma. Things like vaping and suicide are some of those issues. A health teacher would have been, and would be, instrumental in addressing these issues. Thus, when discussing the cuts, Ms. Moran wants the Board to be cognizant of some of the historical information. When items are lost they do not come back and responsibilities then fall on the teachers and the kids take the brunt of this. Perhaps someday they will have another health teacher. Further, there has not been a focus on the district's goals. They have not had conversations about needs and investments, successes, adapting and growing the plan for the future. Outplacements have decreased from 35 (2015) to a projection of 13 (2021). This is thanks to Dr. Willett's thoughtful and careful planning. They should be celebrating this and discussing what they can further do, not just in regard to outplacement but in regard to the entire district. In its inaugural year, Tolland Business Academy exceeded its application goal. While fantastic, it has not been discussed. Dr. Willett has discussed the Portrait of a Graduate. Social and emotional learning and mental health initiatives are all conversations they have not had. The Board heard from a parent that her student would not receive the education she expected due to the staff cuts in the budget. If even one student feels they will not receive the educational experience they planned on, it is not ok. This same parent asked her if she thought if it may be possible to delay the cut in the art department for one year which would give the department a chance to restructure in a more controlled manner. This cut at this time marks an end to what Mr. Blais and Ms. Brocius worked so hard to build. Ms. Moran believes this is a fair request. Keeping the art position gives them a chance to adapt to the situation. It is up to the administrators and Dr. Willett to figure this out. It is her job as a Board member to talk about the value of this position for the students. Sports are important as well. In turn, Ms. Moran can support a 1.84% increase. This would allow sustainability and stability for the school system. Also, at the last meeting about being mad at the State of Connecticut, one can be mad at the State but they need to work with them on educational issues. The State is funding 89% of the cost of rebuilding the elementary school. Tolland should be grateful for this. Ms. Moran noted that there are still needs to be filled in the district. They are not asking for everything. When Dr. Willett held the budget workshop they learned from the administrators of many positions which are needed and are not part of the budget.



Ms. Plourd commented that she appreciates Ms. Moran's comments in regard to goals and the future. The Board has not yet had time to discuss these items due to timing and other factors. Ms. Plourd explained that she is the proud mom of a 4 year old and a 10 month old. She is volunteering her time to be a voice of sustainability for future generations to move to Tolland and stay. As she stated at the last meeting, she comes from a place of gratitude for what they have, a place of balance, and a place of compromise. The work ethic and positive energy of the finance committee in this particular budget process is unparalleled. She is very pleased that the Board had an opportunity to add to the budget without asking the taxpayers for more than necessary. Last week Ms. Plourd felt great about the additions to the budget and terrible supporting the Superintendent's reductions. The decisions were not made lightly. They were made based on enrollment data provided by the Superintendent as well as a list of staff requests for the future referenced by Ms. Moran. It does not make it any easier. Part of advocating for education for all students is advocating for sustainability so they do not drive middle or lower income families out of town. As long as property taxes are tied to education, and sports and clubs are tied to fees, the gap between rich and poor will be widened. The struggling families will be pushed out or trapped in town with homes that will not sell. Those who can afford to stay will do so. Contrary to what some believe, Ms. Plourd has a great deal of respect for Dr. Willett. They do not always see eye to eye and they challenge each other but she believes this is a good thing. They have mutual respect for each other. Dr. Willett was not afraid to make some tough decisions that will pave the path forward for necessary programs. Ms. Plourd commented that she appreciates that Dr. Willett's decisions were data driven and not from a place of emotion. In regard to last week's meeting, they cannot allow political tribalism to be an excuse for what happened. She thanked everyone for understanding her shock at the situation as she too did not respect the rules of order. She hopes they can forgive each other. The room can be charged with emotion; however, they should not let emotions govern the community. Ms. Plourd commented that she has heard some say they do not feel heard. She does hear them. Art is still being offered at THS. Dr. Willett and the staff are working to keep the program alive. Ms. Plourd asked if others hear the struggling family who wants to stay in town. She ran again for the Board because she did not feel that she was being heard even with having a seat at the table. Tonight's vote for her is based on balance between the angry voices wanting more and the ones voicing their quiet appreciation behind the scenes. Ms. Plourd hopes that her friends on the other side of the aisle will consider voting "yes" on this budget. It comes from a place of compromise.

Ms. Besaw commented that she agrees with Ms. Moran. They have not had a chance to have had higher level conversations about direction etc. due to some weather events. She is comfortable with the budget. Given that Literacy How is in place for special education and that some of the teachers attend training, if Dr. Willett believes he feels the best course of action is not to have the additional Literacy How and would like to use the funds for the art position, she would not be against this.

Ms. Howard-Bender thanked the students who spoke this evening. She hopes they know that they are the reason she is on the Board. She and the other members are fighting for them. Ms. Howard-Bender commented in regard to class size. Given her 17 years of teaching experience and her 5 years as a school administrator, she explained

that the larger the class size, the more difficult it is to create a community in the classroom, to support academic needs of students, to ensure students are getting their tier I, II, and III instruction, and to make sure their social and emotional needs are met. The bigger the class the harder it is for an individual professional educator. In reference to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade position, there is a direct impact on class size when a grade school position is cut. Ms. Howard-Bender reminded those who are taxpayers, as she is, the property values are connected to the quality of the schools. Education is an investment in property values. Tolland is comprised of 95% single family homes. The Board received approximately 50 separate e-mails supporting reinstating all of the cuts. One hundred and two signed one of the e-mails. About 9 separate e-mails were received saying that there should be further cuts or that the budget should remain at 1.54%. For perspective, this is a ratio of 16:1. Ms. Howard-Bender supports a 1.84% increase to include the 2 teacher, RAZ for TIS, and the freshman teams. This is in accordance with what the 102 people who signed the e-mail would like and with what she believes is best for the district based on what Dr. Willett and the professionals have stated. This is not about what she wants and is not based on emotion but she believes the positions are needed in order to maintain the level of services on which property values are based. Ms. Howard-Bender thanked all who spoke this evening. She heard what they said. She appreciates the Board and the work that went into trying to put forth a good budget but she asks if they can do more.

Mr. Holt appreciates his conversations with Dr. Willett. Mr. Holt explained that he has only been in Connecticut for a couple of years but Tolland has, at this moment, an absolutely amazing school district. Any place that can create, or help to mold, the types of students that he heard speak today is something special. He thanked the students and parents who brought them today, he appreciates them. His eldest daughter is an animation major at UConn. He has spent the long nights making the mad dashes to retailers to pick up materials and tools for her. She wept when she felt her portfolio was not good enough and cheered as she showed him the video she made in class. He understands what art can mean to someone in their life whether or not it is their career path. By trade, Mr. Holt is an engineer and asks a lot of questions. As they have gone through this process he has leaned heavily on Dr. Willett and his staff as well as the professional members of Board, and the professional educators on the Board to answer his questions and is appreciative of them. Someone whose opinion he respects reiterated in public session and in private conversation that the Board has the right to ask the Town Council for a budget that is higher than the Town Council wants. Mr. Holt agrees but believes the Board has the right and responsibility to ask the Town Council for the number the Board believes is correct and right but to do that they have the responsibility of digging into the details and before asking for more money being confident that the money the district has is being used efficiently. He agrees wholeheartedly with one of Ms. Moran's comments. Their vision, not only as a Board but as a district is critical. It has been incredibly difficult to understand and develop a budget from November to February yet at a prior meeting Dr. Willett explained that once they get through the budget process they have an entire year to dig through the budget and processes. As a member of the policy committee his intention is to dig into the policies so they can position themselves to allow Dr. Willett and the staff to be able to advantage of the resources available to drive them toward the goal – not necessarily the goal for this year but the one for 5 years from now and 10 years from now. When

his three year old graduates from high school he wants her to be in the place where the young speakers this evening are. That means they need to take the time and ask the hard questions and looking at the students and teachers, and listening to those who e-mail the Board. Is he happy with the budget that is before him? No, because he does not feel it is one they fully investigated but he does believe in the process. He believes they spent a lot of time discussing it and getting information. At the last meeting they sat as a Board and voted on a unified direction to present to Dr. Willett. Mr. Holt supports this budget and knows a year from now they will delve even deeper and get to the place where they can apply the resources exactly where needed to get the district where it needs to be.

Ms. Moran shared some data. Students in art have AP exam scores that average 4.5 out of 5. Students in art are accepted to top notch art schools as well as other university art programs. Further, they are awarded merit-based scholarships for their portfolios for many competitive art schools including: Maryland Institute College of Art, Mass Art, RI School of Design and others. Scholarships are earned in dollar amounts ranging from \$25K to \$45K. The THS students have received many accolades at the state and national levels. Students are employed and work in many art careers including: graphic design, animation, and fashion design. Ms. Moran noted that although many students are not headed to art school, they take art as repeaters because it nourishes their creative spirit and challenges them to solve visual problems using another part of their brains. They heard from the students about the importance of these classes to them and limiting the sections of art will affect students. Ms. Moran is saddened that the Board is not listening to them and the many people who wrote in as this is the Board's job. The 1.84% is a financially prudent budget.

Ms. Lundgren commented that they are going on the assumption that the 1.54% will be approved by the Town Council. The Board has tried to see where cuts could be made to learn what they can do to bring items back that she can truly fight for. There are things that she would still like to see in the budget but she does not believe 1.84% would be the answer. Ms. Lundgren sees the Town Council saying that the budget needs to be lower and that puts the Board in a position where they will need to look at what is on the current list but she wants to be able to say they have done their due diligence and gone through line items and used straw polls to come to consensus. A happy medium is needed to go forward together to stand behind the budget. Ms. Lundgren believes this is a good plan.

A discussion took place. Ms. Plourd noted that at the instructional rounds they witnessed Literacy How in action. It is a great program. One of the teachers noted that she taught the program to her regular education team. If the art program is something Dr. Willett wants to restore, could they use a train the trainer model for Literacy How? Ms. Besaw explained that money left over at the end of last year was used for the Literacy How program for special education. Perhaps they should keep the art position and examine the end of year funds to consider Literacy How for general education. The Board would leave the numbers in place but change the direction of how the funds are spent. Dr. Willett explained that the Superintendent's budget was an example of what would have the least negative impact. He applauds and appreciates the Board thinking outside of the box. During the instructional rounds he heard that they valued the

Literacy How training, and could not themselves do the job of training at this point. It is up to the Board to vote on the budget, which will become the Board's budget upon the vote. In regard to positions, traditional wisdom is that they will be carried forward versus materials. In this instance, in lieu of a programmatic item they would carry a position and consideration needs to be given to the situation as they could then be in the same spot next year.

In regard to art, Ms. Plourd confirmed that twenty four art sections will be offered; six sections will be lost. Dr. Willett explained the staff will need to determine the composition of the classes. Ms. Moran explained that there is an opportunity with the position to do other things and if the Board wants to keep the position it needs to commit to it now.

Ms. Philbin commented that the Board needs to be cognizant and aware as they do not know what the Town Council will/will not approve. It is the Board's job to put forth a budget that supports students, staff, and education. The budget is responsible and reasonable. Education pays tenfold on the investment and she expressed concern on the traction the district has on reducing outplacements and having students come to Tolland. She asked Dr. Willett to list some of the items the faculty had requested in November. Dr. Willett explained that part of the process with the administrators is to review and scrutinize items before the budget comes before the Board and listed the positions that totaled approximately 18.5.

Mr. Marie motioned to extend the meeting past 10:00 p.m. Mr. Holt seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Thompson commented that Dr. Willett knows what he is doing. As a student he thanked him. He inquired about the art blocks. Dr. Willett explained that from a scheduling perspective when a position is reduced at the high school six sections are lost. Sections can be different courses based on the expertise of those hired.

Mr. Marie explained that given the provided information he believes they will be ok with the reduction of the art position. It is always a drain on any department when qualified people are lost.

Ms. Griffin explained she is having a difficult time with cuts to positions and programs when there are line items that do not directly affect the students and cited the hiring last year of an accountant and a secretary. Why are those positions not being reevaluated when these positions do not directly affect students' education? Ms. Moran asked Dr. Willett to address this and her experience is that it goes back to the functionality of the central office and ultimately it does affect the students. Dr. Willett noted that this item has been addressed and an answer posted. These were operational decisions that were made to protect the district and he would make the same decisions again.

In regard to Ms. Lundgren's comment, Mr. Holt commented with all due respect that he wants to ensure the Board does not vote on that basis. On the 24th the Board will sit with the Council to passionately defend and articulate the budget. If the Board has

done its due diligence then it has fulfilled its obligation to the student, the district, and the neighbors.

Ms. Plourd motioned to move item H.2 to item K.3 for action. Mr. Marie seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

#### H.2 Monthly Financial Report

Dr. Willett reviewed attachment H2.

The January 2020 financial report shows an available balance of \$797,066 or 1.99% of the BOE's current budget.

A discussion regarding the Travel and Conference line item took place. Dr. Willett clarified that this is last month's budget and no one traveled in an excessive way. The line was frozen in January but they will see some residual requests that were already in the system and that many lines roll into the line on this report. The Finance and Facilities Committee reviewed this extensively and did not find any discrepancies. Dr. Willett commented that the idea that there is unwarranted travel is an absurdity. Dr. Willett offered to sit and discuss with anyone who has concerns. He added that this will be a challenge next year given the \$10K reduction. Ms. Griffin commented that she does not believe there is anything of concern – she just did not expect to see an increase. Ms. Plourd added that she too is not suggesting any wrongdoing. She just feels she needs to question this line given that it went over budget last year. She is not making an accusation. Dr. Willett noted that there are some items still in the pipeline but the line will stabilize.

#### H.3 Birch Grove Drawing Package Approval

Dr. Willett reviewed this item.

The Board has had this item to review in its preliminary form for a couple of weeks. When the Board puts this forth this evening, Dr. Willett and the Chair will be able to sign the SCG-042 form which is necessary for the project to move forward.

Ms. Murray noted that the Building Committee received a final construction estimate of \$45,929,618. The estimated completion date is August 31, 2021. The State Office of School Construction Grants and Review has directed that the project be to the point of completion that will allow teachers to move in on August 23, 2021.

Ms. Plourd motioned to move item H.3 to item K.2 for Board action and to take immediate action. Mr. Holt seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

#### H.4 First Reading of Policy 9060 Modifications

Mr. Holt reviewed this item and attachment H4.

The changes are primarily housekeeping items.

If notification is given then a Board vote of 50% is needed to suspend a policy. If prior notification is not given then a Board vote of 2/3<sup>rd</sup> is required.

### I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

- Policy – Policy 9060 was discussed

- Town Council – discussions regarding the sale of a property and cemetery regulations took place; Chief John Littell was honored as the 2019 "Emergency Manager of the Year" by the Northeast State Emergency Consortium (NESEC)
- Finance and Facilities – met on February 4<sup>th</sup>, discussions included: capitalization, health insurance calculation, salaries and FICA
- Communications – met this evening; discussions included : outreach efforts, best practices for Board communication, CABA liaison opportunity

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT -none

K. BOARD ACTION

K.1 Second Reading of Policy 9190 Modifications

Ms. Plourd motioned to adopt changes to Policy 9190 as presented in the Board of Education meeting of January 22, 2020 adding a standing Curriculum committee with the charge as defined in section 9 of said policy. Ms. Besaw seconded the motion. Ms. Lundgren, Ms. Plourd, Ms. Besaw, Ms. Howard-Bender, Mr. Holt, Ms. Philbin, Ms. Griffin, and Mr. Marie were in favor. Ms. Moran opposed. Motion carried.

K.2 Birch Grove Drawing Package Approval

Ms. Plourd motioned to approve the final Birch Grove Primary School Phase Three Plans and Project Manual(s) as prepared for bidding and dated January 20, 2020, not to exceed \$46 million total project cost, for State Office of School Construction Grants and Review Project Number 142-0083N. This motion authorizes the Chair of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools to sign State Form SCG-042 – Request for Review of Final Plans. Mr. Marie seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passes.

K.3 Budget (BOE FY21 Budget)

Ms. Plourd motioned to approve the Board of Education budget dated February 12, 2020 with a 1.54% increase. Mr. Holt seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ms. Moran commented that she would like the opportunity to vote on a 1.84% budget.

Mr. Marie, Ms. Griffin, Ms. Lundgren, Ms. Plourd, Ms. Besaw, and Mr. Holt were in favor. Ms. Philbin, Ms. Moran, and Ms. Howard-Bender were opposed. Motion carried.

Ms. Moran motioned to approve a Board of Education budget for 1.84%. Ms. Philbin seconded the motion. Ms. Philbin, Ms. Moran, and Ms. Howard-Bender were in favor. Mr. Marie, Ms. Griffin, Ms. Lundgren, Ms. Plourd, Ms. Besaw, and Mr. Holt were opposed. Motion failed.

Ms. Howard-Bender commented that the reason she voted against the 1.54% increase is because she does not feel it is sufficient to support students and the town moving forward.

Ms. Philbin commented that she has stated why she supports a 1.84% increase.

Ms. Moran commented that she will never apologize for being emotional about education. She has been doing this for 6 years and before that volunteered in the

schools. Her experience has been that the Board has always been asked to compromise, think outside of the box, and be creative. In consideration of everything that has happened over the past few years in the district and surrounding towns with similar challenges adopting greater budgets than 1.84%, she is voting with her conscience for the students in the district. She supports 1.84%.

#### L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Tammy Nuccio, 71 Webber Road, clarified that in at least the past 3 years, in every budget cycle, something has been said by the Board in regard to, "if we only knew what the Town Council wanted we could work toward that but we don't know". While the Board is a separate governmental entity, when it comes to the budget pages it is another department because it is a holistic budget for the entire Town. Thus, Mr. Rosen sending the letter is appropriate and has been done every single year prior. Ms. Nuccio noted that the Town Council has its joint meeting with the Board coming up. It is a Town Council meeting for the Board to present its budget. The Town Council recommends and suggests to the Board in regard to the consolidation of non-education services and cost savings. A public comment will also be on the agenda as well as petitions and/or questions to the BOE from the Town Council members specific to the BOE budget. Ms. Nuccio hopes that Dr. Willett has a chance to post the questions and answers which have been submitted so they do not have to be addressed during the meeting. Finally, she thanked the Board for going through the budget and presenting something they will be able to defend and share with the Council.

George Ulrich, Fish and Game Road, commented that the Town has higher costs and less money coming in. He noticed many Town Council members in attendance this evening but has not noticed many Board members at the Town Council meetings. The Board needs to learn what is going on in Town. Seventy three years ago there were less than 1,000 residents. It is no longer a cute little town. Industry is needed or cuts need to be made. The town does not have the money. Further, the Superintendent indicated that the loss of twenty students means one position. Based on this they should be losing 3 positions whether they are art or others just to remain at the same class size. Mr. Ulrich noted that he does not like the Board's buzzer and if they are going to have a buzzer for the public they should have one for the Board members as they sometimes "ramble". He does not see this budget "flying".

Deb Goetz, 176 Kate Lane, thanked the Board. It was wonderful that they worked together and seeing that they each have a voice on every position and program whether it was saved or lost. She thanked Dr. Willett as well. It is a unified budget and she will go to the joint meeting and support the 1.54% budget. She did some research on the State's site and it showed the per-pupil expenditure was \$13,029 (2013/14) and \$16,155 (2018/19). This is a 24% increase during the time of low budgets. The per-pupil expenditure accounts for the students who have been lost. She has been in Tolland for twenty years and her kids lost things every year but did great. Others' kids will do great too.

Liz Costa, 54 Josiah Lane, thanked everyone very much and encourages looking for every dollar. She recommended normalizing to the run rate. Ms. Costa was appreciative of the time the Board members took to visit the school this week and it seemed as if they were "woke". She recommended that they find the time to become "awake" at the 3 other schools as well as at the Superintendent's office. If they had done this she doubts they would have cut the art teacher which will affect business and industrial art.

Mary Rose Duberek, 37 Ryan Road, commented that she was hopeful after hearing comments on what the Board members learned after visiting TIS. She would like them to visit the other schools as well. Moving forward, if times are different, she hopes they can "buck the trend" and get something back. She has a 6<sup>th</sup> grader who will not play sports for a couple of years. There are currently seventeen freshman basketball players and two 8<sup>th</sup> grade travel teams. She explained that that is at least thirty seven boys vying for a basketball team next year.

Andy Powell, 21 Clearbrook Drive, commented as a private citizen. He stated, "Your budget is now our budget". "As strong as an advocate for expanding our capabilities, it is now incumbent upon us to impress that upon the Town Council." He explained that money does not equate to a solid education system. If this was true, they would see legions of Madame Curies, Einsteins, Mozarts, and George Washington Carvers coming from schools that spend \$25K-\$30K per student. What make a difference are the educators, administration, and parents. One of the reasons Tolland's education, graduation rate, and the rate of the secondary level going to colleges and trade schools have been fantastic is because parents have been behind their students. It is now incumbent upon parents, in conjunction with the Board, to be a guardian for education. No one who ran for office ran on a zero budget promise. It was integrity, transparency, and inclusion. The transparency came forward and he believes the Board can defend what it is positioning to the Town Council. He believes they have the capabilities to show the Town Council that the budget is responsible, it may not be all that is wanted, but is all they have and he will be a forceful advocate for the budget put forward.

Kate Vallo, 80 Tolland Green, inquired if the Board members have heard of Maslow. She explained that Maslow has a psychological theory of the hierarchy of human needs and reviewed it. One cannot move forward as a person if one's basic needs are not met first. She shared that social and emotional learning is dear to her heart and she has been advocating it for years. Ms. Vallo has been watching the budget process evolve and values diversity of thought. When she sees the secretarial position being audited to her it seems the past Board did their due diligence and met that basic need. Moving forward the budget should be viewed as a whole. Everything within it is there to meet student needs. Postage allows her daughter to return an athletic survey and share a valuable student voice. Every piece, even those behind the scenes, is important.

**M. POINTS OF INFORMATION**

- January 18, 2020 – Town Council Special Meeting
- January 28, 2020 – Town Council Special Meeting
- January 28, 2020 – Town Council Meeting
  
- Ms. Besaw thanked everyone for their participation. It was delightful and she appreciates everyone being respectful.
- Mr. Holt commented that the Board has every intention of doing instructional rounds in the other schools and Dr. Willett is working on the schedule. The Board members want to go on these rounds.
- Dr. Willett commented that a school system is part of a town, the town is not a part of a school system. Having said that, with regard to the department conversation, he clarified that section 10-222 makes a strong distinction regarding the Board and the



Town Council and responsibilities. The roles are clearly established. There will be a joint meeting where the Town Council can suggest efficiencies regarding non-educational expenses. It is all part of the process. The Board has some independence of the Town Council and it is statutory. Superintendents do not report to town managers and town managers do not report to superintendents. The Board's obligation is to ensure students have what they need. He noted that some of Ms. Nuccio's questions have been addressed and the responses posted online, with more to come.

N. FUTURE

Dr. Willett will set up:

- School rounds/tours/starting with TIS (briefings/tours/debriefings)
- Mental Health Services Initiatives (presentation and discussion)
- School Bus Stop Safety (presentation)
- Portrait of a Graduation / Visioning (presentation and discussion of initiatives)
- Pathways and Lighthouse Programs
- Understanding by Design (presentation and discussion)
- Regionalization (presentation and discussion)
- Board of Education Goal Setting (working session and establishment of goals)

O. NEW BUSINESS - none

P. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Plourd motioned to adjourn the meeting 10:44 p.m. Ms. Besaw seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi  
Clerk

Correspondence from 22 January, 2020  
Anthony (Tony) Holt  
Secretary

- Email from a former Tolland Public Schools teacher concerned that the school systems will falter since the BoE and TC are more concerned with reducing spending than the strength of our schools and expert opinions of our administrators. Supports a modest and reasonable increase
- Email from a current public school teacher in a town similar to Tolland who believes that what is best for our children is to increase the BOE budget over last year.
- Email requesting that the video from the 22 January meeting be posted. Writer requests that board members speak up and enunciate clearly
- Email from parent and current math teacher at TPS. Writer comments that while Dr. Willett is confident that staff will be able to provide a quality, competitive education, this will come at a price. Writer discusses the effect in connecting with the individual student as classroom sizes increase.
- Email supporting a modest and reasonable increase to the Tolland BoE budget.
- Email requesting that we return to a level funding education to keep our schools and therefor the town from suffering a decline in the overall educational opportunity
- Email supporting the Superintendent's budget of an increase of %1.78. Writer requests the addition of a curriculum director/assistant superintendent/director of teaching and learning
- Email suggesting the need for a 2<sup>nd</sup> public participation at the 28 Jan special meeting.
- Email requesting a 2<sup>nd</sup> public participation to the 28 January special meeting. Writer states that this will allow for real time feedback from the people
- Email requesting a 2<sup>nd</sup> public participation to the 28 Jan meeting to allow additional questions based on what was discussed and new information learned.
- Email asking for a 2<sup>nd</sup> public participation on the 28 January special meeting. Writer also commented on their impression that some on the board do not value the experience and expertise of others on the board. Writer asks everyone to be kind and courteous.
- Email requesting a 2<sup>nd</sup> public participation to the 28 January special meeting
- Email from the mother of a special needs child. Writer discusses the wonderful things that TPS have done for her child. Asks for continued investment into the quality of the special education staff and paras. Writer also discusses the value of a calmer environment created by smaller class sizes.
- Email recognizing the learning curve required by a new board. Writer states that there appears to be a lack of faith and confidence in our experts. Writer is concerned that strides made for the school system in the last five years are in jeopardy. Asks that the entire board supports first and foremost the educational and emotional well-being of every child.
- Email offering the writers support of this board if their first commitment is to sustaining and improving our schools.

- Email commending D. Willett for speaking with the insurance consultant and finding savings in the budget. Writer asks if it may be possible to enact a preapproval process for staff lane change. Writer discusses the need to give our staff the tools to identify which students need additional help. Asks for teacher assignments to be posted to power school thereby reducing postage needs. Writer supports eliminating all freshman sports to fund programs such as RAZ. Writer also supports increasing support to foreign languages.
- Email articulating issues with their kindergartener's bus stop
- Email articulating the writer's observations of the BoE meeting. Writer intends the email to be instructive and offers recommendations on paths forward.
- Email requesting that board budget questions and answers be posted for the public. Writer also requests that previous budgets are reposted. Writer asks for impact statements for the positions under considered for reduction.
- Email asking if the building administrators have been asked their preference between an assistant superintendent and a curriculum director
- Email from a concerned parent requesting that the Board members focus our efforts on acting as advocates for the children. Writer believes that Dr. Willett has set an excellent example of teamwork.
- Email expressing disappointment that the public participation was moved to the end of the meeting despite the published agenda. Writer discussed their concern that some members of the board are mostly concerned with the cost of education. The priority should be the children's emotional well-being. Writer asks board members to remember where the district and programs came from. Writer then voices support for a small cut to the line item for lane changes.
- Email containing a proposal from 102 citizens. This email was read into the minutes of the 6 February special meeting.
- Email respectfully requesting that the members of the BoE focus on finalizing a spending plan that supports high quality education and supports the Superintendent's efforts.
- Email supporting Dr. Willett and all of his hard work with so little resources. Writes stresses that these are hard times and that the only way to make them better is to work together.
- Email stating four points. 1. The SPB is not a starting point. Misinformation needs to be corrected. 2. Follow the process. 3. Budgeting every line to its lowest point will result in an inability to effectively run the district. 4. More savings can be found in improvements than in cuts.
- Email supporting the use of the \$220K to returning the freshman sports, reduced positions, and hiring a curriculum director.
- Email supporting professional development, but requesting more detail in what past expenditures have covered and what the proposed increases would cover.
- Email apologizing for insensitive comments made during public participation
- Email from the parent of an art student at THS. Writer is deeply concerned as to the effects of eliminating an art position will have on the future of her child who has chosen art as a future.

- Email commenting on the value of sports. Writer recommends looking at alternate ways to fund the sports and recommends looking at examples in the corporate world.
- Email expressing disappointment that the majority of the BoE has chosen to put a fraction of a percent in savings over the interests of our students.
- Email from a 17 year old Tolland resident expressing disappointment that the Board did not restore all of the reductions given the insurance savings.
- Email recommending that the Board restore all of the proposed reduced items into the BoE budget. Writer feels that a 1.87% increase is a win that the BoE and Superintendent can be proud of. Writer discusses the effects of the reduced art position to both students of art and those that found balance with these classes.
- Email expressing disappointment in the budget process so far. Writer reminds the Board that their purpose is to advocate for our students and not carry on a town agenda. Writer recommends a plan that services the purpose and future of the educational system.
- Email commenting on the Board's willingness to support a budget with an increase of 1.54%. Writer compares this increase to other towns in Connecticut. Writer asks how we are going to compete with these towns that seem willing to invest in their educational systems.
- Email requesting the Board to reconsider the use of an audible timer during public participation. Writer feels that this timer makes it difficult to focus on the speaker once the timer goes off.
- Email discussing concern that the district is considering allowing families to self-fund the freshman teams. Writer recommends against it based on past experiences at the middle school when Dr. Willett was the principal. Writer then recommends placing the freshman teams back into the budget.
- Email asking the Board to restore a budget to a "do no harm budget". Writer discusses a new science teacher, who while new, is already a significant value to the system. Writer recommends asking Dr. Willett to return the budget to a "Do no harm budget."
- Email from a 15 year old resident who works as a graphic designer. He wrote of the benefits of the class. Writer articulated who the ideal instructor would be.
- Email from a resident who believes that the budget is high enough and the reductions make sense.
- Email asking why a public school district in today's environment does not have an Assistant Superintendent.

# A Proposal from Concerned Citizens

We request that our Board of Education (the Board) focus on the quality of a Tolland education. Make adjustments wherever possible to reinvest in ways that will provide for our current students. When we compare the opportunities that were provided to our students prior to the emergency reductions of the summer of 2017, we recognize that there is more recovery needed. Some areas aren't currently sustainable, and the slide in the quality of education will continue to decrease by suggested reductions this year.

A budget is a plan; far more than a laundry list of numbers. The Board is scrutinizing purchased service and supply accounts while the needs of our students have been deliberated far less. Variances were caused by the disruption of cuts, not by overspending or from wrongdoing. To understand the context, especially for a new Board, one has to examine the complete picture, not just the current line by line approach. Line item review must comprise perhaps ten or twenty percent of the budgeting activities at most, not the current 100%. If need be, with the very limited time remaining, budget every non-staffing, non special education budget line to trend and be done with it. Allocate the remaining time to asking:

**To what degree are we providing for our students?**

We ask that the Board consider investing in Tolland schools by prioritizing the following into the school budget:

- Curriculum Director (or better yet an Assistant Superintendent of Learning and Instruction)
- Special Education Case Manager remain in place
- Art remains intact at the High School
- Freshman sports remain in place
- Do not cut programs: RAZ, Newsela, and the General Ed implementation of Literacy How.

**The system has not recovered from the disruption just prior to the start of school in 2017.**

16.5 General Education positions were cut in 2017 (see graph below). 6.70 special ed / student support additions enabled future savings in out-of-district special education. That plan is working and now paying back. However, **General Education has endured even further teacher reductions in more recent budgets, especially impacting the Middle School.** At the same time, the money saved from General Education losses has been put into the town's reserve bank account. That account increased over 20%, by well over \$1,000,000 during this same timeframe, funded by these cuts. Residents don't understand this because they have been told through mailers that this town's reserve bank account is decreasing. This discrepancy has been ignored in public meetings.



Type	Position	BGP	TIS	TMS	THS	District	Total
General Education	Teacher	(3.0)	(1.0)	(2.0)	(3.0)		(9.0)
	Non-Cert			(1.0)			(1.0)
	Administrator				(1.0)	(1.0)	(2.0)
	Facilities				(1.5)	(1.0)	(2.5)
	Administrative				(1.0)	(1.0)	(2.0)
<b>General Education</b>		<b>(3.0)</b>	<b>(1.0)</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>	<b>(6.0)</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>	<b>(16.5)</b>
Spec Ed / Student Support	Teacher					1.7	1.7
	Non-Cert			2.0		3.0	5.0
<b>Spec Ed / Student Support Total</b>				2.0		4.7	6.7
<b>Total 2017 emergency staffing change</b>		<b>(3.0)</b>	<b>(1.0)</b>	<b>(1.0)</b>	<b>(6.5)</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>(9.8)</b>

Our general education now needs to recover. Concern over our students and the quality of education they receive should be the most important issue the Board discusses. After the budget has been adopted, please consider discussing how to improve the quality of education in Tolland, by looking at programs and staff that have been lost. Consider the lack of technology at BG, and how that impacts the class time spent on NWEA testing (progress monitoring). Consider class sizes. Consider the impact of not having a social worker at every school, especially in light of the mental health crisis. Consider increasing World Languages, including at younger grades, to prepare our students for a global economy. Consider supporting 1:1 technology (beyond the middle school), to prepare our 21st century learners. These are what we can do to reinvest in our students. We must do better for our children and our town, to remain a place where families want to live.

We the undersigned request that the Board of Education use the remaining time in the budget process to ask, "how can we improve the quality of education for all of our Tolland students?"

	Resident Name	Address
1.)	<i>Rebecca Risley</i>	103 Mountain Spring Road
2.)	<i>David Risley</i>	103 Mountain Spring Road
3.)	<i>Jayden Regisford</i>	68 Old Stafford Road
4.)	<i>Colleen Yudichak</i>	12 Blueberry Hill Road
5.)	<i>David Yudichak</i>	12 Blueberry Hill Road

6.)	<i>Liz Costa</i>	54 Josiah Lane
7.)	<i>Mike Costa</i>	54 Josiah Lane
8.)	<i>Sam Adlerstein</i>	164 Pine Hill Road
9.)	<i>Sukoshi Clubb</i>	164 Pine Hill Road
10.)	<i>Carl Rossow</i>	8 Hillcrest Drive
11.)	<i>Sophia Shaikh</i>	26 Sutton Drive
12.)	<i>Amir Shaikh</i>	26 Sutton Drive
13.)	<i>Amy Duff</i>	127 Robin Circle
14.)	<i>John Duff</i>	127 Robin Circle
15.)	<i>Toni Moura</i>	42 Center Road
16.)	<i>Madhu Renduchintala</i>	93 Hurlbut Road
17.)	<i>Michelle Harrold</i>	256 Mountain Spring Rd
18.)	<i>Kathy Pagan</i>	19 Pine Hill Road
19.)	<i>David Pagan</i>	19 Pine Hill Road
20.)	<i>Michelle Philopena</i>	26 Ridge Road
21.)	<i>Ed Philopena</i>	25 Ridge Road
22.)	<i>Robert Pagoni</i>	27 Barbara Road
23.)	<i>Janet Pagoni</i>	27 Barbara Road
24.)	<i>Louise Molteni</i>	5 Eastview Terrace
25.)	<i>John Molteni</i>	5 Eastview Terrace
26.)	<i>August Hayes</i>	266 Mile Hill Road
27.)	<i>Laura Hayes</i>	34 Grandview Street
28.)	<i>Amy Neznayko</i>	3 Laurel Ridge Road
29.)	<i>Roger Neznayko</i>	3 Laurel Ridge Road
30.)	<i>Rachel Axler</i>	46 Josiah Lane
31.)	<i>Laura Cassenti</i>	55 Hilltop Road
32.)	<i>Erin Belden</i>	9 Laurel Ridge Road
33.)	<i>Kristen Morgan</i>	167 Dockerel Road

34.)	<i>Aaron Weintraub</i>	167 Dockerl Road
35.)	<i>Denise Bowes</i>	106 Apple Road
36.)	<i>Charlie Bowes</i>	106 Apple Road
37.)	<i>Mary Rose Duberek</i>	37 Ryan Road
38.)	<i>Joseph Duberek</i>	37 Ryan Road
39.)	<i>John McGee</i>	41 Zinfandel Circle
40.)	<i>Karen McGee</i>	41 Zinfandel Circle
41.)	<i>Vanessa Graham</i>	19 Marbella Lane
42.)	<i>Kenny Trice</i>	53 Doe Run
43.)	<i>Teresa R. Julien Trice</i>	53 Doe Run
44.)	<i>Kathy Gorsky</i>	211 Gehring Road
45.)	<i>Tabitha McKown</i>	65 Wildwood Road
46.)	<i>Shawn McKown</i>	65 Wildwood Road
47.)	<i>Linda Scheidel</i>	81 Morgan Lane
48.)	<i>Bethany Lescoe</i>	26 Deer Meadow Road
49.)	<i>Lou Graham</i>	19 Marbella Lane
50.)	<i>Jeff Schroeder</i>	19 Melissa Way
51.)	<i>Elizabeth Chojnicki</i>	10 Old Farms Road
52.)	<i>Geneva Alford</i>	228 Charles Street
53.)	<i>Robert Malicki</i>	81 Morgan Lane
54.)	<i>Sarah Farrell</i>	112 Sugar Hill Road
55.)	<i>Blake Meluch</i>	98 Lawlor Road
56.)	<i>Erik Harrold</i>	256 Mountain Spring Road
57.)	<i>Alyssa Ostergren</i>	133 Anthony Road
58.)	<i>Diana Gascon</i>	144 Browns Bridge Road
59.)	<i>Philippe Gascon</i>	144 Browns Bridge Road
60.)	<i>Cecilia Klember</i>	22 Adam Lane
61.)	<i>Melissa Jamieson</i>	333 Goose Lane



62.)	<i>Douglas Molleni</i>	5 Eastview Terrace
63.)	<i>Isabelle Molleni</i>	5 Eastview Terrace
64.)	<i>Christopher Scheidel</i>	81 Morgan Lane
65.)	<i>Kelli McCabe</i>	262 Mountain Spring Road
66.)	<i>Linda Necci</i>	122 Anthony Road
67.)	<i>Suzanne Kasai</i>	33 Wildwood Road
68.)	<i>Annie Howley</i>	19 Blueberry Hill Road
69.)	<i>Patrick O'neil</i>	19 Blueberry Hill Road
70.)	<i>Gary Lotreck</i>	12 Holly Road
71.)	<i>Susie Lotreck</i>	12 Holly Road
72.)	<i>Jan Rubino</i>	296 Weigold Road
73.)	<i>Patrick Doyle</i>	8 Lakeview Drive Ext.
74.)	<i>Amanda Doyle</i>	8 Lakeview Drive Ext.
75.)	<i>Deirdre Goldsmith</i>	21 Marlboro Glade
76.)	<i>Scott Goldsmith</i>	21 Marlboro Glade
77.)	<i>Jessica Hodge</i>	1275 Tolland Stage Road
78.)	<i>Bill Vallo</i>	80 Tolland Green
79.)	<i>Kate Vallo</i>	80 Tolland Green
80.)	<i>Andy Powell</i>	21 Clearbrook Drive
81.)	<i>Michelle Peterson</i>	44 Wonderview Drive
82.)	<i>Katie Murray</i>	8 Lisa Lane
83.)	<i>Samar Bush</i>	20 Forest Lane
84.)	<i>Sara Sroka</i>	71 Old Farms Road
85.)	<i>Theresa Fanning</i>	10 Eastview Terrace
86.)	<i>Jason Philbin</i>	11 Harvest Lane
87.)	<i>Lisa Klukas</i>	224 Metcalf Road
88.)	<i>Luke Adlerstein</i>	164 Pine Hill Road
89.)	<i>Aly Gaylord</i>	15 Heritage Lane

90.)	<i>Tricia Byam</i>	16 Bonair Hill Road
91.)	<i>Steve Byam</i>	16 Bonair Hill Road
92.)	<i>Karrington Trice</i>	53 Doe Run
93.)	<i>Alexis Trice</i>	53 Doe Run
94.)	<i>Owen Adlerstein</i>	164 Pine Hill Road
95.)	<i>Meredith Renduchintala</i>	93 Hurlbut Road
96.)	<i>Polly Eggers</i>	42 Garnet Ridge
97.)	<i>Will Eggers</i>	42 Garnet Ridge
98.)	<i>Cate Eggers</i>	42 Garnet Ridge
99.)	<i>Oliva Eggers</i>	42 Garnet Ridge
100.)	<i>Adam Bender</i>	103 Goose Lane
101.)	<i>Barb Dimauro</i>	49 Cortland Drive
102.)	<i>Mark Farrell</i>	112 Sugar Hill Road

**Email address** dbclokey@gmail.com

**Message to the Board of Education**

**First Name** Diane

**Last Name** Clokey

**E-mail address through which you can be reached:** dbclokey@gmail.com

**Address:** 29 Tolland Farms Rd

**Message to the Board of Education**

Dear members of the BOE:

I am writing to encourage you to restore all of the items that were not included in Dr. Willett's original proposal to you in light of the favorable adjustments to insurance estimates. If I am reading the minutes correctly, restoring all items still amounts to only a 1.84% increase over last year's allocation. This feels like a win to me. Especially after the excess ECS allocation from last year that was not spent on our students. To be able to go to the Town Council and our community with this very minimal increase and not lose any of the services and programs we expected to lose when insurance costs were higher?! That is an accomplishment that this BOE and Superintendent should be very proud of!! Consider the increases proposed in surrounding communities (also afflicted with crumbling foundations) -- you are still quite frugal by comparison. Insisting on something even lower than this before the budget leaves the hands of our education advocates would be short-sighted.

**Your Message:**

In contrast, the remaining positions set for elimination are costly for our schools and our kids. I'll speak to the one I understand best: the art position at THS. I am sure that you are familiar with the research regarding the impact of the arts on learning. Locally, the THS Art Department (and the Graphics Program also affected by this position) have been extraordinarily influential for our students. Many have found a career path, a new passion, and sometimes scholarships because we have had the resources (human, equipment, and supplies) to offer upper-level opportunities that are at risk with the loss of personnel represented by this cut. Others have simply found balance with the opportunity to think and create in ways that the "core" classes don't provide. I understand why this was included in the original proposal -- but serious consideration should be given to it's restoration. We talk about mental health a lot nowadays; the Art Department provides a form of expression for our students not available in other disciplines, it is a source of

Speak to this because I have been a THS parent since 2011 and value this tremendously --- I am not advocating for this position over others because, as I stated above, I believe all should be included when you send this budget forward.

I would be grateful if this letter could be included in your minutes.

Thank you all for your service.

With love and gratitude,  
Diane Clokey

**SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND**

**ITEM:** Healthy Food Certification Statement 2020 - 2021

**ITEM SUBMITTED BY:** Walter Willett, Ph.D., Superintendent

**FOR BOE MEETING:**

**ITEM SUMMARY:**

Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes allows public school districts (including the vocational-technical school system, charter schools, inter-district magnet schools and endowed academies) that participate in the National School Lunch Program to receive additional funding if food items sold to students meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. Eligible districts that opt for the healthy food certification are currently receiving 10 cents per lunch, based on the total number of reimbursable lunches (paid, free and reduced) served in the district in the prior school year. Last year the School Lunch program received \$14,668 for meals served in the prior 2018-2019 school year.

The three considerations for the vote by the board of education/governing authority are whether to implement the healthy food option and whether to allow food and beverage exemptions.

- Consideration 1 – Healthy Food Option Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education or governing authority certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Page 3 of 6 | Connecticut State Department of Education Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.
- Consideration 2 – Exemption for Food Items: The board of education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales.

**Note:** C.G.S. Section 10-221q addresses requirements for the sale of beverages to students in public schools, and allows exemptions if beverage sales meet specific conditions. Beverage exemptions are **not** part of the annual HFC Statement, which applies only to food sales. If the district chooses to allow beverage exemptions, the CSDE recommends that the board of education or school governing authority conducts the vote on beverage exemptions at the same time as the vote on HFC participation and food exemptions.

- Consideration 3 – Exemption for Beverage items: The board of education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting

or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the beverage sales.

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY:**

.10 cents per lunch (based on past experience)

Reimbursed \$14,668.00 for meals served in the prior 2018-2019 school year

**BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:**

N/A

**BOE ACTION DESIRED:**

First reading, or if the board feels so inclined, move to action.

Recommended Motion: Move K1 to action, second, discussion, and vote.

**#1) Motion language for healthy food option:**

*Motion:* Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education hereby certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

**#2) Motion language for combined food and beverage exemptions:**

*Motion* to allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held.

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:**

None

**SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND**

**ITEM:** Policy 9060 Second Reading

**ITEM SUBMITTED BY:** Walter Willett, Ph.D., Superintendent

**FOR BOE MEETING:** February 26, 2020

**ITEM SUMMARY:**

Section 2 amended from *majority vote* to *two-thirds* vote to make it consistent with Section 3 and provide a greater number of board members required to pass a suspension resolution when no written notice is provided.

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY:** [N/A or put in a summary]

N/A

**LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Increases the required ratio of votes to make changes when no written notice of a suspension of policy has been provided

**BOE ACTION DESIRED:**

Proposed

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:**

Policy 9060 Proposed

**TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
Tolland, Connecticut

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BOARD POLICY

REGARDING: Suspension of Policies, Bylaws or  
Administrative Regulations

Number: 9060  
Bylaws

Approved: 2/28/01

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1. Policies and bylaws of the Board shall be subject to suspension for a specified purpose and limited time by:
  - A. A majority vote of all members of the Board in attendance at a meeting, and
  - B. Provided that prior notification of such a proposed suspension has been described in writing in the call of the meeting.
2. Policies of the Board of Education shall be subject to suspension for a specified purpose and limited time upon a ~~majority vote~~ **two-thirds votes** of all members of the Board when no such written notice has been given.
3. Bylaws of the Board of Education shall be subject to suspension for a specified purpose and limited time upon a two-thirds votes of all members of the Board when no such written notice has been given.
4. Administrative regulations of the Board may be suspended for a specified purpose and limited time:
  - A By the Superintendent, who shall give notice to the Board of the reason for the suspension and the time period of the suspension.
  - B. The Board may direct the Superintendent to suspend administrative regulations for a specified purpose and limited time upon majority vote of all members in attendance at a meeting, provided that prior notification of such proposed suspension has been described in writing in the call of the meeting, or upon majority vote of all members of the Board when no such written notice has been given.



**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE**  
**FEBRUARY 11, 2020, 6:30 PM**

**Council Members Present:** Tammy Nuccio, Chair, Steven Jones, Vice Chair, Robert Abbate, Jr., Brenda Falusi, Lou Luba (arrived at 6:38), John Reagan, Kurt Schenher

**Council Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Richard Conti, Michael Rosen, Michael Wilkinson

1) **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM.

2) **Executive Session:** Pending or Threatened Litigation

Brenda Falusi and Steven Jones motioned to go into Executive Session.

Lou Luba and Steven Jones motioned to end the Executive Session at 6:57 PM.

3) **Adjournment:** Steven Jones and Brenda Falusi motioned to adjourn at 6:58 PM.

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Tammy Nuccio, Chair

**TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL  
HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER  
6<sup>th</sup> FLOOR COUNCIL ROOM  
February 11, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.**

2020 FEB 12 PM 3:25

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tammy Nuccio, Chair; Steven Jones, Vice Chair; Robert Abbate, Brenda Falusi, Lou Luba, John Reagan, Kurt Schenher

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** none

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael Rosen, Town Manager; Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services; John Littell, Fire Chief/Director of Public Safety, Fire Department

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Nuccio called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** A moment of silence was held.
4. **PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS:** John Littell Honored as 2019 "Emergency Manager of the Year" by the Northeast State Emergency Consortium (NESEC)  
*Mr. Luba motioned to table this item until later in the meeting.*  
*Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.*  
*All were in favor. Motion carried.*

Item addressed at 7:32 p.m.

Ms. Nuccio stated that there is no better person than Chief Littell to receive the award of 2019 "Emergency Manager of the Year" by the Northeast State Emergency Consortium (NESEC).

Ms. Nuccio commented that she has had the pleasure of knowing Chief Littell for many years and provided background information. Tolland was a Town that nearly everyone knew your name. John Littell was someone that everyone knew because of his genuine personality. His family's livelihood was not just a job but a way of life. Chief Littell started in the Tolland Fire Department as a volunteer at the age of 18 and two years later became a paid firefighter. He worked his way up from lieutenant to captain, to deputy chief and then chief. Further, Chief Littell became the Public Safety Director and Emergency Management Director for Tolland in 2001, the position for which he is being recognized this evening. Ms. Nuccio provided further details about additional appointments. Chief Littell's career has been a journey and a career worthy of note and recognition which is rightfully deserved. Ms. Nuccio highlighted the hard work and dedication Chief Littell has shown to earn some of the noted positions. These are positions people voted upon for him to receive and were earned. He has the loyalty of the members he supports. He is well-respected in the public safety arena and is the face of public safety. Along with the NESEC, the Town Council would like to recognize the hard work, dedication, compassion, and ethic of the Town's very own Chief Littell. For years they have known that the Chief is a treasure for Tolland and it is nice to see him recognized as one for the New England Region.

Ms. Nuccio congratulated Chief Littell.

Bill Turley, Regional Coordinator, CT Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, spoke in regard to Chief Littell. He noted that the Chief is amazing and reaches out to ensure resources are in place and available if needed. He has earned and deserves the award. On behalf of the CT Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Mr. Turley presented Chief Littell with the Emergency Manager of the Year Award.

Chief Littell accepted the award. He noted that he is "blown away" by the turnout and support this evening. He cannot accept the award by himself – it is the community, the businesses, the residents, and his staff. He has had many mentors including Tom Gavin, Mary Rose, and Brenda Bergeron. While he explained that he "burned out" a lot of staff many stayed with him and he cannot thank them enough. He could not perform his function and roles of his position if it were not for them. He noted that Betsy Tanner is his kingpin – she makes him shine. Further, he would not be able to do all he does if it was not for the support of his wife and children. Chief Littell thanked his family for their support including his sister and brother who were in attendance as well as his mother and father. The Chief thanked the State of CT, the Department of Homeland Security, and Mary Rose for nominating him for many years. He loves his town and community. It is a great town with great residents, businesses, and staff. He thanked colleagues from nearby towns for their support as well. Chief Littell expressed pleasure in having a new town manager with a lot of new ideas and thanked the Town Council for their kind words, support, and taking a vested interest in the department and staff. He appreciates this, respects this, and he and his staff will provide the best service possible for all in everything they do.

**5. PUBLIC PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** *(on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council) (2 minute limit)* - none

**6. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

- 6.1 Consideration of a resolution to approve a Purchase and Sale Agreement between the Town of Tolland and Stephen D. Williams for the purchase of the parcel described as Wilbur Cross 22/k/020(9.70 Acres, more or less) authorizing Michael Rosen, Town Manager to sign the Purchase and Sale Agreement.

Mr. Rosen reviewed the process and purpose of the Public Hearing. He explained that the purchase and sale agreement sets the process, including the conditions of closing, for the sale transaction to take place after all final approvals are met. There are provisions about what items are to be delivered at closing and among other things what rights the buyer would have to access the parcel to grade it prior to closing subject to PZC approval. The PZC did issue a favorable 8-24 review on the Purchase and Sale Agreement back in September 2019. Per the Charter, disposition of real property owned by the Town requires a Public Hearing which is being held this evening. Mr. Rosen recommended that any questions posed by the public in regard to clarification of the Agreement be listed and the relevant ones be answered during the deliberation as part of the Council's reasoning prior to its vote.

Ms. Nuccio reviewed the purpose and format of a public hearing. She noted that they will only answer questions that fall under the Town Council jurisdiction.

Mr. Jones motioned to open the public hearing for item 6.1.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

All were in favor. Motion carried.

**Discussion**

- Ms. Nuccio requested that Mr. Rosen review the Letter of Intent and what is on the books in regard to what was done by the prior Council, and what the Council is doing the evening.
  - Mr. Rosen explained that Mr. William's signature, as well as that of the former Town Manager, are on the Letter of Intent on page 20 of this evening's Town Council packet.

- Ms. Nuccio reviewed questions/comments that were posed at the prior Council meeting.
  - Has the parcel been appraised? no
  - Based on the Tolland Wetlands Conveyance 8-24 abutters and others have the right to bid on the property. An 8-24 review was done by the PZC last September in compliance with the POCD. It was approved and recommended to the Town Council. In this case the deed to the property from the State indicated that this piece of property has to be used for economic development. The only land abutter with access to the land for land development is Mr. Williams. The property cannot be developed individually; it has to be developed in conjunction with the Williams' property for development purposes.
  - Should the Town have put the property out to bid? In this case the money is not staying with the Town and the State does not require this piece of property to go out to bid.
  - Have the steps in the Town Charter and Policies Document been followed for the purpose of sale? The Charter was followed. The dollar amount the land is being sold for is under the dollar amount that requires a referendum. The notice requirement in the Charter was exceeded by the notice they are given because of the heightened State statute of notice requirement.
  - What is the purpose of the proposed land and what will it be used for? The P&S states that the property is for storm water drainage and/or treatment facilities and/or open space and/or commercial development or other development approved by the PZC. The open space is as in open space as part of the development that supports economic development. Per the contract from the State the parcel may not be used as open space for conservation – in such a case the property would revert back to the State. The deed from the State restricts the use of the property to that of economic development. The intent of the use has been that the Town-owned parcel is used to support the development of 53 Merrow Road. It would have to be in accordance with the zoning regulations in effect when a development plan is submitted. Specifically what the land is used for is outside of the purview of the Town Council. The developer needs a fully approved plan from all of the relevant authorities to be able to purchase the land. If not received in the time period specified in the Letter of Intent then the Letter of Intent would be dissolved. At any point Mr. Williams may back out of the Letter of Intent. It was noted that the Letter of Intent indicates that the property may not be accessed via Woodfield Drive unless required by PZC for emergency services.
  - Has the sale been submitted to the PZC? Yes, the 8-24 review was submitted, reviewed, and approved.
  - Has the conveyance been discussed by the board of finance? Tolland does not have a board of finance. It was discussed by the Town Council and approved last year with a Letter of Intent drawn up and signed.
  - Does it have a budget line? No.
  - Has the Town Council or Auditor signed off on it? An auditor is not required and the Town Council signed off on the Letter of Intent last summer.
  - Validity of the application before the Inland Wetlands Commission (IWC) while the P&S is in question? This is not under the jurisdiction of the Town Council.
  - Questions regarding the series of steps with public hearings in respect to the PZC and IWC? This is not under the jurisdiction of the Town Council.

- Has the Town Council done its due diligence? The prior Town Council approved this and the Chair believes due diligence was done.
- Is this the appropriate sale for the appropriate individual for what needs to be done? Has this been vetted? Mr. Williams is the only land owner who has access to this piece of land that has to be developed for economic purposes.
- Was there an opportunity to let someone else develop the land? Mr. Williams is the only land owner who has access to this piece of land that has to be developed for economic purposes.
- A memo from Margaret Miner, Consultant, Rivers Alliance of CT dated February 9, 2020 regarding the Tolland Wilbur Cross Property was read into the record. The e-mail response from the Town Attorney Richard Conti was read into the record and is attached.

The floor was opened for public comment.

Matt Sexton, 75 Woodfield Drive, commented that he begs to differ. He spoke to the CT DOT and the original intent was that the property be used for open land space and it was then later amended. Mr. Sexton stated that he is a proxy for Mr. Christopher Cook of 60 Woodfield Drive and read Mr. Cook's statement into the record (see attached).

Mr. Sexton commented that he, his family, and Mr. Cook are opposed to the sale of this land. He added that it was noted that Mr. Williams is the only one who could develop this land. There are three other abutters. Why couldn't they do so?

Point of Order – Mr. Jones noted that it was 7:30 p.m. and reminded the Chair about item 4.  
Ms. Falusi motioned to suspend the Public Hearing until after the Proclamation.  
Mr. Luba seconded the motion.  
All were in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Jones motioned to reconvene the Public Hearing at 8:00 p.m.  
Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.  
All were in favor. Motion carried.

Mike Byam, 70 Woodfield Drive, commented that he hopes the Council will take into consideration some of the points that will be made by the public. He explained that he has 4 considerations. First, the north and east of this land is significant wetlands. Based on the zoning map, a significant amount is in the aquifer protection zone. He did not hear when this was first approved that it went before the IWC. Further, he cited TVA zoning regulations including section 7.2, bullet 5. Second, on the Town website the planning and development page has the MapGeo tool. When reviewed the property has a value of \$446K. The Town has not assessed the market value of the property and he challenged that when it goes commercial that the value may be significantly more going forward. Mr. Byam cited values of commercial properties in Town. He is sure Mr. Williams is a smart business person and it will not be an inexpensive proposition to clear the land. He knows the value of the property will be more than \$446K. Mr. Byam cited the Town Charter, section 10.3 and indicated that when this property is sold it needs to go to referendum. He challenged the Council – when the property is transferred it will have a market value of over \$570K. While this Council may not have made the prior decision, he is unsure if it constitutes an abuse of power when a decision goes against the town charter. Third, when reviewing the P&S, Mr. Byam does not understand why Mr. Williams is not purchasing the land on day 1. The P&S agreement says that Mr. Williams has a right to prepare the land but it is not transferred until he has a developer. Calculations indicated on \$446K and a mill rate of 36.5 is \$16K annually in tax.

Mr. Byam went through CERT training with Chief Littell and saw what he does with shoestrings. He could use \$16K per year to do things for the community. Further, would the Board of Education like an additional \$16K? Zoning laws do not apply to town land. While Mr. Williams is grading, does he have to follow town zoning? Mr. Byam was told that this is a special legal assessment and that Mr. Williams has to follow zoning regulations but has not seen this in writing. Additionally, who takes on the risk? The agreement states that Mr. Williams has to take an insurance policy but this is broad. What does it cover? Mr. Byam's driveway is 10' from the border on a hill. If there is erosion and his driveway collapses does he need a civil action against Mr. Williams? Does he go after the Town? Is the Town asking him for a construction bond? What happens after three years if Mr. Williams does not have a developer? Does he need to return the land to the same condition as it was before it was cleared? Final point, Mr. Byam explained he is willing to work with Mr. Williams on something that jointly helps the neighborhood and economic development but this piece of land abuts the left side of his property. His well is 20' from the land and his building is 40' away. He is concerned about the impact and adverse effect of marketability of his property. Overall, the risks concern him and he hopes the Council will consider his thoughts.

Alicea Charamut, Executive Director, Rivers Alliance of CT, commented that the Council heard from Margaret Miner who submitted the memo as a consultant and is the previous Executive Director of Rivers Alliance of CT. Ms. Charamut is a resident of Newington, CT. Ms. Charamut cited special act 13-19 which shows the original intent of the act was for this land to be open space in 2003. The act was amended in 2011 for the land to be used for economic development. The term economic development is open to interpretation. In State policy there is economic development in open space and preserving natural resources. Ms. Charamut referred to the comments read by Mr. Byam that alluded to this as well. She has reviewed the Town policies on transferring land and does not see any exemptions to following the policies. The policies are clear that steps including appraisals need to be taken. The policies are in place so there is a transparent process for transferring land that belongs to the public.

Linda Byam, 70 Woodfield Drive, commented in regard to the memo written by Ms. Miner. She cited town policy #3 and the series of steps required when a town property is conveyed. One step is that the land has to be declared as surplus. Ms. Byam asked if this was done. Further, the designated agent shall contact the abutting surplus property owners by letter. It does not say anything about the purpose of the land. She understands that it has been designated for commercial development but this is not stated. She is a small business owner – what is to say she cannot develop that land for economic purposes? She pays taxes for her business, is an abutter, and no one approached her. The Council is making the assumption that the only Mr. Williams can purchase the land and that is faulty logic. No one else was asked. Ms. Byam was not notified by letter. The abutting land owners should be invited to submit a reasonable written offer to the town manager and that reasonable offer is to be equal to at least the minimum of the assessed value. Certainly \$1 is not the assessed value albeit the land has not been assessed. She explained that the process was to be followed and if there were no reasonable offers then it was to be opened to the community at large. She does not know if that was done. They are here tonight because of the public hearing. The letter of intent was drawn up and signed by a previous Town Council and Town Manager. Then, it was brought to the Town Council's attention that the process was done incorrectly. Ms. Byam believes another process was done incorrectly. They need to take a step back and do it right. Just because the Council is looking at the end goal and wants it done does not mean the process can be done incorrectly to get there. Further, based on what they are hearing tonight, the Town Charter and Town Code were not properly followed.

Attorney Sean Clark is working with the Byam and the Johnson families who are affected by this property. He has reviewed some of the documents that have been submitted as part of the package and cited the signature page of the contract (page 15 of the Town Council packet). It appears the agreement has been signed by Mr. Williams and the agreement has been given to the Town in reliance for his application before the IWC and also for the purposes of the zone change to have standing in order to submit those applications with the Town. Even in the excerpts in the memorandum to the Town Council this evening it appears the Town Council acknowledges that this public hearing was really required for the purposes of pre-execution of this document. It is not clear to him whether the document has been executed by the Town at this point. Having said this, a brief review of the Letter of Intent appears to be that there are documents or information in the Letter of Intent that have not necessarily made its way to this particular contract. One of the items that jumped out was the paragraph related to the relocation of the and the removal or transfer of the state DOT parking area. There was reference in the Letter of Intent that that would be incorporated into the contract. In this particular agreement, he does not see where this is located in any respect. The provisions which give him authority or suggest he can go there provide assurance to the Town etc. may be there but Attorney Clark does not see those provisions. The Town is essentially giving up on this property for \$1 with no quid pro quo. There has not been any consideration of what the Town could get for it. He reviewed the Town's annual budget and believes the number to be approximately \$56M which would make 1% roughly \$560K. There are a number of items in the five year budget memorandum that was submitted to the Town Council in December that could be addressed if the Town received the fair value for this property or worked out an agreement with the State – there has been no mention of this. If the original purpose of the property was open space as indicated, if this was changed then why can't the restrictions regarding where the money goes be changed as well? Why shouldn't that money come back to the Town of Tolland if it is going to be for economic development? Why shouldn't the money be used to cover some of the items in the December 2019 memorandum regarding fire equipment, school equipment, computer software for the town etc.? At the heart of this, he believes the Council has been somewhat led astray mainly because the analysis required by the Town Charter has not been followed. The language of 10-3, while it does provide an exception to the transfer of property, the retention of property whether it is open space or town property, is really the essence of the public trust that the town has for its people. Holding property for future use and striving to get the best value for that. Giving it to a developer for the purposes of doing that is a derivation of that responsibility. The language of 10-3 says that no resolution shall be adopted and that the Town Council may be authorized to do this in certain exceptions but in order to determine if paragraph number one applies to the exception one needs to know Mr. Rosen's number and which year it is going to happen. What the Town budget will be. One must know the 1% number. Whether the consideration is \$1, they still need to know the fair value of the property so everyone in town is fairly compensated for the loss of the property the town has been entrusted to give the Town Council to manage and control and ultimately dispose of. Thus, Attorney Clark believes this analysis needs to take place. Further, he reviewed the contract. There is no provision in the contract other than the town has to certify that the Council has authority to transfer this property and take the steps necessary to do so. In order for the Town Council to do so, the Attorney does not see how it would be possible without an appraisal. He does not see how they get to the analysis that says they have done their duty under 10-3 without this. Unfortunately, there is no provision in the contract that says who pays for the appraisal. Thus, Mr. Williams gets that benefit of that appraisal and says the Town has to do this because it is the Town's duty to say that they are authorized to make the transfer. Where does that money come from? Who pays for it? Where is that budget item?

These are all items the Town needs to consider in regard to determining if it has made a prudent, reasonable, and lasting decision. Further, he agrees with Mr. Sexton in regard to this being an aquifer protection zone. While it may be outside of the purview of the Council, it should be a consideration for the protection for all of the citizens. His review of the POCD would suggest that the Town Council has a role to ensure water resources, not just conservation resources, are preserved for everyone in Town. This is a role that should be borne by everyone across the board – inland wetlands, planning & zoning, and the town council.

Aldo Mazzadra, 65 Woodfield Drive, voiced concern about the processes that have taken place. He agrees with his neighbors and the representatives that have spoken this evening. Due consideration needs to be taken and he hopes the Town Council looks at this much stronger than it has up to this point.

Joel Johnson, 52 Woodfield Drive, explained that one thing that bothered him is that they were blindsided. If it was not for a friend finding out about this they never would have known. They feel there has been a backroom, cigar room type of deal between the Town and the developer in this lust for creating more economic development in Tolland. Mr. Johnson is for economic development – it is the slight and slap in the face that the Town cut a deal. There is no way one can convince him that someone did not think that maybe the abutters should be contacted. They had a gentleman on the PZC tell them that they were just supposed to watch the website daily to find out. Notices were only received via mail a few days ago. This deal was cut completely without their input. They are here now raising legal issues to try to put the brakes on because it is the only resource they have. All of this started because of the cutting of this back room deal. He does not mean this to sound like anything illegal is done, just what they feel like as citizens when this happens. Mr. Johnson has nothing against Mr. Williams. The point is they were blindsided and now they are being made to feel that they are being unreasonable and are anti-development which is not the case. Why didn't anyone communicate with us that the property behind us is going to be clear cut and stuff will be blasted and moved. Further, they are giving Mr. Williams the ability to do site work without submitting a plan. While it is legal they are citizens of the Town too. This could have been handled in a different and healthy way.

Angela Penta, 69 Woodfield Drive, commented that they have only been residents for about six months. They moved here because the schools are terrific and the town is beautiful but what made them buy here was the allure of the neighborhood. Specifically, they were told there were wetlands – she owns about 9 acres, most of which are wetlands. She wanted her children to grow up as she did and be able to play in the woods. Now, she and her husband are devastated. They had plans to be here long term – it was their dream. They specifically asked realtors if this was wetlands for anything other than preservation and were told no and that the wetlands were completely protected. They bought the property at people's word. While she is not against economic development and adding to the town as needed, new people to Tolland are not coming in to look at a big box store etc. They are moving here for what Tolland looks like and what it represents – beauty, nature in your backyard, and peace and tranquility.

Mr. Jones motioned to close the public hearing.

Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.

All were in favor. Motion carried.



- Ms. Nuccio reviewed the questions/comments posed. The bulk was in regard to Town Charter Section 10-3. Additional highlighted items included the following:
  - Why could abutters not have developed the property?
  - Town zoning and if it needs to be followed
  - Who takes on the risk in regard to insurance?
  - 2003/2011 intent; current agreement is for economic development
  - Does anything exempt the sale?
  - Has the P&S been executed by the Town? Mr. Rosen responded that the page was signed after the September meeting where the P&S Agreement was voted upon by the previous Town Council. Since the step was done erroneously the unsigned copy was included in tonight's Council packet. As of now, it is considered unsigned.
  - It was noted that everything in regard to this which was under the purview of the Town Council was done openly, publically, and was listed on agendas.
- Point of order – Mr. Jones inquired if they need to motion to approve the P&S prior to beginning the discussion. Town Attorney Conti advised that the Council could have a discussion before the motion. Further, the Council needs to consider if it has all of the information it needs this evening to make a decision. If so, they may act on it tonight. If there are additional information that is needed or if they are going to direct a request for an opinion to him, then this is something to consider.
- Mr. Schenher clarified that there is no requirement for bonding, only insurance. If the property reverts back to the Town it would be as-is.
- Ms. Nuccio clarified that if there is any intended use of the land beyond economic development it voids the deed and the land is reverted back to the State
- A discussion took place regarding this property and section 10-3.
- Town Council members noted that they have unanswered questions.

This item was tabled and will appear on a future agenda as Old Business.

**7a. REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE TO THE COUNCIL - none**

**7b. REPORTS OF TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS**

- Planning & Zoning Commission – a review of the February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting was provided by Ms. Falusi
- Land Acquisition – next meeting February 19<sup>th</sup>
- Tourism – a review was provided by Ms. Falusi
- Sustainable CT – a review of today's meeting was provided by Ms. Falusi
- Complete Count Committee – a review was provided by Ms. Falusi
- Blight Commission - will meet at the end of the month
- Permanent Celebration Committee – will meet on March 17<sup>th</sup>
- Conservation Commission – a review was provided by Mr. Jones
- Board of Education – a review of the Special Meeting held on February 6<sup>th</sup> was provided by Ms. Nuccio; the next meeting is February 12<sup>th</sup>
- Economic Development Commission – a review was provided by Ms. Nuccio
- Birch Grove Building Committee – an update was provided by Mr. Luba
- Agricultural Commission – Mr. Schenher referred the Council members to the minutes
- Parks and Recreation – a review was provided by Mr. Schenher

**8. NEW BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**

- 8.1 Discussion on potential Cemetery Regulation revisions.

Mr. Rosen reviewed this item.

The last time the fees and regulations were updated was in August 2018. The Town Council discussed considerations for revisions to the policy and whether the regulations should be more strictly enforced or relaxed. Items for review included the pouring of footings, alcohol containers, and the securing of items.

Mr. Rosen will create a red-lined policy for the Town Council to review.

Mr. Jones made a point of order that it is 9:50 p.m.

**8.2 Appointments to vacancies on various municipal boards/commissions**

Mr. Jones noted that a resignation letter was received from Wade Mattesen (Inland & Wetlands Commission).

**9. OLD BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS): none**

**10. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER (A WRITTEN REPORT SHALL BE PROVIDED THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE MONTH ONLY)**

- A section regarding the 2020 census has been added the website; next meeting is February 25<sup>th</sup>
- Meetings have been taking place with department heads to discuss operating budgets
- January 30<sup>th</sup>, attended the Regional Legislative Breakfast at THS
- February 10<sup>th</sup>, Representative Joe Courtney hosted a webinar on tax issues related to crumbling foundations
- Upcoming events
  - February 12<sup>th</sup>, ECHIP Board meeting
  - February 13<sup>th</sup>, Capital Budget Presentation, Council Chambers, 7 p.m.
  - February 19<sup>th</sup>, Council of Small Towns (COST) annual meeting
  - February 19<sup>th</sup>, Land Acquisition meeting
  - February 20<sup>th</sup>, Health District meeting

**11. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

11.1 January 28, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes

11.2 January 28, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Jones motioned to adopt minutes at noted in 11.1 and 11.2, the January 28<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting minutes, the January 28<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting minutes.

Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.

Change: January 28<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes, section 9.2, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, delete, " Mr. Luba inquired if learning about services already in place could be done without forming a commission." and replace with, "Mr. Luba inquired if the Commission could review services already in place in Town."

Mr. Jones motioned to approve the adoption of the minutes in 11.1 and 11.2 as amended.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

All were in favor. Motion carried.

**12. CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL**

- e-mail – inquiry regarding a Pride event in June
- e-mail regarding a Board of Education budget concern
- e-mails regarding the Commission on Disabilities and name of the Commission and other topics
- e-mails regarding the Tolland Social Media Policy

- e-mail regarding the Honeywell Project
- e-mail regarding Representative Joe Courtney's webinar

Mr. Jones motioned to extend video recording past 10:00 p.m.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

All were in favor. Motion carried.

**13. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

- February 12<sup>th</sup>, Board of Education meeting
- February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Eagle Freeze
- February 24<sup>th</sup>, Joint Meeting with the Board of Education (BOE); per the Town Charter the meeting is required for discussion of the request of the BOE to the Town Manager; the agenda will include recommendations and suggestions to the BOE regarding consolidation of non-education services and cost savings, a period of public participation, petitions and/or questions from the Town Council to the BOE members specific to the BOE budget; another meeting will be held in March
- February 25<sup>th</sup>, Regional Economic Development meeting
- Chair Hour – 3 attendees, discussed topics included Neighborhood Watch and offerings of the Senior Center
- Conference call with Representative Joe Courtney's legislative aide to discuss the crumbling foundation issue, ECS grants, and transportation issues

**14. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILPERSONS**

- Ms. Falusi congratulated all of the students – today was the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school
- Ms. Falusi noted that today is 211 Day; see 211.org
- Ms. Falusi inquired about the Social Media Policy; Ms. Nuccio noted that the only Social Media Policy is for town employees
- Mr. Luba explained that during his winter break his son visited his mother overseas in China for several weeks and they thoroughly toured the area. He returned just before the news of the Coronavirus hit. There was a great deal of concern that he and his mother had been exposed to the virus. During that time, Tolland neighbors and residents have been outstanding asking about his son. Thankfully Mr. Luba's son was not exposed and his mother is fine as well although she is still in China and sheltering in place for likely the next month and a half. Mr. Luba expressed sincere thanks for the outpouring of support from the Town – the residents and the Town Council.
- Mr. Jones noted that due to scheduling he will be unable to attend the next 3 meetings of the commissions on which he is a liaison.
- Ms. Falusi will attend the Sustainable CT training on February 18<sup>th</sup>
- Mr. Luba asked Mr. Rosen to ask Attorney Conti to pull up the specific special act regarding the conveyance restrictions.

**15. PUBLIC LISTED PARTICIPATION** *(on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council)*  
*(3 minute limit)*

Mike Byam, 70 Woodfield Drive, inquired if he or neighbors on Woodfield Drive have further questions if they may be submitted. *It was noted that questions may be asked during Public Participation and/or e-mailed to the Town Council.* Mr. Byam commented that the Town Council should look at regulation 10-3. Who can he speak to about the scope and what is included?

**16. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Jones motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:08 p.m.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed.

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Tammy Nuccio, Council Chair

Lisa A. Pascuzzi  
Clerk

**Kim Kowalyshyn**

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**Subject:** Response to Memo from Margaret Miner

**From:** Richard Conti <[Rconti@dctlaw.com](mailto:Rconti@dctlaw.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 11, 2020 8:58 AM  
**To:** Michael Rosen <[mrosen@tolland.org](mailto:mrosen@tolland.org)>  
**Subject:** Response to Memo re: Williams for Tonight

Mike:

I suggest the following responses to the memo:

1. Financial value of the property to the public. This land was conveyed to the Town for purposes of economic development. Any monies received are to be transferred to the State, and there is no requirement in the special act that we go to bid or get any significant value for the property – only to enhance economic development. I believe it was the prior Council's belief that this would allow Steve Williams to develop his property adjacent to the parcel, and the revenue to the Town would be the financial benefit. In addition, if Steve Williams didn't buy it, no one else could use it for economic development, and he was not willing to pay value for the parcel. He was, therefore, the only choice.
2. Requirement in Tolland's Town Policies. This policy is for surplus land that the Town does not need, and provides a procedure to get the most value for a parcel. Because of the requirements of the special act, this procedure is inapplicable.
3. Ecological value of the property, and Wetlands at risk. These are issues for the Inland Wetlands Commission, not the Council.
4. Conveyance Acts. This is a State issue, not a Town issue.

**Richard S. Conti**  
Diana, Conti & Tunila, LLP  
1091 Main Street  
Manchester, CT 06040  
860-643-2181  
[rconti@dctlaw.com](mailto:rconti@dctlaw.com)

## **Tolland Wilbur Cross Property**

**Memo from Margaret Miner, Consultant, Rivers Alliance of Connecticut**

**For Matt Sexton and other interested persons**

**February 9, 2020**

**I write concerning the proposed conveyance of 9.7 acres of publicly owned land to a private individual for economic uses. The original conveyance of this property to Tolland was by DOT in 2003 as open space.**

***Financial value of the property to the public.* The property on 2003 was assessed by the Office of Fiscal Analysis at \$150,00 as open space. Obviously, it would be worth much more today, especially if available for economic development.**

**I believe it should be reappraised before any decision is made regarding disposition. From a public policy perspective, this was a gift of land and water resources to the people of Tolland basically for conservation. If that gift is now to be conveyed to an individual for development, at least the public should be told the market value today of the 9.7 acres as commercial (and industrial?) property.**

**In fairness, I urge that, if the proposed land transfer goes forward, the recipient of the property reimburse the public for this valuable benefit. Special Act 11-16, which amended the original conveyance act (Special Act 03-19) calls for revenue ("any consideration") from any sale or lease of the property to be transferred to the state. The town proposes to sell the property for \$1, and, therefore would only be obliged to return \$1 to the people of Connecticut. The public (which includes residents of Tolland) should be fairly compensated if the proposed conveyance is pursued.**

***Requirement in Tolland's Town Policies .* Policy #3 outlines a series of prudent steps required before town real property can be conveyed. I am not a lawyer, but I do not see anything in the state statutes that would require Tolland to override these policies in this case. I am not certain which of the steps in Policy #3 may have been taken, but here they are: declare the property as surplus;**

seek bids from abutting landowners; have an assessed value of the property; offer property to the community at large. If no reasonable offers are received, the Town Council may act in the best interests of the town. The process must be consistent with the provisions in the Town Charter.

There are two sections of this Policy that *might* raise questions relating to Special Act 11-16. As noted above, Section (3) of the Act says that any consideration from the sale must be transferred to the state. The Town Policy refers to putting the money into the Town's general fund. Presumably if that money is actually owed to the state, it could be transferred out of the town general fund to the state. If only \$1 is involved, this should not be a big issue. But I do believe that, if the property is sold for development (which I hope it is not), the public should get more than \$1.

Second, Tolland Policy #3 does not apply to the sale of industrial park property. There is no industrial park on the property. The Policy does not refer to property that might at some point become an industrial park.

*Ecological value of the property.* The only current analysis that I have seen is the REMA report of December 18, 2019, prepared for the Inland-Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (IWC) by George Logan. Mr. Logan frequently testifies for persons intending to develop a property. Reading his report, my reaction was: OMG, no one should touch this place -- three vernal pools! As an advisor, my more professional reaction is: the property should be evaluated by an independent wetlands scientist for its biological habitat function and, of course, its hydrologic functions. You might also ask your Conservation District for help. The original stipulation in the state's gift to Tolland was that this property be used for open space. This was a sound and prudent condition in the public interest, given the high-quality, public-trust water resources on site.

*Wetlands at risk.* I am not commenting here on the application by the developer to the IWC, which involves grading and other radical treatment of the land and water. My experience is that wetlands and vernal pools are fragile, and efforts to create substitute conditions almost never work, especially over time. You are so lucky that the kids and adults in Tolland have a place where they can see frogs and the diverse life associated with this property.

***Conveyance Acts.*** Every year the Connecticut legislature passes one or more conveyances acts transferring state property to towns or individuals. In the past, some of the conveyances were clearly in the interest of the general public (as was apparently the 2003 Act conveying the 9.7 acres of opens space to Tolland). Others, not so much. Many questionable transactions took place with little or no public awareness. In 2018, an Amendment to the State Constitution reformed the conveyance act process to ensure more public awareness and opportunity to comment, especially on environmentally important properties.

The Tolland policy for land disposal is consistent with today's view of good governance of public lands conveyance. The 2011 Conveyance Act is based on an outdated way to handle public lands and waters. It appears, however, that the Tolland Policies do protect the public interest as well as or better than the processes established for the state in 2018. As an advocate for healthy waters and diverse aquatic habitats, I hop Tolland will follow the process in its Policies, and of course I believe it would be in the public interested to retain the 9.7 acres as open space.

Thank you for your attention,

Margaret Miner, Consultant, Rivers Alliance of Connecticut

[Margaret.miner@charter.net](mailto:Margaret.miner@charter.net) 203-788-5161



We, as a community, have an opportunity to create an environment that can capitalize on the logistics and aesthetics of the Tolland community. When considering our proximity to UCONN, its growing international presence and the historic nature of the Town Green including “The Tolland Historic District Commission’s petition of the Connecticut State DOT to designate as a scenic road much of Route 74 and part of Route 195 from the Town Green West and the Town of Tolland adopting a local scenic road ordinance our community” (quoted from Page 21 of the Tolland Plan of Conservation and Development adopted 10.12.2019) Tolland could and should be viewed as a go-to spot for tourism and culture.

This can be accomplished by prudent and needed economic development within established parameters (which I support). “Some resources are so important to environmental quality, public health **OR CHARACTER** that alterations should be avoided to the extent feasible. These include the 100 year floodplain, steep slopes (>20%) and watercourses including riparian buffers (vegetated area along stream or river) **AND WETLANDS**. These are resources to conserve and they include the 500-year floodplain, areas of high ground water availability, **IDENTIFIED AQUIFERS** and recharge areas and unique or special habitat.” (quoted from Page 10 of the Tolland Plan of Conservation and Development adopted 10.12.2019).

With the appropriate, vetted and POCD compliant economic development Tolland could be put in the same category as: Woodstock VT, Manchester VT, Washington CT and Bar Harbor ME to name a few creating opportunity for long-term, sustainable and increasing commercial top line revenue with bottom line revenue improvement. Conversely, without adherence to appropriate vetting and compliance with established and adopted regulations, we could become a different type of destination to the likes of New Orleans LA, Reno NV or Memphis TN.

The Town, through its varying commissions and committees has spent considerable time and money over the years for companies identified as experts to come in and advise them, most

recently Goman and York Advisory Services in 2018. As mentioned at a previous Town Council meeting, I am not aware of any member of the Tolland Town Council or Tolland Planning and Zoning Commission being a licensed Civil or Environmental Engineer or credentialed commercial real estate developer, if they are then I would like that to be known for the record. And even if they are, for an arm's length - unbiased – objective – impartial – unprejudiced approach to any change by recommend experts, there should be similar professional vetting for any change / amendment to established / adopted documents from these governing Committees / Commissions / Councils in order to mitigate the risk of creating the perception of collusion – connivance – bias – nepotism.

As I mentioned at Town Council meeting from my role in the corporate sector when I am involved with a project that requires vendors / third parties, all companies with whom I have been affiliated enlist vendor management protocols and go through a specific: Request for Information (RFI); Request for Proposal (RFP) and Request for Quote (RFQ) to create an impartial, fair and competitive environment for all vendors that are well-established and well-reputed in the specific area for the project being developed that will not cut corners to increase its margins. I am hopeful that this is the same process that will be followed when the Town and its respective committees look to implement any economic development activity.

Our Community missed a huge opportunity a number of years ago when it chose not to purchase a key gateway commercial property on route 195 leading up to the Tolland Green which could potentially have been the beginning to the development needed for Tolland and desired tourism growth in line with the EDC's vision. With hindsight always being 20-20, I am hoping that current members of key Committees and Councils along with the Town Manager learn from the historical perspective and the potential loss of revenue that the return on investment revenue cost our community when developers of the surrounding land pulled out due to a number of publicly and non-publically communicated concerns / issues.

With the Town's Blight and Local Scenic Road ordinances and the POCD directive "to be mindful of scenic features" as adopted October 12, 2019, prudent development that is in-line with the respective Committees / Councils established and adopted governing documents including wetlands and aquifers as referenced earlier from the POCD is possible without changing these protected areas. Most importantly a vendor management process that is arm's length – unbiased – objective – impartial that enlists the vendor management protocols referenced earlier of RFI; RFP and RFQ will allow an impartial, fair and competitive environment for all QUALIFIED vendors / developers that are well-established and well-reputed in the specific area for the project being developed that is in the best interest of Tolland.

Do the governing bodies of Tolland have the character to maintain the character of Tolland with prudent economic development? I am hopeful the answer is "yes" and with established governing rules, invest the needed capital and time that will allow prudent and sustainable economic growth and development that at the same time, protects the character of the historic Tolland community and its vital resources so we do not turn into a small scale version of New Orleans or Reno.

# CAPITAL BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

## TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER 6TH FLOOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS

**FEBRUARY 13, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tammy Nuccio, Chair; Steven Jones, Vice Chair; Robert Abbate (arrived at 7:39 p.m.), Brenda Falusi, Lou Luba, John Reagan, Kurt Schenher

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** none

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael Rosen, Town Manager; Lisa Hancock, Director, Finance & Records; Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services; Heidi Samokar, Director of Planning and Development; Scott Lappen, Director, Public Works; James Paquin, Building Official; Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent; Chief John Littell, Fire Chief/Director of Public Safety; Robert DaBica, Fire Marshall

1. **Call to Order:** Ms. Nuccio called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** recited

**Moment of Silence:** observed

2. **Public Hearing Item**

- 2.1 Consideration of the Proposed 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan

Mr. Rosen gave his presentation with the use of PowerPoint entitled *FY 2020-2021 through 2024 – 2025 Town Manager's Five Year Capital Plan, February 13, 2020.*

The first part explains what the capital budget is, what capital items are and what it includes: streets, parks, buildings, school facilities, large equipment, and technology. The plan is for five years. The town's five year capital improvement program is developed to ensure adequate capital investment in the town's assets and to provide an orderly method for funding these assets. The definition of capital projects is: any project, to be included in the Town's Capital Improvement Program, should fall into one of the following three program categories: 1) any new or expanded physical facility, including preliminary design and related professional services; 2) land or property acquisition; 3) items of a non-recurring nature where the benefits are realized over a long period of time. A project should also exhibit the following characteristics to be included in the Capital Improvement Program: 1) life expectancy; and 2) cost.

Mr. Rosen reviewed the Capital Budget planning process and calendar; and the types of funding methods.

**The FY 20-21 Significant Capital Projects include:**

Town Administration: Town of Vernon Water Pollution Control Plant Upgrade, Replacement of Fire Marshal Vehicle, Permit Software, Depreciation for the Replacement of Light Duty Vehicles

Board of Education: TIS Sidewalk Connection, THS VCT Tile Replacements

Public Facilities: Replacement of Underground Storage Tanks

Capital Equipment: Replacement of Public Works Highway Truck

Public Safety: Personal Protective Equipment, Replacement of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus

Public Works: Replacement of Truck #35, Firehouse Improvement Design Development, Capital Equipment Replacements/Refurbishment

Streets and Roads: Drainage construction and design, Tree Trimming, Pavement Management, Road Improvements, Cross Farms Rear Parking Lot Expansion

Capital Projects funded by other sources include:

Town Administration: Fire Marshal Vehicle

Utility Reserve Fund: Board of Education (THS Boiler Water Filtration System); Public Facilities (Air Conditioning Unit Replacement for Fire Training Center)

District Wide BOE Parking Lot Re-pavement: Non-referendum debt

Capital Equipment: Replacement of Public Works Highway Truck

Public Safety (Ambulance Reserve): Personal Protective Equipment, Replacement of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus

Public Works (non-referendum debt): Replacement of Truck #35, Firehouse Improvement Design Development, Capital Equipment Replacements/Refurbishment

Streets & Roads: Drainage construction and design, tree trimming, pavement management, road improvements, Cross Farms rear parking lot expansion

#### **Year 2:**

Town Administration: Contribution to Town of Vernon Water Pollution Control Plant Facility Plan as defined by Inter-Municipal agreement with Vernon

Board of Education: THS replacement of VCT tiles, THS Security Panel/Burglar system, TMS Library and Main office carpet, TIS Window glass replacements, TIS Hobart High Temp Conveyor Dishwasher & Sink System

Capital Equipment: Replacement of front end loader, dump truck, service truck and an Embark mower, Replacement of a Parks Cargo Maintenance Van

Fire and Ambulance: Replacement of Ambulance 640

Public Facilities: Various projects including replacement of Jail Museum Roof, Public Facilities yearly improvements and funding for the ADA Pathways Cross Farms Park Design fees; Firehouse improvement designs to Station 140, Station 340, and Station 440

Tree Trimming: Elimination of hazardous trees due to damage done by insect infestation

Pavement Management: Various road improvements and paving, Drainage construction and design

#### **Year 3**

Town Administration: Contribution to Town of Vernon Water Pollution Control Plant Facility Plan as defined by Inter-Municipal agreement with Vernon

Board of Education: District Wide Wireless Access Points

Capital Equipment: Replacement of various capital equipment, two highway truck replacements

Public Safety: Replace Ambulance 540, Refurbish Engine Truck 240

Public Facilities: Pole sheds for Highway Garage

Tree Trimming: Elimination of hazardous trees due to damage done by insect infestation

Pavement Management: Various road improvements and drainage construction

#### **Year 4**

Town Administration: Contribution to Town of Vernon Water Pollution Control Plant Upgrade Facility Plan

Board of Education: TIS Modular Roof Replacement

Public Safety: Refurbish Tank 140, Replacement of Engine Tank 340

Capital Equipment: Various Public Works capital equipment replacements

Tree Trimming: Elimination of hazardous trees due to damage done by insect infestation

Pavement Management: Address road maintenance, parking lot and neighborhood roads

**Year 5**

Town Administration: Contribution to Town of Vernon Water Pollution Control Plant Upgrade Facility Plan

Capital Equipment: Replacement of Vac Con

Fire & Ambulance: Replacement of Engine Tank 440, Refurbish Tank 440

Tree Trimming: Elimination of hazardous trees due to damage done by insect infestation

Streets & Roads: Address road maintenance, parking lot and neighborhood roads

Ms. Hancock reviewed the Tolland Debt Management Plan Schedule 2020-21 through 2024-2025.

The last slide contained the budget schedule with important upcoming dates.

Mr. Rosen thanked the staff and department heads for being in attendance this evening.

The Council members asked questions on the presented information and received clarification from Town staff on those items.

Mr. Jones motioned to open the public hearing.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

No public comment.

Mr. Jones motioned to close the public hearing.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**3. Adjournment**

Mr. Jones motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Mr. Schenher seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

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Tammy Nuccio, Council Chair

Lisa A. Pascuzzi  
Clerk