

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

Hicks Municipal Center
Council Chambers
Tolland, CT 06084

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.

BOE GOALS

- Ensure the completion and implementation of the Portrait of a Graduate Report.
- Foster a culture and climate that supports high levels of learning and engagement, promotes mental and physical wellbeing, and leads to individual student success.
- Assess our district needs and advocate for resources to meet them, while pursuing non-traditional sources of revenue, ensuring a quality education for all students.
- Nurture and support an inclusive community where every person, regardless of their identity, is acknowledged and respected. This will ensure that Tolland students have the necessary resources to thrive at school, in the community, and in our diverse world.

REGULAR MEETING

7:00 PM

AGENDA

February 24, 2021

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86358441213?pwd=dUJpbNVDV3BoZW1MT1ZlZ1F1K21XZz09>

Meeting ID: 863 5844 1213

Passcode: 5FgfFH

Dial by your location

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 863 5844 1213

Passcode: 582724

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86358441213?pwd=dUJpbNVDV3BoZW1MT1ZlZ1F1K21XZz09>

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- January 27, 2021
- February 3, 2021
- February 10, 2021

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 – Alexandra Costa and Simar Grewal

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- H.1 COVID Update (no attachment)
- H.2 Policy 4120 Electronic Devices (first read)
- H.3 State Standardized Assessment (no attachment)
- H.4 Honeywell Update (no attachment)
- H.5 Superintendent Check In – Board Member Reflections and Roundtable (no attachment)

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

K. BOARD ACTION

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2-minute limit)

Comments must be limited to items on this agenda.

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION

Tolland Town Council Minutes – February 9, 2021
Tolland Town Council Special Minutes – February 9, 2021
Capital Budget Meeting Minutes-February 11, 2021

N. FUTURE

O. NEW BUSINESS

P. ADJOURNMENT

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ZOOM Meeting

REGULAR MEETING – January 27, 2021

Members Present: Christina Plourd, Vice Chair; Tony Holt, Secretary (arrived at 7:12PM); Renie Besaw, Christine Griffin, Madhu Renduchintala, Jacob Marie, Dana Philbin, Sophia Shaikh

Members Absent: Ashley Lundgren, Chair

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Plourd called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – approved as-is

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- January 13, 2021
 - January 21, 2021
- Approved as posted.

C.2 SUPERINTENDENT STATEMENT

Dr. Willett read the following statement:

During the FFC meeting on January 20th a member of the committee attending virtually pointed out that other members of the committee attending in person were not wearing masks. The observation came with an expression of personal challenges that had been experienced and a desire to see the subcommittee lead by example. Subcommittee members, accustomed to sitting at a distance perceived as safe without a mask, were not aware of how that may be perceived by some in the digital audience. It is not my impression that these individuals wanted to make a point, or stand, regarding not wearing masks but felt compelled by circumstance to provide an immediate response. A disadvantage of the digital meeting format is that on-the-spot reactions are often expected, and even valued, with a pressure toward the immediacy. These situations can be difficult for all of the individuals involved due to the limited lens these Zoom-like meetings can sometimes provide, both tangibly in visual range - what can actually be seen - and metaphorically in human intention and interaction. As intentions can be observed by actions over time, ample opportunity exists through forthcoming meetings and activities to see what lies within our hearts. I believe that what lies within the hearts of all involved is the best interest of children and this community.

In so far as America is the land of rugged individualism, Lin-Manuel Miranda wrote into the play Hamilton: I am the one thing in life I can control. Regardless of what I feel I do right, there is always something I can do better. While I feel there is evidence I am a stickler for what protects children and each other, and adhere and enforce the use of PPE in educational contexts and with professional colleagues and subordinates, I could have done a better job of reflecting on my own actions and by assertively guiding officials in my office space to wear masks as an additional protective measure. While we are accustomed to wearing masks in our classrooms, offices, and the outside world – we may not habitually do it in contexts that feel more like those of a family, and there are spaces in which masks are not required such as at one's own workspace or cubicle. It is a positive that we have come to feel like a socially distanced working family, but the optics in a digital format may send an unintended message of apathy and non-compliance on this important safety measure. A message that I am certain every member of the board agrees is not a message we want to send. We are grateful for the feedback. Rather than a conversation

around the details of spacing, and context, and conditions, this can be an opportunity to learn and move forward together, better equipped to lead having had the experience.

What does not destroy us, most of the time, makes us stronger. We have a lot of work before us serving the children and community of Tolland, and my sincere hope is that we do not get mired in conflict over this situation. I recommend we engage in virtual meetings until such time that the Town has moved back to in-person meetings. In addition, the policy committee can review EO 9H, EO 7NNN, EO 9B, CSDE Reopening Guidance as posted in our plan, and decide if additional documentation is warranted as guidance does frequently change and undergo updates.

In closing, perhaps now more than ever practices of compassionate communication recommended by author Karen Armstrong are crucial to our collective success. If we succumb to taking passion personally and react to, or make our decisions based on, digital forums that benefit more from conflict than consensus, we spiral into a place that has little chance of success. I humbly ask for grace and partnership from our families and the board to move the district beyond this learning opportunity and continue with the important work of serving children and Tolland overall.

C.3 POINTS OF INFORMATION

Regarding the January 21, 2021 FFC (Finance and Facilities Committee) meetings, Ms. Griffin noted that she was appropriately socially distanced when seated from the other Committee members, including the Superintendent, which was within the state guidelines in Executive Order 7NN. She explained that when her colleague commented on the lack of masks in the room, she held up her mask so the colleague could see it and then proceeded to put it back on her face. It was by no means with any ill feelings. She understands the community's concern that masks were not worn during the entire meeting, especially given the recent increase in COVID cases. Ms. Griffin promised to do better and be a better leader and will wear her mask at all times when, and if, they ever go back to future in-person meetings to protect the entire community.

Ms. Besaw commented that she understands the concerns of the public regarding COVID and has read the e-mails regarding the FFC meeting. She explained that she did wear her mask into the building and had it on through the beginning of the meeting. She clarified that the reason she waved her mask in front of the camera was to make it clear that she had one. It was not done in defiance. She put it on immediately after the remote Committee member expressed concern and wore it until the meeting was over and she was in her car. Ms. Besaw explained that while she was following CT Executive Order 7NN regarding mask and face coverings, which requires masks only when a 6' distance cannot be maintained, she realizes that she can set an example and go above and beyond the legal requirements. She added that she truly cares about the health and safety of those around her and strives to be respectful. She noted that she will wear her mask at all times when representing the district regardless of distancing for the duration of the pandemic or as ordered by federal, state, or district policy.

Mr. Marie explained that at last week's FFC meeting himself and 2 other Board members attended in person. Once seated and at least 6' apart, they removed their masks. Based on conversations he has had with the Superintendent, and the many briefings about school reopening, it was his understanding that he was in compliance. He added that at one point he held up his mask in a knee-jerk attempt to show that he does take the virus seriously. Mr. Marie commented that this was not well thought out and was mistaken as mocking the wearing of masks or sending a political message. He explained that it was neither of those things;

nevertheless, he understands the situation was not clear to those watching and more importantly, he does not want students to have the impression that mask-wearing is anything less than an essential tool to fighting the coronavirus. Thus, as co-chair of the Curriculum Committee, he will hold next month's meeting remotely and urged the Policy Committee to research a specific policy regarding this as mentioned by Dr. Willett. Mr. Marie noted that he will strictly adhere to the policy.

Ms. Plourd commented that the Superintendent is charged with ensuring the laws of the state and the policies of the district are enforced. She believes the Board could help with that as well via Mr. Marie's suggestion so there would be a framework for everyone to follow. Ms. Plourd thanked all of the Board members for their comments and recommended that the Policy Committee prioritize adding the use of face coverings on their agenda as an action item. She believes a policy regarding PPE will quell any confusion and unify the team. She asked that all Board members review the Civility Policy and remember that everyone is a volunteer and a human being. There are things that every Board member can improve upon or reflect on. She asked that they not let this hijack the meeting and that they move forward with the important work of the Board

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Lou Luba expressed thanks to Dr. Willett for clarifying the incident as well as the other Board members involved for their explanations. His question regarding this is pursuant to Executive Order 7B as well as Executive Order 9H that the meetings are required to be recorded in some manner. The recording would have been able to help clarify issues. He asked the Chair if the recordings are available so they can be viewed by the public to quell concerns.

Karen Moran, 50 Merlot Way, thanked Dr. Willett for his eloquent and graceful statement. She shared observations regarding the mask situation at the FFC meeting last week. She explained that there was no reason to have an in-person meeting. When the members decided to meet in person, they chose not to wear masks. As adults, they have the ability to read the room and see that the Superintendent was wearing one. Further, when their colleague pointed out concern, they reacted disrespectfully. Ms. Moran commented that lastly, it seems to her that if they had chosen to put their masks on at that point, which did not look or sound like it, and apologized in that moment, they would not be experiencing the chaos now. The Board would have been able to move on to do the work that is expected of them and continue to work for the students. This is what could have happened, but it did not. Ms. Moran believes a simple apology tonight would have been good, thoughtful, and genuine but it turned into excuses and she is disappointed.

Linda Scheidel, 81 Morgan Lane, commented that she agreed with Ms. Moran. She voiced concern about the executive session specific to the COO position appointment tonight. The position is needed not only for the district as a whole, but also for the well-being of the Superintendent. She added that there should not be a discussion on who is filling the position but that the position is needed. She understands that promoting from within is more cost effective and no gaps should be created from the addition of this position. If someone internal suits the position, then that person's position should be filled and not eliminated. They are not in a position to be eliminating any positions. They have already eliminated too many within the district and she is afraid that if the majority of the Board does not approve of the individual Dr.

Willett has in mind, the Board will vote to eliminate this position from the budget. Thus, she does not believe the individual should be shared.

Liz Costa thanked Mr. Renduchintala, Ms. Plourd, Ms. Philbin, Ms. Shaikh, and Mr. Holt for their responses as well as Ms. Griffin for her quick apology for her lapse of judgement and commitment to wear a mask in the future. Ms. Costa commented that she attended to understand how the Board would support students and Tolland Public Schools. She asked why they were meeting in-person and what they could achieve and gain that they could not do in Zoom. She asked had the meeting been open to the public, as all other meetings had been prior to COVID, if they would have chosen to wear masks. If the public cannot meet in person, Ms. Costa wonders if they realize how difficult it was to understand those who were wearing masks during Zoom. It was difficult to understand Dr. Willett at times. She asked where the equity is in meeting in person when at least 1 team member met via Zoom and since it is difficult to understand the person that was wearing the mask, it may be advantageous to hold the meetings via Zoom. She added that much has been made of the fact that someone took a video of someone in the meeting, but wonders why a public meeting is not being recorded during COVID. It is a meeting open to the public and it is doubtful the public would attend. By not wearing masks, she wondered if they considered what message was being sent to staff and students who need to uphold the mitigating efforts. Last week, at the Board meeting, it was discussed that they have one Superintendent with no backup if he were to get sick. Ms. Costa provided guidance from CAGE – great planning and having mitigation strategies in place to minimize COVID-19 transmission in schools has been effective. They owe it to students to continue the strategies that allowed Connecticut to open the doors to the classrooms and keep transmission spread out of the buildings. They have never had a time when one's actions impact others more than now. She added that they should rise to the challenge, stay committed, and play their part for students and educators. It is for them and they deserve it.

Mary Rose Duberek, 37 Ryan Rd, commented that some members of the Board believe that if one is not within 6' of another that they do not need a mask and cited the Governor's executive order written 6 months ago as the basis for that belief. While the executive order states that one must wear a mask within 6' of someone in a public place, it does not say not to. There are hundreds of citations and guidance issued by the State Department of Education, state and local public officials, State Department of Economic and Community Development, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and doctors, nurses, and hospital administrators. All recommend wearing a mask, staying socially distant, washing hands, and avoiding crowds. These mitigation strategies combined are effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Being in a conference room with others for over an hour and not wearing a mask is risky behavior even if one can maintain 6'. It sets a poor example for students, staff, and teachers and does not promote ongoing efforts to keep schools safe and open. Mocking a fellow BOE member who shared her experience with COVID-19 and her genuine concern for their safety goes against the Civility Policy adopted last summer. That was the action that was disappointing.

Kurt Schenher, 138 Chardonay Lane, asked if the meeting was recorded. It is his understanding that meetings like this have to be recorded under the executive orders. If it was, he would like to view it and it may help relieve some people's consternation over this issue. If it was not recorded, he would like to know why and who thought it would be a good idea for a public meeting.

Jeff Schroeder, 19 Melissa Way, asked about the school calendar. The tentative 2021/22 school calendar places the last day of school on June 21st. Concern was voiced that the schedule did not provide enough days for snow days or school closures. Since the pandemic has shown that distance learning is a viable method of student instruction, why cannot the school closures, such as snow days, become distance learning days which would maintain June 21st as the last day of school?

Rebecca Risley, 103 Mountain Spring Road, thanked the Superintendent for his thoughtful words of unity. Tolland has 682 cumulative cases of COVID-19, the schools have been impacted by 24 known positive cases, and at least 355 students have been required to self-quarantine. Wearing a mask in a public setting is not a point of political debate and neither is treating others with decency and respect. During an ongoing pandemic, no one entering someone's office or place of business should ask to remove their mask and they should expect to be required to wear it for the duration of a meeting especially in a setting with prominent signage regarding mask usage. Ms. Risley noted that she attended the FFC meeting and it was a missed opportunity for several Board members for personal growth, a true apology, and working together. When a colleague discusses a lapse in judgment, the adult response is not to become defensive and respond with sarcasm, anger, or flippant reactions. They should recognize the error, apologize if necessary or warranted, correct the error, and move on. If a child did this in school, they would be corrected and there would be a possible consequence. If it was an employee, they would be coached and a letter would likely be put in their file. Ms. Risley did not see any sign of remorse and added that Mr. Marie did not put his mask on even after being asked to do so. Although the other 2 were off camera, her belief is that if they had put theirs on, Mr. Marie would have done so also. The Board is accountable to the residents and children it is making decisions about and needs to do better.

Jayden Regisford, 68 Old Stafford Road, commented that it was asked if there is a video. He explained that it was recorded, and the video is on some discussion forums. He added that it is "pretty disgusting". He hates to see it go out and was part of his write-in to the news. He explained that it was an "atrocious" response that one would never hope to get from someone leading in a small town like Tolland. Mr. Regisford commented that there is no reason to be in person and put each other in harm's way and put the Superintendent in harm's way less than a week after discussions of what they would do without Dr. Willett. He explained that they just got done telling students to wear masks for outdoor sports. When one sits in class 6' apart, they are wearing masks. He added that they should follow the rules set in place for the students in the community.

Kenneth Trice, 53 Doe Run, thanked Dr. Willett but regrets that he had to fall on his sword. He should not have had to do that. Mr. Trice explained that he wrote to the Board almost a year ago about twelve points. When he saw the actions last week, he wondered how many read it. The first was that the Board was not a team. Another was hostility or disdain for certain members and another was criticism. Most importantly, the members forgot they were on stage. Mr. Trice explained that what should have happened and been said this evening is that the members should have said that they apologize for their behavior - that they should have been better, will be better, and offer a sincere apology. Further, they should apologize to their teammate and note that they plan to do better. Additionally, that they can be held accountable to doing better.

Jennifer Gallichant, 150 Timber Trail, commented that Mr. Trice stated it well. She addressed remote learning over the holiday break and commended the teachers who did an outstanding job giving the students their best. In her experience, her sons' 5th and 8th grade teachers were patient, engaging, and responsive to questions. In regard to the discussion about masks at last week's meeting, she asked if the members see themselves as role models to the students and leaders of the community. She explained that she hopes the answer is "yes" considering that they ran for and accepted the positions. Ms. Gallichant commented that she too is a volunteer and when on TPS property, even when mainly outside and not interacting with students, she wears a mask as does everyone on the PTO. She explained that she nearly lost a sibling due to isolation from COVID and is now even more concerned with social/emotional health. Ms. Gallichant noted that her son sat alone at lunch yesterday and children have sat alone this school year for multiple days in a row. Students at TIS have assigned seats and can only speak to the child who sits directly next to them on the same side of the table. A third child cannot sit across from them. She explained that given the actions in the meeting were following state statutes, and acceptable for adults in a TPS building, she expects that they will be looking at the protocols they are holding the children to, especially since many effect the social/emotional health. Ms. Gallichant would like to hear from every Board member regarding how they are going to improve SEL in the schools going forward.

Amber Comeau, 64 Morgan Lane, commented that while she appreciates Dr. Willett's statement regarding last week's FFC meeting, it is not the action of wearing or not wearing a mask that needs to be debated. It comes down to the poor judgment and behavior of Board members. Ms. Griffin mentioned that there was no ill meaning in her response when asked why she was not wearing a mask but for anyone who saw the video of the incident, there certainly was ill meaning. It was negative meaning and has nothing to do with orders and policies. It has everything to do with common decency and she feels that some members of the Board have shown time and again that they are lacking. Ms. Comeau commented that it is embarrassing for her as a member of the community and it is concerning as a parent. She worries about the Board's ability to make decisions for the future of the children and hopes things get better.

Deidre Goldsmith commented that she echoes what her fellow residents have largely said. There is serious disappointment in the judgment exhibited by the 3 Board members. She noted that this evening none of the 3 members extended a sincere apology to Dana Philbin who was trying to give them the wisdom she has based on her experience with COVID. Ms. Goldsmith commented that it was a tragedy. She hopes the apology is forthcoming and that Ms. Philbin will get a better apology. She also hopes for better modeling and is grateful for Dr. Willett's modeling of appropriate behaviors to keep everyone safe.

Sam Adlerstein commented that one theme he heard was about getting back to the important work of serving children. His concern is that his perception is that this Board spends most of its time looking for cost reduction. He is unsure how this translates into serving children. Last year there was a lot of pressure for a 0% budget. He does not know if there is a similar target this year but his perception is that the behaviors are the same and the members are around the table so they can comb through the budget and fire questions at Dr. Willett and try to extract as much as they could cost-wise from the budget. If this is not true, he would like to hear how the Board intends to serve children through the course of the budget process.

E. CORRESPONDENCE

- E-mail stating that the writer would like to know what metrics will be used to determine returning to 5 day in-school
- E-mail where the writer asked if the BOE members who disobeyed the guidelines would be held accountable
- 32 E-mails – stating the writers’ dismay that members attended the committee meeting without wearing a mask; writers also expressed concern with the responses when the issue was brought up
- E-mail asking why the BOE members were not wearing masks during the committee meeting
- E-mail telling the BOE to keep up the good work
- E-mail stating that the writer is not upset with the lack of masks during the committee meeting; writer felt the attendees were sufficiently socially distanced
- E-mail where the writer asks what the policy is on kids wearing masks while in school
- 30 E-mails stating that the writers request that the Board return to focusing on issues greater than members wearing masks
- E-mail thanking the Board members for their hard work
- E-mail asking for the names of the three officials who chose not to wear masks
- E-mail asking how to get a new diploma
- E-mail from the State Representative summarizing the steps the state is taking to keep schools open

F. POINTS OF INFORMATION

- Dr. Willett spoke regarding the calendar and snow days. They are in the process of determining this information and would use some remote learning days in lieu of snow days if it is allowed by the State of Connecticut next year. It was and is this year, so after the third one they will use remote asynchronous learning days. They will need to see if the same allowance carries over to next year.
- Dr. Willett addressed the recording of meetings. Board meeting are recorded by the CVC and displayed on a community channel and recorded. Subcommittee meetings that have been mixed in person and virtual have been more difficult due to some computer crashes. Within the provision of the executive order, they are allowed, and do, transcribe them.
- Dr. Willett noted that he has seen recent correspondence from Board members and the public interacting with Board members. He believes the message has been received. They need to consider carefully people’s feedback and shared truth and find ways to collectively move forward and thanked everyone for their feedback. There are always ways to do things better and his fear is that some of the crucial things that need to get done will get off track. There is hard work to be done to ensure students are taken care of during the pandemic.
- Mr. Holt explained that he can attest to his own perspective and noted that they are working on the fiscal aspect of the budget and it is something they need to discuss and be concerned about. They are making a priority to identify the needs of the students. The budget cycle they are going into is perhaps more important than any other he has been a part of or watched in recent years due to the need to align themselves for the future and to ensure the past year is taken into account. The needs of students both now, and going forward, is absolutely a priority.
- Ms. Philbin thanked Dr. Willett for some clarity he provided at the beginning of the meeting and appreciates the guidance. She is pleased he would like to start moving all of the meetings to a remote format. As someone who is hearing impaired, her peers are not

always on camera and when people are wearing a mask it can be difficult to hear what people are saying. She believes it is an opportunity for everyone to be aligned either in person on Zoom. Ms. Philbin explained that they are in unprecedented times and must ensure that they lead by example for the health and safety of themselves, students, and staff. Her request of her peers to wear a mask during an in-person meeting where the ability to social distance was questionable at best, was to express her concern for everyone's safety in the room and to protect the Board from liability. It was not politically driven or an attempt to disrupt the important work the Board is trying to do for the community. She was trying to communicate what she had experienced to hopefully mitigate anyone else from experiencing it. Regardless of the situation, the optics are that the Board abides by its own rules. Last week was a missed opportunity to lead by example and role model proper behaviors. Ms. Philbin commented that poor judgement, lack of civility, and a lack of respect was displayed. They need to shut their feelings for each other and focus on their ethical and moral obligation to support the Superintendent, advocate for students and staff, and have intentions to support a competitive and diverse education. She added that tonight's conversation was needed and it is time to move forward and focus on the Board's job. Whether Democrat or Republican, they are Tolland community members and have 17,000 community members and over 2,000 students plus staff. It is their job to join together as a team to ensure they are doing everything they can to make people feel supported and get the education they deserve.

- Ms. Plourd commented that tough times do not last, but tough teams do. They can pull through this and everyone craves a sense of pre-pandemic normalcy.

G. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT – Alexandra Costa & Simar Grewal

- Second semester starts tomorrow
- Second Semester Open House – February 4th, virtual
- Eighth Grade Orientation – January 28th, virtual
- Teachers' Jazz Band – a successful virtual concert was held earlier this month
- Laptops are widely available to students
- Mr. Poland has been meeting with seniors individually to discuss plans for end of the year activities

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

H.1 Monthly Financial Report

Dr. Willett reviewed attachment H.1.

The December 2020 Financial Report shows an available balance of \$1,290,341, or 3.22% of the Board's current budget. Dr. Willett noted that this amount will be reduced over the next several months.

Dr. Willett highlighted a number of line items. He noted that salaries are currently underbudget due to COVID. They have had some fluctuations in hiring. Further, there are not as many substitutes who want to work during the pandemic, and they are working on this situation. He noted that overtime expenses cannot be encumbered but will continue to be incurred. Regarding stipends, this is influenced by the reduction in collections from pay to play and it is expected this will run over. He noted that there is an increase in unemployment due to COVID as well as a number of people looking into degrees. Benefits and consultants as well as workers comp are on target. Legal, audit,

and tech are collectively underbudget. The district finished negotiations with the paras and it is now starting to work with the secretaries' union. Student transportation is fluctuating due to additional out-of-district transportation, as well as in-district transportation due to IEPs. Special ed tuitions are plus \$14K and will fluctuate. Energy expenses were transferred at the beginning of the year. Dr. Willett noted that textbooks have not yet been fully encumbered. The instructional equipment line was over because they will be backfilling with educational reserve funds as has been previously reported.

Mr. Marie asked where the district is in regard to COVID related expenses. Dr. Willett responded that they are in the area of \$200K.

H.2 FY 2022 Budget Discussion (no enclosure)

Dr. Willett explained that a number of questions have been submitted by the Board and he has been responding to them. As they enter next weeks, he will transition to some of the questions posed by the general public.

Mr. Renduchintala asked how having a COO, curriculum coordinator, or an assistant superintendent would help streamline the efficiencies and if Dr. Willett has a preference for a position. Dr. Willett responded that the most efficient way to approach the issue is via a COO or like position. He will speak more about this over the coming week and communicate with Board members. The COO position can be effectively funded as well as administrative support for the position by making adjustments in line 730. This position will allow Dr. Willett to be directly involved with fewer items on a daily basis and give him time to devote and work on the teaching and learning side of things. The COO would allow there to be someone between the superintendent and operational activities. The superintendent would still address items that rise to the highest level of operations. Dr. Willett explained that he has expressed concern in the past about having an assistant superintendent position that has a salary range of \$150K-\$170K and in terms of a curriculum director, he believes they are currently managing well. Dr. Willett noted that it is in the best interest of the district to go with the COO option.

Mr. Renduchintala asked about the proposed staff in the Superintendent's budget. He asked if the speech pathologist will serve the entire community. Dr. Willett responded that the position would. Mr. Renduchintala asked what would happen if they did not fund the position. Dr. Willett responded that they cannot do without any of the positions that are up this year. The SLP position is in response to the needs of the district and direct student needs. They are currently using consultants but need a staff member to manage it. Across the country, acquisition of learning is in the range of 63-68% of what it would be in a typical year. The summer slide was exacerbated by the pandemic and data demonstrates that this will happen again this summer. Further, hundreds of students are learning remotely and the district needs to be mindful of their progress. If not managed effectively, they will become referrals for special education. Without the SLP position, they will need consultants which will cost at least as much if not more. Mr. Renduchintala asked about the legal ramifications and liabilities if they do not fund the other listed positions. Dr. Willett explained that the ABA position is an extension of the ABA program - part of the lighthouse programming and part of a multi-year program to provide excellent services for students and live up to the district's

obligation to children of all backgrounds and challenges. The ABA position extends the program into the high school. It would be a problem not to have this position as students in the program are now at this level. The program offers what is morally and ethically correct with respect to serving students while being a cost avoidance program. Six students in an ABA situation could cost \$1.6 million and having a program for them is morally and ethically necessary so they are with their peers, in their community, and have an equal opportunity within a school. It is also part of the overall lighthouse project. Regarding the .5 ESL position, the district's ESL student count has increased over a short span of time. It is the moral/ethical correct thing to do and is required by the state. As for the BIS position, students in the general education population need the programs so they are not automatically identified for special education. The programs are required by the state. The BIS position is necessary for managing the needs in the district's current programs; otherwise, the district will have more outplacements and it is the moral/ethical right thing to do. An average outplacement is about \$69,000 not including transportation. The social worker is needed for BGP and TIS which are in sharing situation right now. The position will allow them to fulfill the needs of the families from the standpoints of social emotional learning and family support. Situations have been exacerbated by the pandemic. It would be morally/ethically incorrect not to have the position and will result in people looking for outside services. Without support, people will seek support through requested designations etc. and if the district is unable to fulfill the needs in the general education population and structures in place, it is obligated to respond. Dr. Willett noted that these positions are absolute needs. Mr. Renduchintala asked about the COO position and if they are promoting and backfilling the position. Dr. Willett responded that he is working through an idea right now and will keep the Board updated. There are some internal options.

Ms. Shaikh commented that Dr. Willett identified the positions as being necessities. She asked what the district needs that are not an absolute need. Dr. Willett responded that he will need to think about it and give due diligence to the answer. They put a lot of energy into what is needed for the students in Tolland and seeking how they can do things better. They have done, and continue to do this, and have a 5-year average of budgets that are below 1%. What he envisions for the future that would require investment at a modest level would be in further enhancing the pathways and moving into the third phase of the lighthouse programming. The job of morally and ethically correct programming has been done and resulted in cost avoidance opportunities. Tolland's teachers and programs are as good or better than magnet programs. One of the major objectives was to avoid attrition and the district has done so but further development would continue to reduce it. Education is now more competitive than ever, and Tolland's offerings need to be clear. Thus, Dr. Willett would be looking at how the programs can be enhanced with managed and logical investments.

Mr. Marie commented that he is interested in the COO position and how the ERF can be utilized. Regarding the structural equipment, Dr. Willett mentioned reducing the request by \$55K and asked if this would be a transfer of funds to ERF expenditures. Dr. Willett responded that he is looking at ways to fund the COO position within the budget request that had already been made. The \$55K coming out of line 730 would help partially address the COO position and related support staff. The \$55K would not by itself reduce the budget, but all of the items to be presented would. The ESSER II funds

would be used for personnel. If the Board wants to reduce the budget, it could take out the \$55K that has been identified to reduce the budget instead of putting it toward the COO and pay for the items from the ERF fund. Mr. Marie commented that he would be interested in learning if any of the expenses would qualify for the ERF. Mr. Marie asked about holding a special meeting to discuss the budget before the next meeting on February 10th when the Board will vote on the budget. Ms. Plourd responded that she was going to ask the Board about this. Dr. Willett added that the Board could make some of the qualifying expenditures from the ERF.

Mr. Holt commented that he wants to ensure Tolland is positioning itself for the pathways. As they are working on the budget, it is obvious Dr. Willett has positioned the district to move forward. Regarding facility maintenance and repair, a small increase is budgeted, and Mr. Holt asked if it would be sufficient for the needs. Dr. Willett responded that he believes it will be but would not want to cut anything from this line. Mr. Holt clarified that he was not suggesting that this line be cut but ensuring the district is positioned when students return.

Ms. Philbin commented that the budget includes needs for COVID recovery, year over year impacts, and increased competitiveness for educational needs. She noted that Dr. Willett has discussed the COO and different positions needed throughout the district as well. Ms. Philbin commented that there are some things that have been lost in years past and would like a list of what has been lost or things that are needed to move forward to support educational goals and ensure they are responsible to the students and staff and providing a diverse curriculum across all levels so they can remain competitive. She added that she is not advocating for another meeting but if they have an opportunity to support the budget, student, and staff she would like to see a secondary list.

A brief discussion about having a workshop next week took place. Dr. Willett will ask Ms. Palumbo to set up a date.

H.3 COVID Update (no enclosure)

Dr. Willett noted that the district continues to be proud of the teachers and staff including nurses, paras, custodians, administrators, and secretaries. Everyone is working hard to keep everyone supported and students learning. He noted that there have been some challenges but all of the nurses have been vaccinated and when the time comes essential employees will be able to be vaccinated as well. They have talked with stakeholders and work closely with the Eastern Highland Health District. The district continues to promote and share information and is poised to take advantage of testing centers and vaccines. In terms of the education option, they are sticking with the 4 day in-person option which the state considers in-person. Wednesdays are currently useful for asynchronous instruction and cleaning, and he is watching the development of potential variants. Dr. Willett noted that considerations include logistics related to teacher effectiveness and the transitioning capacity to support remote learners, vaccine availability, and the impact of COVID-like illnesses on personnel and operations. The district is following all of the directives. That said, Dr. Willett noted that provided there are no other major impacts, he is looking toward an upcoming Pandemic Education Period, the next is in March, in an effort to consider returning to 5-day in-person

learning. Many factors will be mitigated by then and he has started asking staff to consider and prepare. It is likely Wednesdays will be half days.

Ms. Plourd noted that she attended the COVID meeting with Dr. Willett and his staff. She is an advocate for 5-day in-person, and staff explained why the district is not yet in that position.

Ms. Philbin asked about the nurses and the vaccine. Dr. Willett explained that his understanding is that all of the nurses have received at least the first round of the vaccine. Ms. Philbin commented that many people want the 5-day school week, but she wants to be sure they are cognizant of the mental health of the educators. Wednesdays have given educators a chance to address curriculum, set agendas, and talk to peers about best practices. She wants to ensure the educators have this support and time for one-to-one time with remote learners and added that a 5-day schedule will ask educators to find the time for one-to-one with remote students. Ms. Philbin commented that she is sure Mr. Sztaba has a plan and will ensure the buildings are cleaned as needed with the pandemic.

Mr. Marie commented that it would be great to get back to 5-day weeks in March assuming it is safe to do so. He asked if the district would need to do anything in preparation. Dr. Willett responded that he will have to reallocate some resources to remote learners and expand capacity. He added that it is balanced with the dynamics that pandemic has provided with respect to personnel. Further, they will need to make a transition for special program populations. Dr. Willett added that he will also need to consider the needs of the staff so they can serve the needs of the students. They are heroes on a day-to-day basis and half day Wednesdays will be crucial for staff so they can do what is needed. He is doing all he can to ensure teachers and staff are supported. It is a collective effort, and they need cooperation. The end of the marathon may be visible over the horizon and this is the worst time to become fatigued.

Mr. Renduchintala asked about the lunch seating arrangements and if it would possible to relax the restrictions or at least ensure a child is not sitting alone at lunch. Dr. Willett responded that he would look into this. The administrators are doing everything they can so that children are not emotionally isolated, and they will continue to look for options. That said, if it keeps schools open, they will continue doing what they are doing so kids can be interacting in school. In the cafeteria environment, they need to be mindful of keeping students separated. The new variant is not making this easier.

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

- Birch Grove Building Committee – Met on January 19th; a mock room walk-through is being set up
- Negotiations – Setting up to meet with the secretaries in February
- Curriculum Committee – next meeting February 4th
- Communications – next meeting February 2nd
- Town Council – discussed 2 proclamations (declaration of racism as a health emergency and another addressing the recent events in Washington D.C.); approved a program income plan;

- Finance and Facilities – met on January 20th; reviewed the monthly financial report; discussed: federal and state funding, the COO position, questions on the budget
- Policy – cancelled and will be rescheduled

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - none

K. BOARD ACTION

K.1 2021-2022 School Calendar

Dr. Willett reviewed attachment K.1.

This is being presented for a second reading this evening.

Ms. Griffin commented that they have spoken about the January in-service day and the mid-semester day. She recommended adding an asterisk for parents who are not familiar with the mid-semester day. The K-8 day is set in stone, but the mid-semester day is subject to change.

Ms. Philbin asked about snow days and remote days and if the calendar could be adjusted so it does not go out to June 21st. Dr. Willett responded that the issue will be if the state continues its allowance. If so, they can use remote learning days in lieu of snow days. If it is an option, they will try to do so.

Ms. Plourd asked if 3 snow days are built into the calendar. Dr. Willett responded that there are 182 days scheduled while only 180 are required. Ms. Plourd commented that she would advocate to keep the snow days in.

Mr. Renduchintala motioned to accept the Tolland Public School 2021-2022 Calendar.

Mr. Marie seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

K.2 BIRCH GROVE FF&E

Dr. Willett provided an overview and reviewed attachment K.2.

Mr. Marie asked if there is a separate FF&E budget and how much it is. Ms. Murray responded that the line item for Phase 4 (FF&E) and Phase 5 (Technology) are combined. Phase 4 is what is being presented to the Board this evening. The line item for the combined phases is \$1.527M. She noted that this was a deferred item due to the unsuitable soil costs. The total estimated costs for FF&E and Technology is approximately \$55K over the \$1.527M. Ms. Murray noted that in the package there are essential and wish list items. The latter are items that would benefit the school and impact many students. The intention is that with the Board's approval tonight, the architect will take the FF&E packet to the state on Friday. Hopefully, within 2 weeks the packet will be approved, and the FF&E will go out to bid. The majority, if not all items, are on the state bid list which will save time, but items do change so there can be some movement. The Committee agreed to approve the FF&E package knowing that with Technology they are about \$55K over budget and the Committee will make the final decision on which items will be purchased after the bids come back. The Committee has

not yet committed to spending any of the money yet. With the estimated cost, the Committee expects the total to be slightly different. Ms. Murray noted that the Committee also discussed the available contingency funds. Currently, the town side contingency is a little over \$150K and when the unsuitable soil funds are reinstated there will be an additional \$75K+. Thus, there are funds in the project budget to purchase everything in both phases.

Mr. Marie asked what kinds of items were on the wish list. Ms. Murray responded that the list includes area rugs which are used by elementary school teachers in classrooms and other rooms. Also requested were additional lockable file cabinets and items for the sensory room.

Ms. Philbin confirmed that some of the items for the sensory rooms are not reimbursable by the state because they do not have 20-year lifespans. She will send a list of the items to the Board members.

Mr. Marie motioned to approve the final Birch Grove Primary School Phase 4 Furniture, Fixture and Equipment (FF&E) Plans and Project Manuals, as prepared for bidding and dated January 15, 2021, including the professional cost estimate of \$871,345 which is within the \$46 million total project cost, for the State Office of School Construction Grants and Review Project Number 142-0083N. This motion authorizes the Chair of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools to sign State Forms SCG-042: Request for Review of Final Plans.

Mr. Renduchintala seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION - none

- Tolland Town Council Special Minutes – January 12, 2021
- Tolland Town Council Minutes – January 12, 2021

N. Executive Session – Discussion concerning appointment of a Chief Operations Officer

Mr. Renduchintala motioned to enter Executive Session at 9:21 PM.

Ms. Besaw seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

The Board exited Executive Session at 9:58PM.

Mr. Renduchintala motioned to extend the meeting past 10:00PM.

Ms. Philbin seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously

Mr. Renduchintala motioned to go into Executive Session at 9:59PM.

Ms. Philbin seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board exited Executive Session at 10:11PM

N. FUTURE

Dr. Willett will set up:

- Update on CRE efforts, Equity Efforts
- School rounds/tours (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)
- Open Choice

O. NEW BUSINESS – none

P. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Renduchintala motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:12PM.

Ms. Philbin seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi

Clerk

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ZOOM Meeting

SPECIAL MEETING – February 3, 2021

Members Present: Christina Plourd, Vice Chair; Renie Besaw, Christine Griffin, Madhu Renduchintala, Jacob Marie, Dana Philbin (arrived at 7:33 PM), Sophia Shaikh
Members Absent: Ashley Lundgren, Chair; Tony Holt, Secretary
Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Plourd called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

B.1. FY22 Budget Discussion

Dr. Willett reviewed modifications to the Superintendent's Budget Request.

Dr. Willett explained that the ESSER II Funds were recently discussed and released by the state to the districts. Tolland Public Schools will receive approximately \$203K and some adjustments may be able to be made to the budget. He noted that they are not supposed to supplant a position that was in place in the operating budget and fund with the monies, but they can fund positions that address COVID-related issues. Dr. Willett asked explicitly about the positions he will present tonight and was told that they may be funded. Dr. Willett explained that this provides an option for reducing or shifting items from the budget request. He asked that the Board provide feedback on what it would like to do, and he will prepare the budget document accordingly for next week's vote.

Dr. Willett recommended reducing the items displayed or transferring them from line 730 to a capital item from the educational reserve fund (ERF). In either case, they would be removed from the budget. The first set of reductions total \$55,631 and the second set would be covered by the ESSER II funds. These funds must be spent by September 2023. The ESSER II funds would be used to cover 2 positions: school counselor and social worker (total \$143,570). These positions are core to the fulfillment of iep programs and address social/emotional development and mental health, both of which are covered explicitly under ESSER II. Dr. Willett noted that a grant application will need to be submitted for the ESSER II funds and will require justification which can be provided. Thus, the reduction items to the budget would be about \$199,201.

Dr. Willett explained that the net addition of a chief operating officer type position would be \$40,011 addition for a total compensation range of \$130K. In turn, with a \$199,201 reduction and a \$40,011 addition, this provides an overall reduction of \$159,190 or reduction of the budget request from \$1,435,189 to \$1,275,999 or 3.2% increase.

Dr. Willett noted that he is continuing to review if anything else can be removed or modified. He noted that the budget requires a position transition. The financial

assistant in the budget would be changed to a human resource/business assistant who would work with the chief operating officer.

Ms. Besaw inquired about the list of equipment. She asked if there are potentially more Promethean boards that they would want to move. Dr. Willett responded that the items listed are the ones he felt could be reduced. Other items will have greater impacts on programs. Given the circumstances and the budget, he feels the items could be removed and alternatively managed. Ms. Besaw commented that \$143K is being used of the \$203K. She asked what would happen to the other \$60K. Dr. Willett responded that they would try to apply this toward other COVID-related impacts such as remote learning, overtime, staff development, family connectivity issues, and/or academic supports. It could also be used to fund extended school day programs or extended school year into summer programs. Ms. Besaw confirmed that the \$60K is not going toward anything in the current budget but is being set aside for future use. Dr. Willett responded that this is true it would be future use. The funds may be carried to September 2023 so they could offset something in the future.

Mr. Renduchintala asked Dr. Willett if the budget is adequate to strategically move the school system forward. Dr. Willett responded that it is. He believes that in a pandemic year the budget being put forward will help maintain appropriate services. From the standpoint of where they are in the pandemic, the objective is to prevent the district from sliding backwards. They want to ensure students are receiving needed services and they are making up for some of what happened over nearly the last year. They will move forward in some things and significant advances have been made in internal programs. While it is not a massive leap, it is designed to help ameliorate and address the issues that are being faced. Mr. Renduchintala commented on past increases of less than a percent for the last few years, when averaged, and that they are not keeping up with the cost of living. He asked Dr. Willett what he would say to those who balk at a 3.2% increase and how this benefits the community. Dr. Willett responded that he believes the district has a good record of working with stakeholders and developing reasonable budgets. The last 5 years have averaged less than 1%. He explained that one cannot go through that many years without expecting a bump. Last year they did all they could and continue to do so to ensure reasonable budgets are put forward. It is time for a budget a little bigger than what has typically been put forward. The 3.2% is necessary, at this point, to rebalance and address needs. Programmatically, everything in the budget is meant to do some level of either cost avoidance or aggressively meet the needs of the pandemic. The 3.2% needs to be supported; otherwise, there would be undesirable outcomes and ramifications.

Mr. Marie asked about funding the positions. Because they would hold the positions for more than 1 year, he asked if they should be in the regular budget and use the ESSER Fund for COVID-related expenses such as cleaners and ppe. Dr. Willett responded that it makes sense to consider doing material items and noted that there are other supports for such items. The ESSER grant allows districts to use the funds for personnel which is somewhat unique and is an advantage of this funding over others. Dr. Willett added that moving forward there will be retirements and adjustments that could allow them to retain the positions. Further, the positions can be easily and expeditiously defended through the ESSER II process versus one hundred material items. Mr. Marie asked about

Line 730 and if there is any other technology that could be funded by the ERF. Dr. Willett responded that it is possible but in the next year there will be a steeper climb given the replacement trajectory. Mr. Marie asked if the Promethean boards are replacing the smart boards. Dr. Willett responded that they are. Software and other items are no longer available or are expensive for some of the older units.

Ms. Griffin commented that she is in favor of taking the \$55,000 from the ERF given the balance.

Ms. Plourd noted that she had the same question about the ERF. She has been thinking about how the past couple years the budget has had relatively low increases and now they are seeing a bump in a difficult year. There is still a 10% unemployment rate in Tolland so if they have money in the ERF that can help alleviate some of the general fund tax burden, she would like to see that approval on the agenda. Ms. Plourd commented that the budget looks good. She asked if they could reapply for the ESSER Fund. Dr. Willett responded that he doubts there will be an ESSER III.

Dr. Willett asked the Board for direction. If it supports the approach presented this evening, he will start working on the revising the document. If the Board would like him to do something else, he asked that the members let him know now for the next meeting.

Ms. Plourd invited input from the members about their feelings on the budget.

Ms. Shaikh commented that the budget appears logical and she appreciates that it takes this in year into consideration. Coronavirus has affected many families and she is happy he is providing supports for children. The increase is logical, and she is in support of it.

Ms. Besaw commented that she believes it is a good budget. She expressed that she is a little concerned about the level of the increase given the many people out of work and businesses that have failed. That said, over the last several years with small increases, if amortized it may reach 1%. There have been contractual increases that need to be covered as well as a reduction in the number of students, so it is a balancing act. Supporting the students is the most important thing and Ms. Besaw added that she likes the addition of the chief operating officer position and is comfortable with the budget.

Mr. Renduchintala commented that he is pleased, and the budget moves the school forward. He added that they are starting to keep up with the cost of living and when averaged over the last several budget cycles, he does not believe it is 1%. He added that he does not see any bloat, and everything requested has been logically explained and helps students. Thus, he is comfortable with the budget.

Ms. Philbin commented that she is in favor of funding the proper support from the administrative level to student materials. She added that the budget has not been funded properly over the past several years and they are digging out of a hole. In order to continue to support the schools and students, they need to fund and support the educators. She added that it helps increase property values and make Tolland a destination for families by having a strong school system and with that comes funding.

Ms. Philbin added that she is excited about the chief operating officer position as well as the counselor and social worker positions.

Mr. Marie commented that he is comfortable with the budget but shares concerns about the size of the increase. That said, he believes everything being requested is justified and he can defend it at a joint BOE/Town Council meeting. He looks forward to seeing the revised document with the changes on Wednesday.

Ms. Griffin commented that she is in support of the budget. It addresses the concerns about the effects of COVID and learning loss. The district is moving forward with one-to-one technology and the budget includes many positives with online subscriptions, technology, and software which are important in moving to one-to-one technology. She is in support of the chief operating officer position, the budget, and presenting it to the Council.

Ms. Plourd commented that she supports the budget. A lot of innovation was put in as well as hard work on the part of the Board to understand it. She added that her caveat is that she will only vote "yes" if it is for a 5-day school week. Dr. Willett responded that he is hoping for a return to some higher level of normalcy next year and believes this is in everyone's thoughts although he does not have a crystal ball.

C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mary Rose Dubarek, 37 Ryan Road, expressed thanks.

Liz Costa, 54 Josiah Lane, expressed thanks and commented that she hopes the Board will fully support the budget. She added that she still questions whether the ESSER Funds should be used in the way they are being used. She believes they are better off using them long term but she knows Dr. Willett has a plan. Ms. Costa added that she heard from a parent today about the benefits of the lighthouse and other projects and that it is apparent that they contribute to the good of the town. She added that she hopes they will continue to support the social worker and other positions in the future.

Colleen Yudichak, 12 Blueberry Hill Road, commented that the Board has worked hard, and it is a fair budget to put forth. She is pleased to hear many Board members say that they can get behind the budget and defend it when they meet with the Town Council.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Marie motioned to adjourn the meeting 7:46 p.m.

Mr. Renduchintala seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi
Clerk

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

ZOOM Meeting

REGULAR MEETING – February 10, 2021

Members Present: Ashley Lundgren, Chair; Christina Plourd, Vice Chair; Tony Holt, Secretary; Renie Besaw, Christine Griffin, Madhu Renduchintala, Jacob Marie, Dana Philbin, Sophia Shaikh

Members Absent:

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools

- A. **CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
Ms. Lundgren called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- B. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – no changes**
- C. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES - none**
- D. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none**
- E. **CORRESPONDENCE**
 - E-mail – from the State Representative with information on ESSER II funding
 - E-mail – requesting a February Zoom meeting to discuss racism and the experiences of citizens
 - E-mail - articulating concern over the proposed school schedule
 - E-mail - observations on the last meeting
 - E-mail – thanking the Board for steps to address mask wearing; writer supports the proposed budget
 - E-mail – included a video as a reminder of the big picture
 - E-mail – urging the vaccinations of local educators
 - E-mail - asking about the minutes from recent meetings
- F. **POINTS OF INFORMATION - none**
- G. **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT – Alexandra Costa & Simar Grewal**
 - Seniors will be wearing their special senior shirts the 1st Friday of every month
 - Mr. Poland is having meetings with seniors to talk about safe ways to have end-of-year activities
 - February 25th – possible meeting to talk with parents about what they think will be safe for end-of-year activities such as prom
 - NHS – raising money at THS Valentine's Day activities to donate supplies to local hospitals
 - Student Council – continuing to decorate THS to hopefully keep up spirits; decorations were just switched to a Valentine's Day
- H. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**
 - H.1 **Monthly Financial Report**
Dr. Willett reviewed attachment H.1.

The attached January 2021 financial report shows an available balance of \$1,041,746 or 2.60% of the BOE's current budget.

Dr. Willett highlighted areas including the following:

- Salaries – under budget; pandemic has resulted in a situation where they were unable to fill all staff positions the entire span of the year;
- Substitutes – under budget; will likely be absorbed by other things as the year progresses; some contracted services will be needed for items such as SLPs; will be seen on the Contractor Services lines
- Overtime Expenses – cannot be encumbered; expenses are being incurred for items such as cleaning
- Stipends – over budget; pay to play has been reduced from \$200 to \$100 per person; often does not come into closer balance until those dollars are collected
- FICA/MED/Soc Sec – under budget; expects this will remain under budget
- Retirement/Course Reimbursement/Unemployment – under budget; needs review; increase in unemployment expenses; people are doing degree work since they are home during the pandemic; expectation that this line will be impacted
- Legal/Audit/Tech Services – under budget; district is negotiating this year; expectation that expenses will be incurred
- Repairs/Maintenance/Custodial – continue to be drawn upon; many expenses are cyclical; increase due to material and supply costs
- Student Transportation – over budget; mostly due to out-of-district student transportation
- Energy Expenses – transferred to the town as part of UISF agreement
- Textbooks – expect funds to be incurred fairly soon
- Instructional supplies/Miscellaneous Supplies/General Supplies – under budget; expect expenses to continue to be incurred
- New Instructional Equipment – over budget; ERF funds will backfill

Ms. Besaw inquired about stipends. Since some items have been suspended, would the stipends still be paid out? Dr. Willett responded that most things they pay people to do are still in effect. He cited the example of CIAC which still ran sports. Middle school sports are not running but they never absorbed too much. High school sports have the greatest impact on stipends for pay to play.

H.2 FY 2022 BOE Budget (provided and presented in the meeting)

Dr. Willett explained that if adopted this evening, the budget will be shared with the town tomorrow and posted to the website.

The Board of Education Budget (BOEB) up for potential adoption, has a few modifications from the Superintendent's Proposed Budget (SPB).

Dr. Willett reviewed the modifications which include the following:

- Reduction from 3.59% to 3.19% - due to reductions including in Line 730 of approximately \$55K
- Introduction

- Information about the impacts of the pandemic including mental health needs based on information from the National Alliance on Mental Illness and how they relate to resources that will be needed
- Chief Personnel Officer – formerly discussed as a chief operating officer; addition of \$40K; reductions between the SPB and the BOEB include the counseling and social worker positions; these 2 positions were transferred to the grants side under ESSER II fund including Medicare (1.45%), and Line 730 reduction (\$55,631) for a total of \$199,201; difference: overall reduction of \$159,190 reduces the budget request from \$1,435,189 or a 3.19% increase
- Position Transition – 1.0 FTE Financial Assistant becomes 1.0 FTE Human Resources Generalist
- Changes to FTEs – net add is 3.5; other 2 positions go from the operating budget to the grants

Mr. Renduchintala asked about the 2 positions funded by the ESSER II funds and if next year they will need to be included in the budget. Dr. Willett responded that they would need to be included. The hope is that they will be able to balance the 2 new positions with other positions that may be retiring or resigning as they get to the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Marie thanked Dr. Willett and staff for crafting a document with the Board that meets the goals. The budget will help the schools rebuild and there is prudent use of the ESSER funds and perhaps the ERF. He looks forward to presenting the budget to the Town Council.

Ms. Plourd motioned to move item H.2. to item K.2 for action.

Mr. Renduchintala seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

- Curriculum – discussions included: differences between curriculum director/assistant superintendent/chief operating officer; gaps in curriculum and post-pandemic goals; reporting aggregated performance data; lighthouse project presentation
- Negotiations – none
- Policy - met on February 3rd; discussions included a mask/face covering policy as requested by the Board, Policy 4120
- Communications - discussion on policy tabled until all members could be in attendance
- Town Council – Council voted on the Honeywell settlement and directed the town to go move forward on this
- Birch Grove Building Committee – reminder to Board members to sign up for the walk-through which was rescheduled; change orders were reviewed; tech package discussion
- Finance and Facilities – will meet later this month

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ms. Lundgren commented that she is happy to be back. She thanked everyone for keeping her up to date and taking the time to ensure she was up to par on everything. Ms. Lundgren thanked the community for all the messages and texts.

K. BOARD ACTION

K.1 BOE Birch Grove Technology Approval

Dr. Willett explained that this is similar to what the Board has seen previously in the FF&E package.

Ms. Murray explained that the specs were developed similarly to those of FF&E. When finalized, the price came down and is now \$20K over budget. Once approved by the Board, the Architect will bring it to the state for review. The state will either provide feedback for changes or an approval. Once completed, the package is priced in two parts. One is off the state bid list and the other will be put out to bid. Once final pricing is available for the entire technology package, the Birch Grove Building Committee will make the final purchasing decisions. Ms. Murray noted that a substantial portion of the package are essential items while others are wish list items. The latter items are important and would impact students and staff in a positive way. They include additional charging carts, hearing assistance items, and weatherproofing for outdoor wireless access points.

Ms. Philbin noted that the team that put together the package worked closely with Dr. Willett, Mr. Sztaba, and Mr. Swanson. She thanked the entire team.

Ms. Murray added that this is the final phase packet for the building project. The project is running on time, on schedule, and on budget.

Ms. Philbin motioned to approve the final Birch Grove Primary School Phase 5 Technology Plans and Project Manuals, as prepared for bidding and dated January 29, 2021, including the professional cost estimate of \$674,849.33 which is within the \$46 Million total project cost, for the State Office of School Construction Grants and Review Project Number 142-0083N. This motion authorizes the Chair of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools to sign State Forms SCG-042: Request for Review of Final Plans.

Mr. Marie seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

K.2. FY 2022 BOE Budget

Mr. Marie motioned to accept and approve the Board of Education Budget as presented in the February 10, 2021 BOE meeting and authorize the Superintendent to present it to the Town manager as the BOE adopted budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

Mr. Renduchintala seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

*A roll call vote was taken.
Motion passed unanimously.*

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Karen Moran, 50 Merlot Way, commented that the lighthouse concept should have been part of leading the Board's conversation about the budget and not after the fact. She does not believe it needed to be a large presentation but as an overall vision for the district, it is important as part of strategic planning and budgeting toward progress and improvement. Ms. Moran added that she looks forward to hearing about this but believes it would have better served the Board to hear it before its budget process. Further, Ms. Moran would like to know how the Board will support and advocate for the budget with the Town Council at the joint meeting.

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION

- Tolland Town Council Minutes – January 26, 2021
 - Mr. Renduchintala explained that based on comments made by Board members, they are excited to defend this budget. The members have asked good questions, received feedback, and have a good understanding of what is being asked and why. He personally looks forward to defending the budget and believes it is a good document.
 - Mr. Marie commented that he wishes they could have discussed the lighthouse projects earlier, but it has been a crazy year. They have had some good, initial conversations in the Curriculum Committee and hopefully they can make some real progress this year.
 - Ms. Shaikh commented that she is excited to support and defend the budget. She believes the constituents have reached out to the Board countless times with regards to concerns about COVID and the ramifications it has had on students in the district. This budget addresses a lot of those concerns. Ms. Shaikh does not see any reason why, hopefully, the Town Council will not accept it. It addresses what is happening currently in the district.

N. FUTURE

- School rounds/tours (briefings/tours/debriefings)
- Superintendent's Monthly Report – addition of data points on performance
- Culturally responsive education/culture/climate

O. NEW BUSINESS – none

P. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Marie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:49PM.
Ms. Plourd seconded the motion.
A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi
Clerk

SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND

ITEM: Regulation 4120 Electronic Devices (first read)

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

FOR BOE MEETING: February 24, 2021

ITEM SUMMARY:

Replacing existing with the following language:

POLICY REGARDING EMPLOYEE USE OF THE DISTRICT'S COMPUTER SYSTEMS AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Computers, computer networks, electronic devices, Internet access, and e-mail are effective and important technological resources. The Tolland Board of Education (the "Board") has installed computers and a computer network, including Internet access and an e-mail system, on Board premises and may provide other electronic devices that can access the network such as wireless and/or portable electronic hand-held equipment that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture and recording, sound recording, information transmitting and/or receiving, storing, etc. (including, but not limited to, personal laptops, Smartphones, network access devices, Kindles, Nooks, cellular telephones, radios, personal cassette players, CD players, iPads or other tablet computers, walkie-talkies, Blackberries, personal data assistants, iPhones, Androids and other electronic signaling devices). The Board's computers, computer networks, electronic devices, Internet access, and e-mail are referred to collectively as "the computer systems" and are provided in order to enhance both the educational opportunities for our students and the business operations of the district.

These computer systems are business and educational tools. As such, they are made available to Board employees for business and education-related uses. The Administration shall develop regulations setting forth procedures to be used by the Administration in an effort to ensure that such computer systems are used for appropriate business and education-related purposes.

In accordance with applicable laws and the Administrative Regulations associated with this Policy, the system administrator and others managing the computer systems may access email or monitor activity on the computer system or electronic devices accessing the computer systems at any time and for any reason or no reason. Typical examples include when there is reason to suspect inappropriate conduct or there is a problem with the computer systems needing correction. Further, the system administrator and others managing the computer systems can access or monitor activity on the systems despite the use of passwords by individual users, and can bypass such passwords. In addition, review of emails, messages or information stored on the computer systems, which can be forensically retrieved, includes those messages and/or electronic data sent, posted and/or retrieved using social networking sites, including but not limited to, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Incidental personal use of the computer systems may be permitted solely for the purpose of e-mail transmissions and access to the Internet on a limited, occasional basis. Such incidental personal

use of the computer systems, however, is subject to all rules, including monitoring of all such use, as the Superintendent may establish through regulation. Moreover, any such incidental personal use shall not interfere in any manner with work responsibilities.

Users should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of the computer system or other electronic devices that access the computer system. Use of the computer system represents an employee's acknowledgement that the employee has read and understands this policy and any applicable regulations in their entirety, including the provisions regarding monitoring and review of computer activity.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-40x
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-48d
Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-182b; 53a-183; 53a-250

Electronic Communication Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2520

ADOPTED: _____

REVISED: _____

CURRENT POLICY TO BE REPLACED:

***TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Tolland, Connecticut***

BOARD POLICY

REGARDING: Notice Regarding Electronic Monitoring

Number: 4120

Personnel

Approved: 2/28/01

In accordance with the provisions of Public Act 98-142, the Board of Education hereby gives notice to all its employees of the potential use of electronic monitoring in its workplace. While the Board may not actually engage in the use of electronic monitoring, it reserves the right to do so as the Board and/or the Administration deem appropriate in their discretion, consistent with the provisions set forth in this Notice.

"Electronic monitoring," as defined by Public Act 98-142, means the collection of information on the Board's premises concerning employees' activities or communications, by any means other than direct observation of the employees. Electronic monitoring includes the use of a computer, telephone, wire, radio, camera, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical systems. The law does not cover the collection of information (A) for security purposes in any common areas of the Board's premises which are open to the public, or (B) which is prohibited under other state or federal law.

The following specific types of electronic monitoring may be used by the Board in its workplaces:

- *Monitoring of e-mail and other components of the Board's computer systems for compliance with the Board's policies and regulations concerning use of such systems.*
- *Video and/or audio surveillance within school buildings (other than in restrooms, locker rooms, lounges and other areas designed for the health or personal comfort of employees or for the safeguarding of their possessions), on school grounds and on school buses and other vehicles providing transportation to students and/or employees of the school system.*
- *Monitoring of employee usage of the school district's telephone systems.*

The law also provides that, where electronic monitoring may produce evidence of misconduct, the Board may use electronic monitoring without any prior notice when the Board has reasonable grounds to believe employees are engaged in conduct that (i) violates the law, (ii) violates the legal rights of the Board or other employees, or (iii) creates a hostile work environment.

Questions about electronic monitoring in the workplace should be directed to the Superintendent.

Legal References:

*Connecticut General Statutes:
Section 31-48b
Section 31-48d]*

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

NA

BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:

Model policy utilized (S&G)

BOE ACTION DESIRED:

First read.

Proposed motion: Motion to approve the changes, modifications, and updates to the Policy Regarding Employee Use of the District's Computer Systems and Electronic Communications

SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:

Regulation 4120

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS 4120
REGARDING EMPLOYEE USE OF THE DISTRICT'S COMPUTER SYSTEMS AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Introduction

Computers, computer networks, electronic devices, Internet access, and electronic mail are effective and important technological resources. The Tolland Board of Education has installed computers and a computer network, including Internet access and an e-mail system, on Tolland Board premises and may provide electronic devices that can access the system, such as personal laptops, Smartphones, I-Pads or other tablet computers, I-Phones, Androids or other mobile or handheld electronic devices, to enhance the educational and business operations of the district. In these regulations, the computers, computer network, electronic devices, Internet access and e-mail system are referred to collectively as "the computer systems."

These computer systems are business and educational tools. As such, they are being made available to employees of the district for district-related educational and business purposes. *All users of the computer systems must restrict themselves to appropriate district-related educational and business purposes.* Incidental personal use of the computer systems may be permitted solely for the purpose of e-mail transmissions and similar communications, including access to the Internet on a limited, occasional basis. Such incidental personal use of the computer systems is subject to all rules, including monitoring of all such use, set out in these regulations. Moreover, any such incidental personal use shall not interfere in any manner with work responsibilities.

These computer systems are expensive to install, own and maintain. Unfortunately, these computer systems can be misused in a variety of ways, some of which are innocent and others deliberate. Therefore, in order to maximize the benefits of these technologies to the district, our employees and all our students, this regulation shall govern *all* use of these computer systems.

Monitoring

It is important for all users of these computer systems to understand that the Tolland Board of Education, as the owner of the computer systems, reserves the right to monitor the use of the computer systems to ensure that they are being used in accordance with these regulations. The Tolland Board of Education intends to monitor in a limited fashion, but will do so as needed to ensure that the systems are being used appropriately for district-related educational and business purposes and to maximize utilization of the systems for such business and educational purposes. The Superintendent reserves the right to eliminate personal use of the district's computer systems by any or all employees at any time.

The system administrator and others managing the computer systems may access email or monitor activity on the computer system or electronic devices accessing the computer systems at any time and for any reason or no reason. Typical examples include when there is reason to suspect inappropriate conduct or there is a problem with the computer systems

needing correction. Further, the system administrator and others managing the computer systems can access or monitor activity on the systems despite the use of passwords by individual users, and can bypass such passwords. In addition, review of emails, messages or information stored on the computer systems, which can be forensically retrieved, includes those messages and/or electronic data sent, posted and/or retrieved using social networking sites, including, but not limited to, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Notwithstanding the above and in accordance with state law, the Tolland Board may not: (1) request or require that an employee provide the Tolland Board with a user name and password, password or any other authentication means for accessing a personal online account; (2) request or require that an employee authenticate or access a personal online account in the presence of a Tolland Board representative; or (3) require that an employee invite a supervisor employed by the Tolland Board or accept an invitation from a supervisor employed by the Tolland Board to join a group affiliated with any personal online account of the employee. However, the Tolland Board may request or require that an employee provide the Tolland Board with a user name and password, password or any other authentication means for accessing (1) any account or service provided by Tolland Board or by virtue of the employee's employment relationship with the Tolland Board or that the employee uses for the Tolland Board's business purposes, or (2) any electronic communications device supplied or paid for, in whole or in part, by the Tolland Board.

In accordance with applicable law, the Tolland Board maintains the right to require an employee to allow the Tolland Board to access his or her personal online account, without disclosing the user name and password, password or other authentication means for accessing such personal online account, for the purpose of:

- (A) Conducting an investigation for the purpose of ensuring compliance with applicable state or federal laws, regulatory requirements or prohibitions against work-related employee misconduct based on the receipt of specific information about activity on an employee's personal online account; or
- (B) Conducting an investigation based on the receipt of specific information about an employee's unauthorized transfer of the Tolland Board's proprietary information, confidential information or financial data to or from a personal online account operated by an employee or other source.

For purposes of these Administrative Regulations, "personal online account" means any online account that is used by an employee exclusively for personal purposes and unrelated to any business purpose of the Tolland Board, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, social media and retail-based Internet web sites. "Personal online account" does not include any account created, maintained, used or accessed by an employee for a business purpose of the Tolland Board.

Why Monitor?

The computer systems are expensive for the Tolland Board to install, operate and maintain. For that reason alone it is necessary to prevent misuse of the computer systems.

However, there are other equally important reasons why the Tolland Board intends to monitor the use of these computer systems, reasons that support its efforts to maintain a comfortable and pleasant work environment for all employees.

These computer systems can be used for improper, and even illegal, purposes. Experience by other operators of such computer systems has shown that they can be used for such wrongful purposes as sexual harassment, intimidation of co-workers, threatening of co-workers, breaches of confidentiality, copyright infringement and the like.

Monitoring will also allow the Tolland Board to continually reassess the utility of the computer systems, and whenever appropriate, make such changes to the computer systems as it deems fit. Thus, the Tolland Board monitoring should serve to increase the value of the system to the district on an ongoing basis.

Privacy Issues

Employees must understand that the Tolland Board has reserved the right to conduct monitoring of these computer systems and can do so *despite* the assignment to individual employees of passwords for system security. Any password systems implemented by the district are designed solely to provide system security from unauthorized users, not to provide privacy to the individual system user.

The system's security aspects, message delete function and personal passwords can be bypassed for monitoring purposes.

Therefore, employees must be aware that they should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of these computer systems. This provision applies to any and all uses of the district's computer systems and electronic devices that access same, including any incidental personal use permitted in accordance with these regulations.

Use of the computer system represents an employee's acknowledgement that the employee has read and understands these regulations and any applicable policy in their entirety, including the provisions regarding monitoring and review of computer activity.

Prohibited Uses

Inappropriate use of district computer systems is expressly prohibited, including, but not limited to, the following:

- ◆ Sending any form of solicitation not directly related to the business of the Tolland Board of Education;
- ◆ Sending any form of slanderous, harassing, threatening, or intimidating message, at any time, to any person (such communications *may* also be a *crime*);
- ◆ Gaining or seeking to gain unauthorized access to computer systems;

- ◆ Downloading or modifying computer software of the district in violation of the district's licensure agreement(s) and/or without authorization from supervisory personnel;
- ◆ Sending any message that breaches the Tolland Board of Education's confidentiality requirements, including the confidentiality rights of students;
- ◆ Sending any copyrighted material over the system;
- ◆ Sending messages for any purpose prohibited by law;
- ◆ Transmission or receipt of inappropriate e-mail communications or accessing inappropriate information on the Internet, including vulgar, lewd or obscene words or pictures;
- ◆ Using computer systems for any purposes, or in any manner, other than those permitted under these regulations;
- ◆ Using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube in a manner that violates the Tolland Board's Social Networking policy.

[If the Tolland Board does not have a formal social networking policy, the last bullet may be revised as follows:

- ◆ **Using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube in a manner that disrupts or undermines the effective operation of the school district; is used to engage in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate communications; creates a hostile work environment; breaches confidentiality obligations of school district employees; or violates the law, Tolland Board policies and/or the other school rules and regulations.]**

In addition, if a particular behavior or activity is generally prohibited by law and/or Tolland Board of Education policy, use of these computer systems for the purpose of carrying out such activity and/or behavior is also prohibited.

Electronic Communications

The Tolland Board expects that all employees will comply with all applicable Tolland Board policies and standards of professional conduct when engaging in any form of electronic communication, including texting, using the district's computer system, or through the use of any electronic device or mobile device owned, leased, or used by the Tolland Board. As with any form of communication, the Tolland Board expects district personnel to exercise caution and appropriate judgment when using electronic communications with students, colleagues and other individuals in the context of fulfilling an employee's job-related responsibilities, including when engaging in remote teaching or use of a digital teaching platform.

Disciplinary Action

Misuse of these computer systems will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Because no two situations are identical, the Tolland Board reserves the right to determine the appropriate discipline for any particular set of circumstances.

Complaints of Problems or Misuse

Anyone who is aware of problems with or misuse of these computer systems, or has a question regarding the appropriate use of the computer systems, should report this to his or her supervisor or to the Superintendent of Schools.

Most importantly, the Tolland Board urges *any* employee who receives *any* harassing, threatening, intimidating or other improper message through the computer systems to report this immediately. It is the Tolland Board's policy that no employee should be required to tolerate such treatment, regardless of the identity of the sender of the message. *Please report these events!*

Implementation

This regulation is effective as of __/__/__.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-40x

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-48d

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-182; 53a-183; 53a-250

Electronic Communication Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2520

NOTICE REGARDING ELECTRONIC MONITORING

[For Posting]

In accordance with the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes Section 31-48d, the Tolland Board of Education hereby gives notice to all its employees of the potential use of electronic monitoring in its workplace. While the Tolland Board may not actually engage in the use of electronic monitoring, it reserves the right to do so as the Tolland Board and/or the Administration deem appropriate in their discretion, consistent with the provisions set forth in this Notice.

“Electronic monitoring,” as defined by Connecticut General Statutes Section 31-48d, means the collection of information on the Tolland Board’s premises concerning employees’ activities or communications, by any means other than direct observation of the employees. Electronic monitoring includes the use of a computer, telephone, wire, radio, camera, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical systems. The law does not cover the collection of information (A) for security purposes in any common areas of the Tolland Board’s premises which are open to the public, or (B) which is prohibited under other state or federal law.

The following specific types of electronic monitoring may be used by the Tolland Board in its workplaces: **[modify as appropriate for the school district in question]**

- Monitoring of e-mail and other components of the Tolland Board’s computer systems, including monitoring of electronic devices such as PDAs, Smartphones, and mobile or handheld devices that access the computer systems, for compliance with the Tolland Board’s policies and regulations concerning use of such systems.
- Video and/or audio surveillance within school buildings (other than in restrooms, locker rooms, lounges and other areas designed for the health or personal comfort of employees or for the safeguarding of their possessions), on school grounds and on school buses and other vehicles providing transportation to students and/or employees of the school system.
- Monitoring of employee usage of the school district’s telephone systems.
- Monitoring of employees when employees are engaging in remote teaching or use of a digital teaching platform.

The law also provides that, where electronic monitoring may produce evidence of misconduct, the Tolland Board may use electronic monitoring without any prior notice when the Tolland Board has reasonable grounds to believe employees are engaged in conduct that (i)

violates the law, (ii) violates the legal rights of the Tolland Board or other employees, or (iii) creates a hostile work environment.

Questions about electronic monitoring in the workplace should be directed to the Superintendent.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes:

Section 31-48b

Section 31-48d

MINUTES

TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL ZOOM REMOTE MEETING February 9, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Jones, Vice Chair; Brenda Falusi, Cassandra Forsythe, Lou Luba, John Reagan, Kurt Schenher

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tammy Nuccio, Chair

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael Rosen, Town Manager; Lisa Hancock, Director, Finance & Records/Treasurer; John Littell, Fire Chief/Director of Public Safety; Rob Miller, District Director of Health, EHHD

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Jones called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Observed
4. **PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS:** none
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:** none
- 7a. **REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE TO THE COUNCIL**
Tourism – Ms. Falusi commented that the Central Region Tourism District met yesterday. Discussions included items for the upcoming year including brochures to support small businesses. Currently, Tolland is not listed in the brochures, but Ms. Falusi believes it will be in the future and cited examples of listed businesses. Ms. Falusi noted that they are waiting on the budget.

Mr. Jones noted that he is running the meeting this evening due to the Chair not being in attendance.

- 7b. **REPORTS OF TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS**
 - Planning and Zoning Commission – Ms. Falusi provided an update of last night's meeting.
 - Blight Committee – no meeting
 - Land Acquisition – no meeting
 - Sustainable CT – Ms. Falusi provided an update.
 - Conservation Commission – Mr. Jones provided an update of the January 28th meeting.
 - Birch Grove Building Committee – Mr. Luba provided an update.
 - Board of Education – Mr. Luba provided an update.
 - Agriculture Commission – Mr. Schenher noted the meeting cancelled due to the weather.
 - Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – Mr. Schenher noted the meeting was cancelled due to quorum issues.
 - Economic Development Commission – Mr. Schenher provided an update.
8. **NEW BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**
 - 8.1 Consideration and approval of a lease renewal for 52 Tolland Green (Jail Museum) between the Town of Tolland and the Tolland Historical Society for the period April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2031 and the setting of a Public Hearing thereon for February 23, 2021.
Mr. Rosen provided background information.

Mr. Rosen explained that on this evening's agenda are 3 lease renewals for 3 different Tolland historic buildings for consideration to set public hearings at the next meeting. Due to the Charter, any lease or real property decisions need to be done by public hearing.

The lease of the Jail Museum is up for renewal on March 31, 2021 and the Tolland Historical Society has requested an extension of 10 years. The agreement has not changed. Mr. Rosen noted that all 3 agreements, (as noted in items 8.1, 8.2, 8.3) were reviewed by the Town Attorney and are extensions of the respective current agreements for the next 10 years. He noted that 10 years is the standard agreement length for agreements such as these.

Mr. Rosen requested that the Council set the 3 public hearings and he will ask the respective proprietors to attend to address any specific questions about the properties.

Ms. Falusi motioned:

MOTION that the following resolution be introduced and set down for a public hearing on February 23, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. remotely via video conference:

DRAFT RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to sign the lease renewal for 52 Tolland Green between the Town of Tolland and the Tolland Historical Society for April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2031.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.2 Consideration and approval of a lease renewal for 749 Tolland Stage Road (Military Museum) between the Town of Tolland and the Tolland Historical Society for the period April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2031 and the setting of a Public Hearing thereon for February 23, 2021. Mr. Rosen reviewed the background information.

The original lease for this property ran from April 2011 through March 2021. Per the agreement, they needed to notify the town 60 days in advance if they were interested in renewing and have done so. This is a non-profit organization and the lease amount is \$1.00/year.

Ms. Falusi motioned:

MOTION that the following resolution be introduced and set down for a public hearing on February 23, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. remotely via video conference:

DRAFT RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to sign the lease renewal for 749 Tolland Stage Road between the Town of Tolland and the Tolland Historical Society for April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2031.

Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.3 Consideration and approval of a lease renewal for 22 Tolland Green (Arts of Tolland) between the Town of Tolland and the Arts of Tolland, Inc. for the period April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2031 and the setting of a Public Hearing thereon for February 23, 2021.

Mr. Rosen provided background information.

The Arts of Tolland building is leased to Arts of Tolland Incorporated. The lease amount is \$1.00/year for a 10-year time span. The current agreement expires March 31, 2021. The extension would be for 10 years through 2031.

Mr. Rosen explained that on the next agenda, for all 3 properties, there will be an extension document that the Council will authorize him to sign after the public hearing assuming the Council moves forward with the extension. He noted that the Town Attorney has reviewed the existing lease agreements and the Council will vote on a separate side letter extending the lease for another 10 years.

Ms. Falusi motioned:

MOTION that the following resolution be introduced and set down for a public hearing on February 23, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. remotely via video conference:

DRAFT RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to sign the lease renewal for 22 Tolland Green between the Town of Tolland and the Arts of Tolland, Inc. for April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2031.

Mr. Reagan seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

8.4 Discussion and consideration of a statement against racism by the Tolland Town Council.

Ms. Falusi motioned to move item 9.1 ahead of this item in case someone who is helping with item 9.1 needs to get off so the Council can be cognizant of the staff's time.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Rosen provided background information. At the last meeting, there were 2 proclamation requests. One was specific to the Town Council declaring racism as a public health emergency in a proclamation. Both proclamations, including the one noted, were removed from the agenda as they were believed to not be the right format to do something of such magnitude. Mr. Rosen explained that at the last meeting it was suggested that a better way to address this would be through some sort of statement, perhaps a joint statement between the Council and some of the other elected boards. There is no supporting documentation because the Town Manager did not receive a draft to share. Mr. Rosen noted that Mr. Jones e-mailed him an hour ago with a draft. Mr. Rosen explained that this item is for a discussion among the Council members to discuss what such a statement may look like.

Mr. Jones commented that his conversations between himself and the Chair were individual conversations regarding the potential for a discussion. He is sharing the draft not as emotion but as a stepping off point for a broad, respectful, and cordial conversation among counselors.

Mr. Jones read the following which was also shared by Mr. Rosen on the screen:

Prejudice, in all forms, is a blight that only serves to harm all of society. As elected representatives of the Town of Tolland, we condemn racism, bigotry and discrimination in any form, and look to promote authentic dialogues about race, diversity, and inclusion. As a Council, we endeavor not only to continuously evaluate our own policies and practices in order to ensure they live up to these values and standards, but seek to educate all citizens and our municipal employees regarding racism as well as all forms of prejudice and the negative impacts they have upon our community. It is through open dialogue, humility and respect, that we can learn from each other and from the community where we live and work, and work together to appropriately address these issues facing our town, state and nation.

Ms. Falusi commented that when the Council does a statement, she would like to ensure it includes information about systemic, structural, and institutional racism. She explained that these forms of racism, while the words and/or phrases are used interchangeably at times, have nuances. They could be intentional or unintentional. Ms. Falusi commented that at the last meeting they spoke a lot about intentional racism and residents were brave and shared their personal experiences both during public comments and via e-mail. Ms. Falusi added that she received numerous phone calls and e-mails about instances people have experienced or witnessed. She does not believe they have examined where structural racism exists in Tolland such as its impact on planning and zoning, the housing market, and how things done in the community that one would not think of as having structural racism would impact other communities in the state and how they can be good neighbors and citizens and address systemic, structural, or institutional types of racism. Ms. Falusi commented that she is pleased they are considering talking with other boards and commissions and including them in this. She added that Sustainable CT can send an equity coach at no charge to facilitate a meeting with the Council for up to 4 hours.

Mr. Reagan commented that the statement has language about open discussion. He would like to see stronger language around having an open dialogue, the ability to have an open dialogue, and possibly a mechanism for that to take place. After hearing what they did at the last meeting, and seeing some of the e-mails, he believes there needs to be some sort of mechanism. He would like this to be considered and have language drafted around it. Further, Mr. Reagan spoke in regard to education and that it would be great if there are people who can be brought in and it can be offered to the community. He fully supports education and educational opportunities.

Mr. Schenher commented that he likes the draft statement. He would like it to be shared with other elected officials as well but noted he is unsure if they would make their own statement or would sign on to the one drafted by the Council. Mr. Schenher added that before adding language regarding systemic racism, he would like more of a definition. He explained that he is unclear on what it entails. He added that he heard at the last meeting that putting out garbage is systemically racist and he needs more clarification on this before he could support putting it in a statement.

Ms. York commented that they need education and she would like to know on what the Council is focusing. If they are declaring a public health crisis for Tolland, are they going to discuss just Tolland or racism as a whole? She noted that she is not saying that they are mutually exclusive but if they are declaring racism as a public health crisis in town, should they not be hearing more from the members of the town? If so, how would that be facilitated, moderated, and how will everyone in the community be given equal access? Ms. York explained that education is key and they do a lot at the institution where she works on this topic. If they are saying that racism is a public health crisis in Tolland, they should have specific topics and discussions regarding the town and how it is approached. The right moderator/facilitator needs to be found and it needs to be advertised to the community. She added that everyone should be aware of what others are experiencing in terms of racism and bullying and they should work as a community to be more kind, more helpful, and ensure people are not being excluded because of the color of their skin, gender, or their sex, religious, or political affiliation. Ms. York explained that all of these things do need to be taken into consideration. They all need to be inclusive as a town and she asked if they are talking about the town, state, country, and/or the world. She added that they are not mutually exclusive, but they need to hone in on this a bit more.

Mr. Luba commented that the statement is a great start. He explained that he too has concerns regarding the definitions of systemic and structural racism. There are a lot of nebulous theories about them. One thing they can do in addressing structural racism is focus on what the town has control over. As discussed previously and when people presented their issues regarding declaring racism as a public health emergency, a lot of the e-mails received were about things that the town cannot control. The town cannot control healthcare or transportation but, one thing they can control is the issue of taxes. Mr. Luba explained that this would go to directly to the issue of structural racism because if taxes are not controlled within the town, it is a de facto redlining. By increasing taxes, people who may be able to move into town, and create a more diverse town and younger town, would not be able to move in and he believes this is a significant issue and is directly under the town's control. There are opportunities for tourism and businesses but if the taxes are too high, then the families and businesses cannot move to town. He explained that this the one way they can present something within the town's control to combat the structural racism that has been presented. They repeatedly hear about the median income of \$122K as the reason why the town should be able to raise taxes to pay for various programs

but, by doing this, they are keeping the town from being affordable. Mr. Luba commented that if they are going to address the issue of structural racism, they need to make the town affordable and they have control over the budget. Thus, he would like this to be addressed in the statement. They need to look at what they can control including the town code and budget.

Mr. Jones commented that addressing diversity in housing stock when speaking of the value of homes, accessibility, and affordability, and the redlining policy and its intents and purposes are important to recognize but, he is unsure how affordable the Santini proposal would be but would provide opportunities for advocacy on behalf of the town with the state to increase and improve the wastewater systems and sewer lines.

Ms. Falusi commented that systemic racism, which is also called structural racism or institutional racism, are the systems, structures, or institutions that have procedures or processes that disadvantage people of color. She added that it is a complex interaction of culture, policy, and institutions that holds in place the outcomes missing in lives. She commented that it is more than taxes and a lot can be seen in Tolland as unintentional. She noted that 95% of Tolland has single family detached housing and 2-acre lot sizes which is not affordable or workforce housing. They cannot welcome people who need affordable or workforce housing. Ms. Falusi commented that lowering taxes will not bring the ability to have people move into affordable housing. The reason for the 2-acre lots is because there are not services such as gas lines, water, and sewer to certain areas of town. There are wells and they need to think of the environment. She added that a series of events led them to where they are now and not having affordable housing. The POCD recognizes that there is not enough affordable housing and they are working on addressing the systemic racism in this area. She believes there are other areas where they could address systemic, structural, or institutional racism by using the dedication of the workforce and creativity of people to focus on these items.

Mr. Jones commented that while income inequality crosses certain racial and ethnic barriers, it has been pervasively predominantly people of color that have not had the opportunity for advancement in terms of education, opportunities for professional careers as well as job hiring and job advancement that would afford them into communities such as Tolland's. Such opportunities and having more inclusive hiring practices which he believes are practices and policies in Tolland, would allow the community have more opportunities for diversity.

Mr. Luba commented that many things brought up are things that Tolland cannot control such as gas lines. They cannot force a gas company to run lines to town but can work with them through the POCD to develop certain things to attract them, but it is outside of the town's control. The town has the 2-acre requirement because of the wells and septic systems. Mr. Luba agrees they need to work on this but should use the POCD and what the town can to its advantage. Until utilities are brought into town, he does not believe reducing lot size requirements will be a reality. While he agrees it is something they need to look at, they need to look at what the town can control.

Mr. Jones commented that he believes there is an area where they may be able to advocate with state legislators and the government in terms of encouraging gas line or water main extensions. He asked about state assistance and the history of when Big Y built in Tolland. When some of the larger businesses moved in, it required the town to take a multi-year tax abatement and gradually regain revenues at a time when it was profitable and comfortable for businesses. He noted that they are not voting on a statement this evening.

Mr. Luba commented that the draft is a good starting point and if other Council members want to add to items to the statement, they can be sent to Mr. Jones, Ms. Nuccio, and Mr. Rosen and sent to the Council for review. This can then be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Rosen will send the draft presented to the Council and use it at the next meeting. He asked that if individual councilors have revisions or suggestions that they e-mail them to him. He will compile them and present a revised document at the next meeting. In regard to extending the gas line, it was looked at when a development was proposed behind Papa T's. At that time, Eversource did a cost benefit analysis and determined that there would not be sufficient businesses and residents. That said, they have re-engaged them given the Santini interest, and Eversource is doing another cost benefit analysis to determine if it would be worthwhile.

Mr. Luba motioned to instruct Town Manager Rosen to move forward with developing a draft statement against racism to be presented and discussed at the next meeting.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

8.5 Appointments to vacancies on various municipal boards/commissions. - none

9. **OLD BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**

9.1 Discussion and consideration of approval of a settlement offer from the Honeywell Corporation.

Mr. Rosen provided background information on this item.

Mr. Rosen explained that Honeywell and the town are engaged in a contract whereby the Honeywell Corporation does measurement verifications for the town about energy savings and efficiency. It is a joint agreement among the Board of Education (BOE), the town, and Honeywell. The BOE has the lion's share of what is supported by the agreement. Mr. Rosen explained that several legal authorities have looked at the proposed settlement agreement which has been updated to reflect a couple changes since the previous iteration. The changes are mainly in item 2.1 with language regarding guarantees and warranties. The attorneys noted were involved as well as the town's bond counsel. The finalized wording is in the current iteration. Information on it being subject to FOIA because it is a public settlement as well as attorneys' fees are included as well. Mr. Rosen recommended that the Council act on this item this evening and noted that in exchange for the settlement agreement, the town would receive the sum of \$200,000. This settlement would be deposited into the Utility Internal Service Fund account until such time when it will be appropriated most likely for capital projects related to energy savings as discussed at a previous meeting. The motion authorizes the Town Manager to finalize, negotiate, and sign the settlement agreement between the town and the Honeywell Corporation.

Mr. Jones extended thanks to the Town Manager's Office, Ms. Hancock, and all of the attorneys who have worked on this. He is pleased they are reaching a fairly solid consensus that is beneficial for everyone and the settlement will be used for more energy efficiency savings for the community as well as reducing its reliance on green houses. Hopefully, this will move the town forward with a cleaner environment for the community. Mr. Jones thanked Ms. Shaikh for bringing up item 2.1 regarding the warranties.

Ms. Falusi motioned:

MOTION that the Tolland Town Council approve the following resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves as follows:

Consideration of a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to negotiate and sign a settlement agreement between the Town of Tolland and the Honeywell Corporation, and to deposit said settlement into the Utility Internal Service Fund (UISF) until such further time when it will be appropriated.

Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Rosen noted that Mr. Miller was in attendance and invited him to provide information.

Mr. Miller commented that he will review 3 topics: data indicators, testing, and information regarding the vaccine rollout.

Regarding the data indicators, as of February of 4th, in Tolland there is a 34% drop in the prevalence of cases within a two-week period. This aligns with what has been a downward trend statewide over the past 3 weeks. Regarding hospitalizations in the state, it has been under 1,000 for some time and the positivity rate is less than 4%. Tolland's last positivity rate was 4.5% as of February 4th. While the town is still in level red, it is in good company with the rest of the state and it will be some time before larger and moderate towns are no longer level red. The indicator threshold is 15 cases per 100K and Tolland is at 36.6 as of the last update.

Regarding testing, they are partnering with the town of Vernon and alternating testing sites between the high schools. The schedule has been extended through February and will do the same into March. They are administering 200-350 tests on any given day

Regarding the vaccine campaign, the EHHD has been holding 3 to 5 clinics per week and administering 400-500 doses per week. In total, approximately 2,300 people have been vaccinated: 2,000 first doses and 300 second doses. In terms of vaccine coverage for the senior population, Tolland is doing well relative to other towns at 76.5% as of February 3rd. The state is at 43.2%. In terms of the rollout, there is a soft launch for those 65 and older on Thursday and Mr. Miller's office received authorization that if there are any available appointments in their upcoming clinics leading up to the formal launch, they are permitted to use the vaccines for frontline municipal workers and teachers who are 65+. Mr. Miller noted that most of their clinics in February are nearly booked and more clinics will be posted. Next, they will look to see about vaccinating frontline municipal workers and teachers. He noted that EHHD is one of many providers. Others include pharmacies, ECHN, Trinity, and Hartford Healthcare and there have been discussions about mass vaccination sites. He noted that the limiting resource right now is the vaccine but the state has the capacity to do 150,000/week.

Mr. Rosen noted that outside of the state systems, Tolland has partnered with Vernon to avail themselves to vaccine clinics administered in the Town of Vernon. Tolland residents who qualify can get vaccinated in Vernon as part of these clinics. The phone number for the call center is 860-896-4568. This number is staffed Monday – Wednesday, 8:30AM to 4:30PM, Thursdays 8:30AM to 7PM, and Fridays 8:30AM to 1:00PM. The call center is staffed by volunteers of neighboring towns and live people answer the calls.

Mr. Schenher asked about people are reacting to the second doses. Mr. Miller responded that based on his small, non-random sampling of colleagues and staff, it is not uncommon for someone to develop flu-like symptoms within a 24-hour period after the second dose. They are often out of work for a day. He has not heard of any examples which have been much more extreme than that within his sphere.

Ms. Falusi asked about those who cannot drive or have mobility issues and if Dial-A-Ride or others are able to provide rides to the vaccine clinics. Mr. Miller responded that there are a number of options, ideas, and resources including Uber and Lyft and many communities have senior vans.

Mr. Jones asked if the EHHD is using the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines. Mr. Miller responded that they are administering Moderna (2 dose series, 28 days apart). Mr. Jones asked if this was due to storage. Mr. Miller responded that this was part of thinking when developing the allocation plan. Mr. Jones asked about state aid for the vaccines. Mr. Miller responded that the money is being spent quickly as they have had to hire 3 full time positions along with a part time position. While the ELC grant is \$380K, it is over a 3.5 year span. That said, they received about \$30K from the initial crisis funding which has been spent and have secured about \$100K through the Corona Relief Fund (CRF). The challenge is that they are not set up for third party billing and they are hoping funding will be provided. Mr. Jones asked about the volunteer corps and if there is still a need for sign ups. Mr. Miller responded that they have a Medical Reserve Corps fully engaged in a number of roles including contact tracing and staffing clinics. They are still recruiting new members. Those interested can go to CT Responds! <https://ctresponds.ct.gov/> and register as a volunteer. To be a member of the Eastern Highlands unit, when one identifies an affiliated organization they should identify Eastern Highlands MRC. Mr. Jones asked if the medial reserve corps is in an earlier cohort for vaccinations due to their consistent risk of exposure. Mr. Miller responded that anyone working the clinic floor is within a health care setting and is considered health care personnel interface 1A. Thus, everyone is offered vaccination if they work the clinic as a volunteer. Mr. Jones asked about Tolland's high rate of vaccinations among those 75+ and congregate and home

settings or senior housing areas. Mr. Miller responded that he believes it does include those residents but not age-restricted apartment complexes. Mr. Jones gave kudos to Chief Littell and those running the EOC. Everyone has been professional and courteous. Chief Littell has been very forward thinking in terms of trying to get people within all the communities that work with public safety to reach out to those in need who may have issues such as registering online for vaccinations.

- Mr. Rosen noted that the Capital Budget Public Hearing is Thursday, February 11th at 7:00 PM on Zoom.

11. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

11.1 January 26, 2021 Remote Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Luba motioned to adopt the minutes as laid out in 11.1.

Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ms. Falusi commented that 2 e-mails were received about what was in the minutes. One was about making changes to something reported in the minutes and the other came in at 6:20PM just before the Council went into executive session. Ms. Falusi commented that she has not had a chance to compare what was stated in the video with the minutes and that it was brought to her attention that she may have misspoken. She would like to be able to review this. Ms. Falusi commented that it was regarding the correspondence. She explained that what she wrote down does not line up with the correspondence received and there may have been a mistake. If she did make a mistake, she would like an opportunity to make a statement and fix the minutes because she does not want the minutes to reflect something that was misrepresented.

A brief discussion took place. Mr. Rosen explained that the draft minutes have been published but there is a statute that involves motions and voting in a timely fashion. He believes this can be tabled and voted on at the next meeting.

Mr. Luba commented that given the statement, the issue is in regard to the correspondence and when Ms. Falusi was reviewing it at the last meeting. If this is what she is referring to, then he withdraws his motion to be addressed at a later time subject to Mr. Schenher's agreement.

Mr. Schenher was in agreement.

Mr. Schenher motioned to table 11.1 to the next meeting.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

12. CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL

- E-mail – resident was looking forward to the discussion about racism; says it is difficult but important work that they will be doing
- E-mails (2) – about the electric school bus that has been deployed in the State of Connecticut and looking forward to possibly Tolland getting some electric school buses at some point in the future
- Resident – looks forward to the discussion on racism and shared experiences that her son had witnessed about racism
- E-mail – provided information on racism being a problem in Tolland
- E-mail – outlined health equity solutions in the 177 municipalities that have made declarations
- E-mail – resident was moved by the bravery and honesty of the residents and asked the Council to take action (in regard to the discussion on racism)
- E-mail - support for declaring racism as a public health emergency
- Statements (2) – violence and racism are both bad; they both exist in Tolland to some extent
- E-mail – request for a Zoom meeting in February to discuss racism in Tolland
- Request to find a way to fly the Pride Flag for the month of June

- Comment – the intent of the Charter and how it was to enable volunteer opportunities to as many residents as possible to be able to serve on boards and commissions
- E-mail – decarbonization of the U.S. energy system
- E-mail – disappointed on the lack of discussion on racism and asked for a special meeting
- E-mail – note some changes for some comments made by one of the Councilors in the minutes
- E-mail – commenting that Ms. Falusi had misspoken about their letter; *Ms. Falusi apologized and noted that she has not had a chance to review it; racism is a real issue and something that should not be allowed in Tolland*

Ms. Falusi requested that when the Council looks at the correspondence next time, that it look at the history of what the Council has done with correspondence. She believes that at the beginning of this 2-year session they were putting copies of all of the correspondence received into meeting minutes. She believes the file got too big and they started doing an overview of what was received.

13. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Mr. Jones spoke in regard to the upcoming public hearing on the capital budget. Mr. Rosen noted that the document will be on the financial page and copies will be available in the library for physical inspection.

Mr. Jones noted that a joint meeting between the Council and the Board of Education will be held on February 22nd regarding the budget.

Mr. Jones noted that during the meeting for the capital budget hearing, the Board of Education will submit its budget to the Town Manager. On March 3rd, the Town Manager will submit the budget to the Council. The public hearing will be advertised on March 4th and budget discussions will be held on March 10th, 11th, and 16th.

Mr. Jones welcomed the following new town staff: Karen Vaiciulis, Assessor's Office; Suzanne Litwin, assisting in covering the Town Clerk's Office; Timothy Seitz, Public Safety Officer.

Mr. Jones commented that he appreciated everyone's conversations in item 8.4 and the cordialness. He hopes they can move forward in a way that is respectful of all people in the community as well as each other despite differences, political affiliations, religion, race, gender identity, and sexual orientation. He explained they have difficult conversations ahead and it is important to wade into the difficult conversations and uncomfortable situations because it brings about more honest dialogue and hopefully meaningful resolutions and action going forward.

14. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILPERSONS

- Mr. Schenher commented that in upcoming meetings he would like to have a discussion about going back to the hybrid meeting model that was discussed prior to the New Year. He would like to discuss having at least some in-person meetings if it is feasible. With the vaccine rolling out and cases getting lower, he believes it is time to have that discussion.
- Mr. Luba commented that he too would like to review how correspondence to the Council is handled. After the last meeting, he was approached by several residents about their concerns regarding letters that were submitted where they felt their position was not fully presented; moreover, after the meeting there was a lot of discussion about what was discussed. Mr. Luba explained that he was approached by other residents, including some of the BIPOC community within Tolland about the discussion. They expressed their concerns about expressing what they felt. They had issues with racism being declared a public health emergency. They stated that they know racism is an issue but they did not encounter it as much as what is being presented. They were concerned about possible repercussions if this was put in writing, an e-mail, or called in. Mr. Luba commented that he believes that some of their fears were well-founded. The next day there were social media posts about the discussions and a call by some on the social media about doxxing who had written in and comments about some who had written in about being business owners. He added that there was a comment that someone wanted to "hold them responsible" for their statements. Mr. Luba explained that this has a chilling effect. These people contacted him again voicing concerns. Mr. Luba added that the most egregious thing is that they were not only looking at doxxing them but also requested assistance from former elected representatives as well as current representatives. Mr. Luba's biggest concern is that this even occurred and the request for information about people that are speaking out simply because they do not hold a viewpoint that some of the other speakers hold. To hold them responsible and make an issue of it, only

reinforces an issue he spoke of previously about the cancel culture. It has a chilling effect that prevents people from being willing to call in and voice their opinions because of this concern. If they disagree with what others are putting forward during meetings, they are "held responsible" for it by said members and this dissuades open discussion which what is needed. Mr. Luba explained that there cannot be open and honest disagreement where people can feel able to voice opposing opinions or other experiences that differ from those speaking. As a Town Council, this should be condemned. By looking to dox someone because they disagree will only serve to harm the discussion and create a further divide.

- Ms. Falusi commented that she believes they enter a slippery slope when they start allowing discussions that happen on social media to enter inside this forum and allow them to be reactionary. From her understanding, correspondence is FOIA-able. If someone writes to the Council, anyone can request to read the information and previously it was copied and put into the minutes. Any comments that people make during public discussion can be seen in the minutes, on video, or live. Ms. Falusi explained that when they start talking about doxxing or residents deciding where they want to spend their money, or what businesses they want to support, those are personal choices that they are welcome to make. She does not believe social media should be a driving force for how the Council conducts business or creates policy. She added that they should be welcoming and inviting for all so residents can write in and speak in public forums letting them know that when they share it is public knowledge that anyone can view at any time.
- Mr. Jones commented on returning to a hybrid meeting format. They have had a discussion about reviewing the remote participation policy particularly since when the last survey was done, the Commission on Persons with Disabilities had not been established. He believes that in term of equity and access, they would be a germane group that could provide input on what is beneficial, equitable, and fair for all residents. He would like to utilize a survey and ask where boards and commissions stand on this. Mr. Jones added that being in-person is somewhat ideal in terms of sharing information and the ability for people to convey themselves.

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

Liz Costa, 54 Josiah Lane, commented that as seen in nearly every state including CT during the public pandemic, racism has negatively impacted and exacerbated health inequities among historically marginalized communities. Without systemic and structural level change, health inequities will continue to exist and the overall health of the nation will suffer. She added that the Council members should be committed to optimal health for all of the community and work to ensure that all people within the community reach their full potential. By declaring racism an urgent public health crisis, it is a step toward advancing equity and access to public health and ensuring that citizens can reach their full potential while creating pathways for truth, healing, and reconciliation. Ms. Costa commented that in the proclamation, that was not discussed, it sought the town to acknowledge that although the primary drivers of racial health inequity are systemic and structural racism, an unconscious bias within the town, and in healthcare delivery, have potentially caused and continued to cause harm to marginalized communities and society as a whole during the pandemic. She added that in the Council's statement, it should recognize racism in its systemic, cultural, interpersonal, and other forms as a serious threat to public health, the advancement of health equity, and appropriate medical care. Further, she added that it should support the development of policy and a committee to combat racism and its effects in all parts of town government, education, business, and access to town services. Ms. Costa added that it should also encourage governments, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations in town to increase funding for support of a committee to end damages related to racism and how to prevent or repair them. She explained that it should encourage the development, implementation, and evaluation of every board, commission, and the public education system and fund changes to ensure the town approves the programs and curriculum that engender greater understanding of the causes, influences, and effects of systemic, cultural, and institutional interpersonal racism as well as how to prevent and ameliorate the health effects of racism.

Mary Rose Duberek, 37 Ryan Road, thanked the Council for discussing racism. She commented that Mr. Luba spoke about taxes and the need to lower taxes so people can afford to live in town. There was mention of affordable housing and then the median household income of almost \$120K. She explained that Mr. Luba, assuming people of color cannot afford to live in Tolland, is racism.

Marilee Beebe, 90 Rhodes Road, commented that she is following up on the process alluded to by Ms. Falusi. Ms. Beebe requested that the proposed proclamation language that was submitted for consideration under items 4.1 or 4.2 of the January 26th meeting, along with all related correspondence, be appended to the minutes and/or posted to the website for public inspection as required by the Freedom of Information Act. She explained that this includes e-mail

sent to/from individual Council members. She added that it does not appear that the Council has been, and is not currently, in compliance with FOIA requirements. Ms. Beebe requested that all data related to the conduct of the public's business be available, as required by this law, both before and after the Town Council meetings. She explained that this does not mean that correspondence has to be read verbatim into the record; it can be summarized. She noted that all such correspondence and documentation of the public's business is required to be available for public review. This has been standard practice for the land use boards even during contentious issues and she pointed to the most current Planning & Zoning packet and minutes for reference as to how this is done.

Kenneth Trice, 53 Doe Run, commented that his observations are pretty glaring. He explained that this is a hard discussion. To talk about racism is tough, hard, and makes people's emotions go to places they do not want to go to. He added that this is ok, it is human. Mr. Trice commented that when he first saw the intent, noting that he credits the Council for trying to make a statement, the first word "smacked" him in the face. He explained that racism and prejudice are two different definitions. He suggested that perhaps the Council does not know what to do, and this is ok. He asked that they find people to help them. Mr. Trice explained that is it like the Indian commissioner making a statement to the Indians when he has never been on the reservation and does not know how Indians think. He commented that this is difficult for everyone because it is new and a conversation people do not want to talk about for many reasons. He added that fear is number one. He suggested that the Council find people to help. Regarding the statement on housing by Ms. Duberek, he commented that it is true. Mr. Trice explained that when he and his wife moved to Tolland, a statement was made regarding how they could afford to do so.

Annelise Cyr, 334 Columbine Road, commented that it was a struggle and a painful conversation last week to hear. Many people discredited and denied racism. The conversation has turned to that it does exist in town but she believes they heard different things in last week's conversation but it was enlightening to hear. She summarized a quote by Malcolm X that one cannot blame people for not understanding what they have not experienced. Ms. Cyr explained that she is trying to be open-minded and understand that many people have not experienced, seen, or witnessed racism. That said, millions of people around the world have cried out for help asking for change and for the white race to join and help them. She commented that it one's duty to do this. Last week's conversation was not about declaring racism as a public health crisis; it was conversation and debate as to whether racism is real. Ms. Cyr explained that that should not have been the conversation and hopes they progress and talk more. The conversations are difficult and everyone is learning. She hopes people come to the conversations with open hearts, open minds, and more compassion than in the past. She commented that people are talking at each other and not with each other. She hopes they come together and are action and goal oriented and come from a place of love with a goal of unity.

16. **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Falusi motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 PM

Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,



Lisa Pascuzzi
Town Council Clerk

Town Council Chair

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL
ZOOM REMOTE MEETING
FEBRUARY 9, 2021 – 6:30 PM

Council Members Present: Steven Jones, Kurt Schenher, Cassandra York, John Reagan, Brenda Falusi, Lou Luba

Council Members Absent: Tammy Nuccio

- 1) **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM by Vice Chair, Steven Jones.
- 2) **Executive Session (and 3):**

Brenda Falusi motioned, seconded by John Reagan, to go into Executive Session and invited Michael Rosen, Michael Wilkinson, Lisa Hancock and Richard Conti with a unanimous vote of 6-0-0. The Executive Session concluded at 6:57 PM.
- 4) **Adjournment:** Kurt Schenher motioned, seconded by Brenda Falusi, to adjourn at 6:57 PM with a unanimous vote of 6-0-0.

Steven Jones, Vice Chair

MINUTES

TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL CAPITAL BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING ZOOM REMOTE SPECIAL MEETING February 11, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tammy Nuccio, Chair; Steve Jones, Vice Chair; Cassandra Forsythe, Lou Luba, John Reagan, Kurt Schenher

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brenda Falusi

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael Rosen, Town Manager; Lisa Hancock, Director, Finance & Records/Treasurer; John Littell, Fire Chief/Director of Public Safety; Scott Lappen, Director, Public Works; Bruce Watt, Director, Recreation; Walter Willett, Superintendent; Peter Sztaba, Facilities Director, Tolland Public Schools; Mike Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services

1. Call to Order: Ms. Nuccio called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Public Hearing Item

6.1 Consideration of the Proposed 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan

Mr. Rosen noted that this evening's presentation is available on the town's website: Home> Finance Department> 2021-2022 Budget Information>February 11, 2021 Capital Budget Presentation.

Mr. Rosen noted that a section regarding the Firehouse Capital Improvement Project has been added to the website: Home>Firehouse Capital Improvement Project. This is part of the public information effort regarding this specific project. It will require a standalone referendum.

Mr. Rosen reviewed the following presentation:

FY 2021 – 2022 through 2025 – 2026
Town Manager's Five Year Capital Plan
February 11, 2021

- Capital Budget
 - Assets – includes streets, parks, buildings, school facilities, large equipment, technology
- What Is A Capital Item?
 - Definition of Capital Projects
 - Characteristics
 - Life Expectancy – greater than 8 years
 - Cost – generally in excess of \$10,000
- Capital Budget Planning Process
- Types of Funding Methods
- Year 1 Capital Budget Summary, FY 2021/22
 - Department requests for year 1 by funding source
 - Overall impact to General Fund, Year 1: \$211,213
- FY21-22 Town of Vernon Water Pollution Control Plant Upgrade; Total Amount: \$218,542
- FY21-22: Significant Capital Projects Funded by the General Fund; Total Amount: \$211,213
 - Other Town Administration Projects
 - General Fund portion of WPCA, \$85,444
 - Replacement of Cargo Van #75, \$43,267
 - Renovate THS Special Education Area, \$15,000
 - Depreciation amount for replacement of light duty vehicles
 - Town, \$39,854 + \$14,862 Public Works
 - BOE, \$12,786
- FY 21-22: Significant Capital Projects Funded By Other Sources
 - Parks and Recreation

- New Playground at Crandall Park, \$40,000 (CNRE)
 - Public Facilities
 - Replacement of Jail Museum Room (LOCIP Grant \$44,500)
 - Firehouse Improvement Project (Referendum scheduled for May 4, 2021; \$5M)
 - BOE Paving and Sidewalk Project (TMS/TIS)
 - Non-referendum debt of \$140,000
- Station 140 Renderings
- Station 340 and 440 Renderings
- FY 21-22 Significant Capital Projects Funded by Other Sources
 - Capital Equipment: \$461,469
 - Replacement of Front End Loader - \$275,000
 - Replacement of Truck #53 – Snow Removal Operations - \$73,783
 - Replacement of Service Truck 450 – Mechanics - \$57,246
 - 72" Zero Turn Exmark Mowers (quantity 4) - \$55,440
 - Public Safety (Ambulance Reserve)
 - Replacement of Ambulance 640 - \$285,000
 - Public Works
 - Tree Trimming - \$70,000 TAR Grant
 - Streets and Roads
 - Drainage construction and design - \$102,735, (Town Aid Road Grant)
 - Pavement Management - \$236,500 (TAR and LOCIP Grants)
 - Road Improvements - \$800,000 (Part of \$5M bond funding approval from November 2018)
 - Cross Farms Rear Parking Lot - \$151,800 (Non-referendum debt)
- Significant Projects in Years 2-5 By All Sources (Year 2)
 - Town Administration
 - Contribution to Town of Vernon Water Pollution Control Plant Facility Plan as defined by Inter-Municipal agreement with Vernon (\$164,906) - \$134,906 from General Fund and \$30,000 from account balance
 - Fire Chief Chevy Tahoe - \$70,000 General Fund (previously funded by Fire Association)
 - Board of Education (non-referendum debt)
 - District Wide Wireless Access Point Upgrades - \$130,800
 - TIS Hobart High Temp Conveyor Dishwasher & Sink System - \$44,539
 - District Wide Artillery Lift - \$80,000
 - THS Oven/Steamer Combo - \$44,839
 - TMS Track Re-Surface - \$140,000
 - Capital Equipment
 - Replacement of Parks Truck #38 - \$103,499 (non-referendum debt)
 - 16' Toro Mower - \$114,345 (non-referendum debt)
 - Replacement of Parks Truck #68 - \$84,700 (non-referendum debt)
 - Replacement of Highway Truck #10 - \$42,350 (general fund)
 - Purchase of New Remote Controlled Mower - \$54,750 (general fund)
 - Fire and Ambulance
 - Replacement of Ambulance 540 funded by the Ambulance Reserve Fund - \$280,000
 - Refurbishment of ET-240 funded by the Ambulance Fund - \$170,000
 - Refurbishment of ET-540 funded by non-referendum debt - \$750,000
 - Parks and Recreation (Recreation Fund)
 - Crack Repair/Resurface Tennis Courts on Old Cathole Road - \$67,124
 - Tree Trimming
 - Elimination of hazardous trees due to damage by insect infestation - \$70,000 funded by LOCIP grant
 - Public Facilities
 - Shingled Roof at Highway Garage - \$44,000 (general fund)
 - Pole Sheds for Highway Garage - \$88,000 from the LOCIP grant

- Drainage Construction and Design - \$91,913 from TAR grant
- Significant Projects in Years 2-5 By All Sources (Year 3)
 - Town Administration
 - Contribution to Town of Vernon Water Pollution Control Plant Facility Plan as defined by Inter-Municipal agreement with Vernon - \$164,906 (general fund)
 - Board of Education
 - TIS Modular Roof Replacement - \$45,000 (general fund)
 - Capital Equipment
 - Pick Up Truck #56 - \$42,350 (general fund)
 - Replacement of Truck #27 - \$198,000 (non-referendum debt)
 - Sweeper - \$275,000 (non-referendum debt)
 - Public Safety
 - Refurbish Tank 140 - \$85,000 (ambulance reserve fund)
 - Replace Engine Tank 340 - \$750,000 (non-referendum debt)
 - Public Facilities (LOCIP grant)
 - Emergency Generator for the Highway Garage - \$49,500
 - Retrofit Emergency Generator for Parks and Facilities Garage - \$16,500
 - Parks and Recreation (non-referendum debt)
 - Artificial Turf Replacement at Tolland High School - \$825,000
 - Public Works
 - Tree Trimming - \$70,000 (TAR grant)
 - Streets and Roads
 - Various road improvements - \$820,000 (November 2018 referendum bonds)
 - Various drainage construction - \$50,000 (TAR grant)
 - Pavement Management - \$268,913 (LOCIP & TAR grants)
- Significant Projects in Years 2-5 By All Sources (Year 4)
 - Town Administration
 - Contribution to Town of Vernon Water Pollution Control Plant Upgrade Facility Plan - \$164,906 (general fund)
 - Capital Equipment
 - Vac Con for the Highway Dept. to comply with Catch Basin Cleaning and the MS4 Program - \$450,000 (non-referendum debt)
 - Replacement of Highway Truck #64 - \$46,000 (general fund)
 - Public Safety
 - Refurbish Tank 440 - \$85,000 (ambulance reserve fund)
 - Replacement of Engine Tank 440 - \$760,000 (non-referendum debt)
 - Parks and Recreation (LOCIP Grant and Non-referendum Debt)
 - New Pickleball Courts at Heron Cove - \$173,250
 - Public Facilities (non-referendum debt)
 - Parks and Facilities Garage Upgrade - \$750,000
 - Public Works
 - Tree Trimming - \$70,000 (TAR grant)
 - Streets and Roads
 - Pavement Management - \$219,929 (TAR grant)
 - Road Improvements - \$790,000 (November 2018 referendum bond)
 - Various drainage construction - \$50,000 (TAR grant)
- Significant Projects in Years 2-5 By All Sources (Year 5)
 - Town Administration
 - Contribution to Town of Vernon Water Pollution Control Plant Upgrade Facility Plan - \$164,906 (general fund)
 - Board of Education (non-referendum debt)
 - Various renovations (TIS Nurse's area, TMS Café Tables, THS Track) - \$439,000
 - Capital Equipment (non-referendum debt)
 - Used Road Grader - \$90,000
 - Replacement of Truck #21 - \$225,000

- Replacement of Roadside Mower - \$185,000
- Public Safety
 - Replacement of Truck 240 - \$1,350,000 (non-referendum debt)
 - Replacement of PPE - \$50,000 (ambulance reserve)
- Arts Building Roof Replacement - \$65,000 (LOCIP grant)
- Streets & Roads
 - Pavement Management - \$318,735 (TAR & LOCIP grants)
 - Consideration of a Bond Referendum for \$5M in November 2024 for road improvements
- Equipment Aging Schedule for Units Assigned to Highway Division
- Equipment Aging Schedule for Units Assigned to Parks & Facilities Division
- Past 5 Year General Fund Capital Contributions
- FY21-22 Capital Plan by Program Area
- Tolland Debt Management Plan Schedule 2021-22 through 2025-26
- Budget Schedule: Important Upcoming Dates
- Referendum Schedule: Firehouse Project

The Chair invited the Councilors to ask questions.

Mr. Luba commented on the \$5M bonding for the Fire Department renovations and rebuilding. He asked since this is due to crumbling foundation issues if there is any funding that may be available to offset some of the costs. Mr. Luba asked if these firehouses will be sufficient. He would rather build to the future once and have it work for a period of time versus to a specification where in 5-10 years it will be outdated. He noted that while he does not want to spend extra money, if they are going to spend the money, he wants it to be spent in the right way. Mr. Rosen responded that they are looking at potential state aid through the bonding bill to help pay for the \$5M if it goes through legislation. He does not know if they can go to their insurer but they are reaching out to learn if state aid is available. Further, they are working with bond counsel and would create the language as part of the resolution that should the town be able to receive outside money, whether from the state or other sources, that the debt would be reduced by amount. They will not borrow if the funds are not needed. Through referendum, they will ask the town to authorize borrowing up to \$5M but it would be reduced by any amount the town may receive through other means. Ms. Nuccio added that she has submitted legislation to learn if there may be bonding for fire departments from the state. In regard to what is needed, Chief Littell explained how this was determined. Consultants were hired and he noted that it is dependent on the town's growth and code changes. He expects that call volume may increase and the town may see a 24/7 operation which would mean they would need personnel coverage and there are not adequate facilities to legally keep staff overnight. Ideally, part of the plans will address some of the code requirements and new standards. He noted that Station 140 has a crumbling foundation and they are limited for space at the other stations. Chief Littell explained that the least expensive option is via Morton Buildings. In terms of adequate space, he is grateful to get what he can to safeguard the community's assets.

Mr. Schenher asked about lawn mowers. Mr. Lappen responded that the town has 4 zero-turn mowers that were all purchased at the same time; thus, they all should be replaced as they have approximately the same number of hours and are used on a daily basis. Mr. Schenher asked about their useful life. Mr. Lappen responded that it depends. The mowers were purchased in 2014 and have almost 1,700 hours.

Mr. Schenher asked about the Fire Department project. He commented that Stations 140 and 240 are the most used. He asked why they are looking to replace Station 440 which he understands is used more as a storage facility. Chief Littell explained that Stations 140 and 240 are the 2 main firehouses in the community. Chief Littell reviewed the history of a study that was done on Station 240 and the Training Center a couple of years ago. Currently, he believes they are in a holding pattern until someone buys the property and then the facilities would be relocated. He noted that recently, Station 440 has been more active. He noted that if a firehouse is closed, fire insurance will increase. Mr. Schenher asked what the useable life is for a Morton Building. Mr. Rosen responded that he believes it is 50 years. He added that if referendum passes, they would likely start with Station 140 so all the apparatus would not be offline.

Mr. Jones asked when the tennis courts on Old Cathole Road were last repaired/replaced. Mr. Watt responded that he believes it has been at least 10 years since they were resurfaced. Mr. Jones asked about the pickle ball court. Mr. Watt explained that it would go where the old ice rink is located – the rink does not hold water. Mr. Jones asked about the rear lot at Cross Farms and if it is an expansion project that creates greater accessibility to other fields. Mr. Lappen responded that it will allow for more parking and establish a traffic flow. Mr. Jones asked about tree removal and if a state forester assesses trees in town. Mr. Lappen responded that they go out on an annual basis for bids for tree removal. The contractor is a licensed arborist and the town has 2 tree wardens. Mr. Jones asked Dr. Willett about the wireless proposal and if would increase speed, strength, and stability. Dr. Willett responded that this is part of a 5-year plan for wireless access point upgrades. With all of the Chromebooks etc., they are heavily dependent on wireless access. Without it, the devices will not run or will do so in a clunky manner. Mr. Jones asked if the artillery lifts are for the school facilities' maintenance and repair. Mr. Sztaba explained that it will build in-house capacity to do more exterior projects. Over the last 3 years, they have sustained approximately \$18K in rental fees related to facade repairs at THS and Mr. Sztaba cited examples and noted that he intends to share the unit with Public Works. Dr. Willett added that there would be greater productivity and less wasted human hours. Mr. Jones asked why the THS artificial turf replacement is under Parks & Recreation. Dr. Willett responded that it has been in the turf & maintenance agreement and they are discussing where this falls. Overall, it has been a significant investment for the town and a community effort. It is a community field and resource.

Mr. Reagan asked about Other Town Administration Projects, General Fund Portion of WPCA, and if this is a result of the Vernon sewer projects. Mr. Rosen responded that it is for the Vernon sewer. In regard to the \$85,444, this is the 2021/22 general fund contribution. The difference between this and the \$218,542 is the contribution from the CNRE and the \$33,000 is from the available account balance. He explained that it is not being counted twice; it was only listed again to show it under the general fund portion. Mr. Reagan asked if there was a budget line item in the capital plan, approximately \$160K/year moving forward to cover the project. Mr. Rosen explained that this year the amount is \$218,542 because they are in a ramping up period. This year, they can use 3 different funding sources (general fund of \$85,444, CNRE of \$99,558, and available account balance of \$33,540). Going forward, the number is \$164,906 which will be absorbed by the general fund unless other funding is available. Next year is the last year they will be able to pull from the available account balance and it will be in the amount of approximately \$33,000. Mr. Reagan asked about the purpose of Cargo Van #75 (\$43,267). Mr. Lappen explained that it carries a variety of supplies and tools for changing lightbulbs, air filters, and other repairs. The new van will have more space inside and make it easier to find tools since one can stand up in it. Mr. Reagan asked about the condition of the current van. Mr. Lappen responded that it is a 2008 Ford van with a little over 90K miles. He added that typically they hire 3 summer staff to do landscape work. The intention is the van will be used to safely transport this staff. Mr. Reagan asked if the town has a lift. Mr. Lappen responded that they have a man lift that is used more for inside work. It does not have a telescoping or articulating feature. He added that it has been shared with the school district but does not work in some of the applications needed.

Ms. Forsythe commented that the town already owns a lift and why it was not being shared with the school district. Also, she asked how many sweepers they have and explained that they have 2 sweepers but still hire out for the work. Lastly, what happens to items when they are upgraded? Mr. Lappen explained they only have one sweeper and it is used only on an emergency basis. Additionally, they have a grader from the 1990s and a Vacall which is only used to clean catch basins etc. Money and time was spent re-welding the body and it has no virtually vacuum power so they contract out catch basin cleaning as they do with sweeping. Ms. Forsythe asked if the purchase of the sweeper is because the current one is not working. Mr. Lappen responded that it is only for emergencies, not for road projects. Ms. Forsythe asked if they could continue to use a contractor. Mr. Lappen explained that the MS4, the Municipal Storm & Sewer System, program requires that towns review catch basins on an annual basis and sweep the roads to prevent debris from going into catch basins. The money set aside for sweeping is not enough to cover the entire town. In terms of the used items, when they purchase new equipment they will have whoever is awarded the contract give a price on the used equipment. If it will not benefit the town and has value it is returned to the fleet until it can be traded in or it reaches its useful life at which time the Council declares it as surplus and will go out for bid. In regard to the lift, Ms. Forsythe commented that the town has a lift and the fire department has a bucket truck. She asked about the rationale. Dr. Willett explained that the kind the town has is not sufficient for what is needed. Mr. Sztaba explained that

the bucket truck has a 25-30' working height. The proposed lift has a 60-80' height. Further, he does not want to need to count on Chief Littell to put snow blowers to his ladder truck to get them on the roof of schools. It is not the intention of the ladder truck and does not have the weight rating. The primary use of the lift is to reduce response times and number of outside contractors as well as provide the ability to do more work and future projects in-house. Chief Littell added that anything operated off the ladder truck needs to be aerial certified.

Ms. Nuccio asked Dr. Willett about the \$140,000 paving. Dr. Willett responded that it is 2 projects - \$30K for TIS front entry sidewalk and \$110K for the First Student area at TMS. They have already set aside \$259K for the TMS paving project. The \$110K will ideally finish most of the work other than the access road in the back. The \$30K is to address the concrete at TIS.

Ms. Nuccio asked if any of the newer vehicles are being depreciated and commented that 10 new vehicles in one year is a hard pill to swallow. There are 10 this year, 7 next year, and 4 the year after. Mr. Rosen responded that they usually try to spread it out but right now many are coming due. Many trucks are at, or have exceeded their useful lives. Ms. Hancock clarified that the only vehicles that are depreciated are generally the vehicles for the fire marshal, the building inspector, the public works director, and the fire chief so when it comes time to replace them they have most of the money. They are also doing it for a few of the public works vehicles – the larger pickup truck. The rest of the vehicles are purchased either through the general fund if available or if large enough, via debt. She noted that there are 2 BOE vehicles that are depreciated as well. Ms. Hancock explained that at some point when debt starts falling off the books, one option would be to use some of that money to build a reserve so they can pay cash rather than issuing debt for larger pieces of equipment. Further, she would like everything to be on a depreciation schedule putting a little money away each year. That said right now financing is the only way they can do this. In the financial report, they will see certain depreciation but that is more on a GAAP basis for reporting. Ms. Nuccio asked if they could stagger the mower purchase over a couple of years. Mr. Lappen responded that if the Council wishes, they could do 2 this year and 2 the following year but when equipment gets old, good money is spent that will not be recouped. Ms. Nuccio explained that she is looking at it from the perspective of planning. Ten new pieces of equipment, between vehicles and equipment, in one year is a lot. Mr. Lappen responded that they have "kicked the can" down the road a long time and eventually it catches up. The front end loader is the frontline piece of equipment with a weight management system. It will get pushed down the line and the second oldest will replace a 2002 loader. He confirmed they have 3 loaders in total – one stays in the yard, another stays at THS for clearing the THS and TMS lots, and the third handles stored materials or is used at the old recycling center. Ms. Nuccio asked about the expected hour limit on the zero turns. Mr. Lappen responded that they have been surpassed and have 1,300 running hours and have been subjected to a variety of conditions. One cannot identify a number since age and conditions need to be taken into account. Ms. Nuccio asked about Truck #53 under Parks & Facilities. Mr. Lappen explained that it is a 2007 F-450, a small dump truck. The vehicles are multipurpose and most have plows on them. Ms. Nuccio asked about Parks Truck #38. Mr. Rosen noted that it is a 2004 Ford F-550 in Year 2 of the plan. Mr. Lappen explained it is a small, but heavier duty, dump truck. They are playing catch up with truck replacement on the Parks side. Ms. Nuccio asked about Truck #27. Mr. Lappen explained that it is one of the 6-wheel plow trucks with 86-87K miles and is in fair condition at best. It has been subjected to salt. The newer vehicles have an undercoating system and the new undercarriage washing system is keeping them much cleaner. Thus, repairs should be minimized. A brief discussion regarding what is being used on the roads took place. Ms. Nuccio asked about the \$114K mower, replacing the 2010 Toro, and its useful life. Mr. Lappen responded that this is the large wing mower with a 16' span. It is used in the larger open areas such as the athletic fields and the useful life depends on its exposure. Ms. Nuccio asked about the shingled roof on the highway garage. Mr. Lappen explained that part of the old garage still has a shingled roof that was not upgraded and needs to be addressed.

Ms. Nuccio asked about pickle ball and the ice skating rink. Mr. Watt explained that the ice rink no longer holds water. Over the summer, they would like to survey what amenities the town would like to see including the possibility of portable rinks.

Ms. Nuccio asked Dr. Willett about the dishwasher and oven equipment and if it is built into the food services budget. Dr. Willett explained that anything like this is large enough to be a capital expense. The food service

programs across the state, including in Tolland, are struggling. It is well-managed but this year is at a deficit and it will be a struggle to cover this over the next 2 or 3 years as well. Ms. Nuccio requested high level information on food services. She would like to pursue at the state level some of the monies that may be available. Mr. Sztaba noted that these are commercial units so whether they revamp the food service program or alter how it runs; they will still be school fixtures at TIS. Dr. Willett noted that they have no intention of outsourcing the food service program. Ms. Nuccio agreed that it does not make sense to outsource the program.

Ms. Nuccio asked Chief Littell if the Morton buildings (340 & 440) will fit on the existing footprints. Chief Littell responded that the engineer has looked at and flagged the property. Based on guidance from the engineer, they believe the buildings will fit on the footprints. A video tutorial is being done to provide a walk through and overview. Ms. Nuccio explained that as much as she understands the history and age of the firehouses, they will need to be very transparent as it will be a bit of a sell to get people in town to agree to replace 2 fire stations. Anything to educate the public will be beneficial given the \$5M cost for the 2 stations. Mr. Lappen explained that 3 years ago money was set aside to try to correct the roof at 340 but they collectively decided it was not worth putting a lot of money into the roof if there was going to be an opportunity for replacement. Thus, the wetlands were delineated; the septic tanks and leeching fields were added to the plans. The engineer determined that to bring 340 & 440 to code and make the necessary additions, it would cost more than razing and rebuilding. Ms. Nuccio asked Chief Littell if people stay at the stations overnight. Chief Littell responded that lately they do not due to COVID but normally they do have staff staying overnight during snow storms. The career staff is traditionally held over. If he had adequate space, he would stage DPW crews and the fire department at the 4 stations. He added that at some point someone will say they are sleeping in close proximity with a female or a male and there is not adequate spacing. Ms. Nuccio confirmed that during storms and disasters, they can have people at all 4 stations. Ms. Nuccio noted that during the last storm, they heard about Eversource having crews in Tolland and not having anywhere for them to sleep or stay. If there is capacity to stage utilities' people with the fire department emergency response teams, this will provide quicker service. Ms. Nuccio commented that for years the Fire Association has purchased the chief's truck but will not do so this year. She asked for history on this and why the fire chief and marshal's trucks have a 5-year life. Chief Littell noted that the Deputy Chief is driving a 2006 vehicle that may not pass a DOT inspection this year. It is a first responder vehicle and was purchased 5-6 years ago by the Corporation and has over 100K miles on it. The chief's vehicle has always been purchased by the Board of Directors of the Fire Department with funds raised by the phone book or town donations. As someone who holds 3 titles - Director of Public Safety, Fire Chief, and Emergency Management Director, the Corporation has always bought the Chief's vehicle. The town has never supplied the public safety supervisor or director a vehicle. Funds and donations are dropping and they would like to see the town purchase the vehicles because the Chief is using it during the day Monday through Friday as the Public Safety Director. Mr. Ruest believes the town should supply the vehicle as it does for every other department head etc. The Chief noted that his vehicle is cycled down to the duty officers who share the vehicle. Deputy Chief Dojan explained that the Tolland Fire Department received payments in the past from the state for each response on I-84. These funds were used to purchase the chief's car; however, the department no longer receives such payments. This has put the burden on the Corporation, which was managing this with extra fundraising but the cost of vehicles has increased. Chief Littell explained that they can buy off the state capital bid list and reviewed how the vehicles are cycled through the department.

Mr. Jones asked about the equipment aging schedule and how much of the equipment is 3+ years past recommended service. Mr. Rosen explained that he can work with Mr. Lappen and Chief Littell to portray the requested information. Mr. Jones commented that this may be a good way to convey to residents how they arrived at this point where 10 vehicles need to be replaced in one year. He would like better foresight and policy by this and future Councils. Mr. Lappen commented that last year they received a significant amount of money towards capital purchases but prior they only got \$120K. Mr. Rosen explained that the superintendent and department heads brought forward their capital budgets and what is being presented is what he believes are the true needs of the town after edits and discussions. This is Mr. Rosen's recommended capital budget. Mr. Jones commented that this is in line with the firehouse project and he is in favor of moving forward with it. He added that Councilors who support this should push it so it moves forward. Chief Littell clarified that in answer to Mr. Jones' question, it is 10 years on fire trucks and 5 years on reserve.

Mr. Luba asked if there is a depreciation table so that going forward, they can pace and find the most effective way to pay for items. Mr. Rosen explained that this could be on a numerical chart with the useful life of each asset as previously discussed. While it may be too late for this capital budget, it may be incorporated for next year. Mr. Luba explained that it would be information that could assist the Council and residents.

Mr. Jones asked about the cleaning of the fleet's undercarriages and where this is done. Chief Littell explained that the fleet goes to a commercial service for undercoating and prior to inspections the vehicles are sprayed. This has programmed the vehicles to last longer.

Chief Littell commented that the adopted 2006 Capital Facilities Plan included the animal control facility. This has not been included as a line item and the facility has passed its annual animal control inspections. He noted that this facility is being discussed with the Town Manager and others and that it may not pass inspection at some point in the future. Thus, it should be on the Council's radar. Ms. Nuccio noted that depending on the situation, it may be something to discuss next year.

Mr. Jones motioned to open the public hearing.

Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

Public comments - none

Mr. Jones motioned to close the public hearing.

Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

3. **ADJOURNMENT**


Mr. Jones motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 PM

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,



Lisa Pascuzzi
Town Council Clerk

Town Council Chair