

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  
March 24, 2021

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86358441213?pwd=dUJPbnVDV3BoZW1MT1ZJZ1F1K21XZz09>  
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=dUJPbnVDV3BoZW1MT1ZJZ1F1K21XZz09>

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- March 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 THS Senior Activities and Graduation (no enclosure)
- H.2 Budget (no enclosure)

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

K. BOARD ACTION

- K.1 State CO#3 for the Birch Grove Building Project

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2-minute limit)

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

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION

- March 9, 2021 Town Council Meeting Minutes
- March 10, 2021 Town Council Budget Meeting Minutes
- March 11, 2021 Town Council Budget Meeting Minutes
- March 16, 2021 Town Council Budget Meeting Minutes
- March 17, 2021 Town Council Budget Meeting Minutes

N. FUTURE

O. NEW BUSINESS

P. ADJOURNMENT

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
ZOOM Meeting

REGULAR MEETING – March 10, 2021

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

Members Absent: Tony Holt

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools

- A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE  
Ms. Lundgren called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – no changes
- C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
  - February 24, 2021  
*Mr. Marie motioned to approve the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.*  
*Ms. Plourd seconded the motion.*  
*Discussion: none*  
*A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.*
- D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none
- E. CORRESPONDENCE - none
- F. POINTS OF INFORMATION - none
- G. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT – Alexandra Costa & Simar Grewal
  - DECA Competition Results: 40 students competed, 25 received medals for being in the Top 6 and 19 of those 25 were in the Top 3 for their category meaning they qualified to go to the international competition
  - Senior Activities
    - Informational meeting for parents on March 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM
    - Class Night is scheduled for June 4<sup>th</sup>.
    - Class Day and Last Ride are scheduled for June 5<sup>th</sup>.
    - Graduation is set for June 18<sup>th</sup>.
  - THS students are selecting their courses for next year.
- H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
  - H.1 Monthly Financial Report  
The February 2021 Financial Report shows an available balance of \$1,121,167 or 2.80% of the BOE's current budget.  
  
Dr. Willett highlighted areas including the following:
    - Salaries – under budget; with COVID they have not hired all the people they normally would have; they are hiring additional custodians to be in compliance

with the cleaning necessary for health district's standards; remote learning assistant educators have been hired

- Substitutes – under budget; more permanent substitutes are being used
- Overtime Expenses – cannot be encumbered; under budget; it is likely that adjustments will need to be made due to cleaning guidelines
- Stipends – over budget; pay to play participation has been less; if there is a full spring sport season and schedule, they will charge the full amount for pay to play
- Health Insurance/Employee Benefits – under budget due to staffing changes and differentials
- Retirement/Course Reimbursement/Unemployment – under budget; course reimbursements are not paid until programs are completed
- 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; expenses are typically cyclical and not incurred until the end of the year
- Student Transportation – under budget; expected to level out
- Special Ed Tuitions – under budget
- Public Officers and State Troopers – under budget; will be drawn down as events take place this year
- Energy Expenses – transferred to the town as part of UISF agreement
- Textbooks – a math pilot will be completed soon and there will be an expenditure on texts fairly soon
- Instructional supplies/Miscellaneous Supplies/General Supplies – as expected
- New Instructional Equipment – over budget; ERF reimbursement is coming and may balance this line

Mr. Marie asked about Substitutes and if Dr. Willett expects there to be a deficit and if it is normal to have such a drop between January and February. Dr. Willett responded that it is difficult to predict. More substitutes are signing up right now but he believes there will be a balance. Mr. Marie inquired about General Supplies (600) and its drop. Dr. Willett responded that the line often starts slow and toward the end of the year supplies are needed.

Ms. Plourd asked about Professional Education Services (320) and the encumbrance. Dr. Willett responded that he would need to research this. He noted that they usually spend money on certain training programs and will receive the excess cost payment. He believes when the reimbursement is received the line will balance. Ms. Plourd asked if the FFC tracks the COVID-related expenses. Dr. Willett responded that they do and it is regularly discussed. They were allocated \$283K and a grant was received that dropped the amount to closer to \$200,000 but it is fluctuating. Ms. Griffin noted that this is on next week's agenda for the Committee.

## H.2 5 Day In Person Learning Plan/ COVID Update

Dr. Willett noted that he held a Community Workshop as well as a Faculty Forum. Multiple meetings are held each week and on Fridays culminate in meetings with many stakeholders. Dr. Willett explained that they are arriving at the 5 day in-person model.

Registration closes in about 5 days and the remote learning population is holding stable at around 300 students. The district will go to the 5 day in person model on March 29<sup>th</sup>. The process to arrive at the model included multiple stakeholders, constant consultation with the health district, taking into account contact tracing, and other considerations. The 5 day in person plan was laid out last week. According to the Pandemic Continuity of Learning Plan (PCLP) it needed to be presented to the community by March 3<sup>rd</sup> and all information was presented by March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Dr. Willett reviewed the Pandemic Education Options and Registration for Period 6 and the TPS 5 day in person information and Q&A documents.

The Pandemic Education Options and Registration for Period 6 describes the options for registration. These options included that starting on March 29<sup>th</sup>, the 4 day in person will roll to 5 day in person or one could be a remote learner. Students with exceptions may continue with those that have previously been granted. Dr. Willett reviewed the TPS 5 day in person information and Q&A document and noted that there will be a continuation of the early release days (Wednesdays). He noted that about 40 students changed from Remote to the upcoming 5 day in person option thus far. It is important that support for students is not sacrificed for any population and many dynamics need to be balanced. Dr. Willett noted that the district chose not to bring in remote only teaching staff and he reviewed the rationale. The district has kept the students in front of certified teachers who know their craft. Assistant educators will provide additional support and the model provides enough time for teachers to do what is needed to support all students. PPE must continue to be used as it does a good job of mitigating the spread of COVID. Dr. Willett noted that the district has had more in person time for students than many others in Connecticut and moving to 5 days was the most logical step.

Mr. Renduchintala asked if Dr. Willett envisions a scenario where they resume full days. Dr. Willett responded that he would like to see the district move to a point where there are full days with the exception of Wednesdays throughout the rest of this year. He explained that there is a lot of planning and meetings that are concentrated on the Wednesdays. Mr. Renduchintala explained that he was referring more to the other days. Dr. Willett responded that it is a possibility as they go later into the year. They need to ensure everyone felt they could adequately support the students and do the best job possible.

Mr. Marie asked about the rationale of extending the period to March 26<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Willett responded they needed time to make the necessary scheduling and program adjustments.

Ms. Philbin commented that there was some concern about the changing of the schedule to the 5 days and she knows the goal has been to get to the 5-day model and get students in front of the educators because it is the best process for absorbing curriculum and education. Everyone wants to be back in school and in a normal environment, but people are still not in a normal environment. She commented that she respects the drive of Dr. Willett and her peers to get to 5 days, but it disrupts a lot not only for remote learners but also in person learners as well. It changes not only Wednesdays but all 5 days. She commented that she knows people have struggled to

find suitable people to be with their children on Wednesdays and the early release days have been a concern across the board. Regarding the remote learners' day, they are online and engaging with their classmates and educators. On a Wednesday, the concerning aspect is that they can start a Google Meet as early at 9AM and go through noon. Her concern with the early release is that the last 15 minutes of the day is packing up and getting ready to go so the actual curriculum time, rather than 30 minutes, is 15 minutes. Although the space has been opened for educators to meet with online learners, having them meet one on one after class all day, she does not know how impactful the time will be. Additionally, by losing Wednesdays, they are increasing expenses by hiring additional janitorial staff to maintain the standard for COVID protocols. Further, she has heard a lot of people talk about the mental health of the educators. Every educator wants their students in class and to be in 5 days. Every student and every parent wants to be in 5 days in a normal environment but it is not. Right now, they are expecting a lot of the educators. Some want the 5 days while others want the mental break to meet with students one on one and meet with peers to devise plans. Ms. Philbin commented that she is worried about the mental health of the educators and the students. Further, by doing it at the end of the day, people may not have the opportunity to have the time to utilize resources. She noted that she is appreciative of all the administrators, faculty, and staff for all they have done and continue to do. She wants to ensure are taking care of the remote learners as well as the educators and administrators. She noted that she appreciates the plan and the goal but feels she would be remiss if she did not mention her concerns.

Dr. Willett responded that he respects Ms. Philbin's comments. He added that every family knows what it needs. He tries to find the balance and the best way forward. He believes that on the Wednesdays, for the remote learners, the synchronous learning they will receive versus the asynchronous is worthwhile and then they receive contact in small groups. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays they get this as well although in smaller timespans. Dr. Willett explained that the model is a good balance of getting students back in front of teachers, seeing their teachers, and having direct interaction with them whether in person or remote. He added that he respects and understands where Ms. Philbin and others are coming from in regard to remote learners getting appropriate help and attention. Dr. Willett noted that they are working hard to provide the services and the right balance. Ms. Philbin commented that she knows that he has been thoughtful and thorough and wanted to express her concern.

Ms. Shaikh asked if there is a future plan where remote learning will not be needed. She noted that she understands that it is a strain, and they need to have the perfect balance but wonders if there is a time where the remote option would not need to be available to alleviate the strain. Dr. Willett responded that the last he heard is that there is an intention to have the option available into next year; however, he has sensed that if it is going into next year, there will be conditions and the population of remote learners would be much smaller. He noted that the only thing he can see changing this is if there is a change in the trajectory of the virus over the next 5 months. He believes if they stay the course of what is happening with the vaccines and if they are proving to be as effective as they seem, they can expect a more normal year next year with fewer schedule disruptions and those who are remote will be in a special condition. Dr. Willett added that this is only a guess.

Ms. Plourd commented that her thought on the remote learning process, if it is to continue next year status quo, is that it is unfair to students and teachers to bounce between remote and in person learners, that they should look at staffing for the different populations to alleviate the stress and provide time to the remote learners. Dr. Willett commented that it is easier with smaller populations and he is optimistic about next year as well as the end of this year. Ms. Plourd added that she believes they are turning a corner and it is her hope that students will not have to quarantine for 14 days after herd immunity is reached.

Dr. Willett noted that 16- and 17-year-olds can receive the Pfizer vaccine once their age group opens, and some may work in a core critical work area. Additionally, sometime in July they are looking to have approval for those of younger ages and this too will change the trajectory. Although teachers will be vaccinated, currently the students will still quarantine for 10 days through the end of the year if they are COVID positive.

Ms. Lundgren asked if they will still use outside classrooms. Dr. Willett responded that they will have outside activities. They have received grants that help and are even more equipped to do so now.

### H.3 Finance and Facilities One Page Summary

Ms. Griffin explained that she attended the Communications Committee meeting and they discussed creating a summary of the budget with numbers and explanations and highlights of what the Board asked so the Town Council could have more background information. Ms. Griffin presented the 2021-2022 BOE Proposed Budget Summary. She noted that this was created prior to the Town Manager's Proposed Budget which will be presented to the Council and reduced the Board's budget by \$295K. Ms. Griffin noted that the document will be sent to the Town Council.

Mr. Renduchintala asked if the Board is still advocating for the 3.19%. Dr. Willett explained that typically in the budget process, when the town manager creates the budget, it does not increase from that point. The Council will deliberate over the Town Manager's Proposed Budget and set a budget. Mr. Renduchintala asked if the Board would redo its budget or know what will need to be adjusted. Dr. Willett explained that once he receives the final budget, he will begin to release phase documents that lay out a series of choices for the Board regarding how to adjust. Dr. Willett noted that the phase documents will have recommendations. Ms. Griffin added that the plan is to leave the one-page document as is. They do not want the Council to reduce anything further. Mr. Renduchintala asked if it would be worth it to add the rationale for the new positions and salaries to the document. Dr. Willett explained that the goal was to have a one-page document. Dr. Willett added that he is scheduled to attend the March 16<sup>th</sup> Council meeting to assist as the Superintendent.

Mr. Marie commented that the one-page document was a good idea. It highlights what was in the 3.19% and what is at stake. In the future, he would like the FFC and Communications to do something like this to get the conversation going.

Ms. Philbin commented that they have an opportunity to improve the process year over year. At the last meeting they discussed having a liaison and she compared it to the Chair of the Birch Grove Building Committee attending Board meetings to provide detailed updates. This would be in addition to the normal liaison. Ms. Philbin added that they need to continue to advocate for the Board's budget. While the Town Manager has proposed his budget, the Board's budget took care of the needs of the students and staff. She believes they would be doing the staff and students an injustice if they cut anything back further than what they did. While she knows it is out of the Board members' hands, they need to stand strong and communicate why they feel they need the support of their full budget. Ms. Philbin added that she will send a list of ideas for the budget process to Ms. Lundgren. Ms. Lundgren noted that they are creating a list of ideas about things related to the budget process that could be improved. Efficiency is key.

Dr. Willett noted that the district's staff is amazing as is that of the town and they work well together. The Town Manager tries to find the best solution that he can within all the constraints.

Mr. Renduchintala asked if the Board has received any advice from outside professional organizations about ECS funding. Dr. Willett responded that this is one of the hardest things to predict. Given COVID, he is optimistic that there will not be a significant slide this year, but it is difficult to answer until the state's budget is finalized. Mr. Renduchintala asked if the town develops its budget based on the governor's proposed budget. Dr. Willett responded that they have in the past.

Ms. Lundgren noted that the one-page budget document will be officially sent to the Town Council.

#### I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

- Negotiations – secretaries are upcoming
- Finance and Facilities – the focus was on the one-page budget document discussed in H.3
- Communications – they will be discussing changing the meeting time; an ongoing agenda item will be understanding the budget process and ideas for improved communications
- Curriculum Committee – in the process of drafting a letter to opt out of SBACs; discussed the vaccinations of staff; reviewed the Q&A for the return to 5 day in person; discussed plans for preparing for mental health outreach for families need
- Birch Grove Building Committee – the credit (\$1,869.941) for the unsuitable soils was recognized; postponed items were brought back into the project for discussion; State Change Order #3 will be on the Board's March 24<sup>th</sup> agenda; project is on schedule and under budget; if anyone did not make the walkthrough, they still have an opportunity to schedule one

#### J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - none

#### K. BOARD ACTION

K.1 Paraprofessional Contract (no enclosure)

*Ms. Besaw motioned to accept the bargaining unit agreement between the Board of Education and the Tolland Paraeducator Union CSEA SEIU Local 2001 extending from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023.*

*Mr. Marie seconded the motion.*

*Discussion:*

*Ms. Besaw commented that they spent a good amount of time working with the union on this she believes they came to a mutually acceptable agreement that benefits both parties. It is a good agreement.*

*Ms. Plourd commented that she feels that last time they voted on a para contract they went into executive session to review it. Dr. Willett responded that he checked with their legal resource who suggested putting it in as it is.*

*Ms. Philbin commented that they had good conversations with the paras and they are doing right by all parties involved. There was a lot of good collaborative work. She thanked both teams. The process was interesting and went well.*

*Mr. Marie thanked Dr. Willett and the Negotiations Committee for working on this. He asked if there were any major non-financial changes to the agreement. Dr. Willett responded that one of the biggest items is the Sick Bank. It is beneficial and allows the paraprofessionals in a collegial professional form to take care of each other. Further, professional development and training provisions were clarified to give paraprofessionals robust opportunities for training. The professional development training provisions for the paras are similar to those of the teachers with respect to how they request and are granted professional development. This is more of an organizational change. Dr. Willett added that it is a great agreement that the paras deserve, and the district did well with it as well.*

*A roll call vote was taken.*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

#### K.2. Policy 4120 Electronic Devices

Dr. Willett explained that this is an updating of the district's computer systems and electronic communications policy for employees. He noted that it updates the technology - some of the older language did not include some of the new items. Additionally, it highlights the provision that there is not any expectation of personal privacy when using district equipment. This is consistent with industry. The update codifies this in policy and catches the policy up to the current technology. The policy is the Board's approval, and the regulation is traditionally written as an expansion of policy. Dr. Willett presented and reviewed the regulation and noted that its language will be updated. Dr. Willett presented and reviewed the Notice Regarding Electronic Monitoring. Dr. Willett commented that in some areas where it refers to Tolland Board Representative, they will replace this with Tolland Public School Administration. A brief discussion took place.

*Mr. Marie motioned to approve the changes, modifications, and updates to the Policy Regarding Employee Use of the District's Computer Systems and Electronic Communications and make any necessary changes of "board" to "public school staff" where necessary.*

*Mr. Renduchintala seconded the motion.*

*Discussion: none*

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

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Susan Diamond, 52 Glen Drive, thanked the Board for revising and putting through the paraeducators' contract. She appreciates this and is one of them. Ms. Diamond commented on Ms. Philbin's comments on online learning. Ms. Diamond explained that she can personally say that on both parts it is good and beneficial for the children, but she prefers in person, sitting next to the child, and working with them with manipulatives. They have had to be flexible at home and use magnets and do a lot of reading. It has been a bit harder doing it at home and she cannot wait until everyone is back in school and they are working with the small groups or individually as needed. She works at TIS and is a paraeducator. She thanked the Board for the contract and sees both sides but prefers all in person. She added that she feels better about this since she has had her shots.

Liz Costa, 54 Josiah Lane, thanked the Board for approving the paras' contract. She is thrilled.

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION

- Ms. Philbin thanked Ms. Diamond and Ms. Costa. Ms. Philbin commented that she is proud of the work they did as a team on all sides. In regard to Ms. Diamond's point of view, she appreciates it and does not disagree. Educators, paraeducators, and administrators want the students next to them. She explained that she wanted to shed light on remote learners who cannot get back into the classroom. She wanted to highlight the bond she sees in small groups and the amazing work that paras, special educators, and educators are doing as well. Nothing will replace one on one or group time in person. They are all angels and phenomenal at what they do. There is no training for being in the pandemic. Ms. Philbin thanked Ms. Diamond for expressing her point of view and thanked her for what she does.
- Ms. Lundgren commented that she used to be a para in the school system when work was slow and she loved it. Everyone is trying their best.
- Ms. Griffin thanked the paraeducators. She knows it has been a long time getting the contract finalized and it seems that everyone is happy. Ms. Griffin commented on that she is thrilled to hear about all of the end of year senior activities. She excited that they have taken the time to figure out what they can do for the class of 2021 and it sounds like there will be some great events.

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

Ms. Philbin motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:42PM.  
Mr. Renduchintala seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Pascuzzi  
Clerk

**SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND**

**ITEM:** THS Senior Activities and Graduation

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

**FOR BOE MEETING:** March 24, 2021

**ITEM SUMMARY:**

The district, with input from stakeholders, is working to provide the students at Tolland Public Schools with great end of the year activities. A presentation will be provided at the meeting. A few points to consider are as follows:

- Staff involved in working on these events have established a process that is both inclusive and considerate of all stakeholders.
- The pandemic requires the district to approach all events with a focus on, and balance of, health, safety, and consideration of people's preferences.
- Graduation is in the planning stages. Pandemic considerations will continue to need to be considered, and this may make an outdoor graduation preferable. The logistics and costs associated with an indoor and outdoor graduation are currently being reviewed and considered, and additional information will be shared as it becomes available.
- Events held at public school facilities provide far greater flexibility with respect to scheduling and covid-mitigation than other options. The school district has a greater level of responsibility to the students and their families than commercial venues. The school district can also structure events held on its campuses in such a way as to minimize potential infection and quarantine risks that could prevent students and their families from participating in the events most important to them.
- Events held at the facilities and in the locality will have a greater potential of supporting local businesses and give greater possibilities for community involvement in parades and functions.
- The student population of this age group in our health district currently has a COVID infection rate of between 2 to 4 times that of the other age populations. Long term consequences of the COVID virus are still not entirely known, and although this age group generally does not get hospitalized, they are still subject to quarantines of a 10-to-14-day period that could result in exclusion from activities for that span of time. This can impact their participation in other events and family activities important to them. District planning seeks to minimize these risks.

**BOE ACTION DESIRED:**

Review.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND**

**ITEM:** State CO#3 for the Birch Grove Building Project

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

**FOR BOE MEETING:** March 24, 2021

**ITEM SUMMARY:**

D'Amato (BGP Project Contractor) has compiled the second Change Order submission to the State of Connecticut. The BGP School Building Committee has already reviewed and approved these change orders, and they have been signed and authorized for payment by the Town Manager.

In order for the Town to be reimbursed for these items, the Board of Education must accept the documentation and authorize the Superintendent to sign all related documentation and approvals.

**General Sequence:**

1. BGP Contractor, Architect and/or Owners Rep raises field condition, identifying any needed changes to the project plans.
2. Contractor, Architect and Owners Rep review needed change and decide upon the best solution. NOTE: All 3 contracted agencies must approve Change Order Request before it can be submitted to the Building Committee.
3. BGP Building Committee reviews and approves Change Order Approval Letters with supporting documentation.
4. Approved Change Order(s) are sent to the Town Manager for his signature, which commits the Town to pay for the Change Order item(s).
5. Following State Requirements, multiple Change Order Approval Letters are compiled into State Change Orders.
6. **The Board of Education reviews State Change Orders and authorizes the Superintendent to apply for reimbursement for all items and to sign SCG-042. (current step)**
7. The BOE minutes are submitted to the contractor and subsequently to the State of Connecticut.
8. The State of Connecticut reviews the change orders and documentation and sends a letter confirming reimbursement.

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY:**

See attachments.

**BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:**

**BOE ACTION DESIRED:**

*Proposed Motion:* Motion to accept documentation related to Project 142-0083-N State Change Order #3, presented in the Board of Education meeting of March 24, 2021, and authorize the Superintendent to sign all related documentation and approvals to apply for reimbursement from the State for eligible items.

*Second. Discussion. Vote.*

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:**

[C.O. Tracker](#)

[CO #28 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #29 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #30 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #31 - SIGNED](#)

[CO #33 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #34 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #35 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #36 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #37 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #38 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #39 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #40 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #41 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #42 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[CO #46 - SIGNED.pdf](#)

[FORM SCG-042.pdf](#)

[FORM SCG-043CO State CO Summary 3.15.21.pdf](#)

**MINUTES**

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

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
TOLLAND, CT

2021 MAR 11 AM 8:09

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** none

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael Rosen, Town Manager; Lisa Hancock, Director, Finance & Records/Treasurer; Mike Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services; John Littell, Fire Chief/Director of Public Safety

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Nuccio called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited

3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Observed

4. **PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS:**

Ms. Nuccio asked if for some proclamations, specifically the Presidential Proclamations, if they could find the standard language from the Presidential Proclamations. This way it would be easier for Mr. Rosen and the staff, and more efficient than waiting for the Council. Mr. Rosen responded that they are still figuring out the proclamation procedure. The process was set in June 2020. He added that any tweaks to the process that would help them streamline things would be appreciated. If the Council wishes, and there is a proclamation request that follows a Presidential Proclamation, they could seek out and utilize the wording. Currently, when residents or other interested stakeholders write in, they provide drafted or proposed language. His office has been working on cobbling things together and he would be interested in any way to streamline this. Ms. Nuccio agreed and noted that it is something they should discuss.

4.1 Proclamation request Recognizing February as Black History Month

Ms. Nuccio read the Proclamation recognizing February as Black History Month.

Mr. Luba commented that after reviewing the Proclamation as presented by Mr. Rosen, although it is not exactly the same language as has been used on the past proclamations, it is the same language that has been used over the past 10 years for this type of proclamation. He believes it is consistent with Mr. Rosen's comments.

It was noted that voting on the final language is not part of the current process.

4.2 Proclamation for Robert Noonan

Ms. Nuccio read the Proclamation recognizing Robert Noonan.

Mr. Rosen commented that he discussed this Proclamation with the Human Services Director Bev Bellody. She and many of her staff members knew Mr. Noonan and would like to deliver a framed copy of the Proclamation to his family. Ms. Nuccio responded that this would be appropriate.

4.3 Proclamation request Recognizing March as Disability Awareness Month

Mr. Rosen commented that the request came from an interested stakeholder in the community that wanted to recognize March as Disability Awareness Month. Traditionally, according to the process, this is not a proclamation that the town has had in the past. That said, this does not mean a new tradition cannot be started today. Mr. Rosen explained that he is looking to the Council for permission to draft language for this request.

*Mr. Jones motioned to authorize Town Manager Rosen to draft a proclamation recognizing March as Disability Awareness Month.*

*Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.*

*Discussion: none*

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

- 4.4 Proclamation request to Members of the Tolland Resident State Trooper's Office and Connecticut State Troopers-Troop C regarding attempted burglaries on February 20, 2021 on Tolland Green  
Mr. Rosen explained that the requests for proclamations in items 4.4 and 4.5 both pertain to an event that happened in late February. The event made the news and Mr. Rosen noted that he kept the Council informed as it was happening. Mr. Rosen noted that the Council issued a proclamation for an act of heroism a few months ago so there is a track record of doing so. This item is presented for the Council's consideration – to honor the Resident State Troopers and the Troop C barracks for their involvement in preventing attempted burglaries on February 20<sup>th</sup> on the Green.

Ms. Nuccio asked the Council if there was any objection to addressing items 4.4 and 4.5 together. There was no objection.

Mr. Luba commented regarding item 4.4 and noted that the Tolland Fire Department assisted in the efforts. He asked if recognition of the Tolland Fire Department could be included as well. He recommended doing so.

*Mr. Jones motioned to authorize Town Manager Rosen to move forward with the proclamation request to members of the Tolland Resident State Trooper's Office, CT State Troopers Troop C, and Tolland Public Safety regarding attempted burglaries on February 20, 2021 on the Tolland Green.  
Mr. Luba seconded the motion.  
Discussion: none  
A roll call vote was taken.  
Motion passed unanimously.*

- 4.5 Proclamation request for Resident regarding attempted burglaries on February 20, 2021 on Tolland Green  
Mr. Rosen explained that this item pertains to the same incident as noted in item 4.4 but it is about the Resident who performed an act of valor to contain the suspects from fleeing successfully. He noted that some draft language was provided to him.

Mr. Jones motioned to authorize the Town Manager to move forward with the proclamation request for the Resident regarding attempted burglaries on February 20, 2021 on the Tolland Green.

Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

- 4.6 Proclamation request for Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Day – May 15<sup>th</sup>  
Mr. Rosen explained that he understands that May 15<sup>th</sup> is recognized as Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Day. This would be the first time that Tolland would recognize Law Enforcement Memorial Day but other entities have this date on their calendars.

*[Mr. Jones exited the meeting due to technical difficulties.]*

Ms. Falusi motioned to have the Town Manager draft the language for item 4.6, Proclamation Request for Law Enforcement Officer, recognizing Law Enforcement Memorial Day on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

5. **PUBLIC PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** *(on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council) (2-minute limit)*  
*[Mr. Jones returned to the meeting.]*

Sophia Johnson, 48 Crystal Lake Road, commented that her family of 6 is new to Tolland as of February 2<sup>nd</sup> and has been stalking the community since June 2, 2020 when they went into contract. She does not know who the previous homeowner was, but they were amazing. She noted that through difficulties, they had faith that the house belonged to her family and this speaks to the character of an individual who lived in Tolland and did an amazing thing by waiting for her family to get the ducks in a row so they could purchase their dream home. Ms. Johnson commented that they are living the dream. They love Tolland. She explained that they would come to Tolland to go to Big Y and passed many places and the hospitality, treatment, service, and dedication were amazing. She added that she is an engaging person, and they went into different shops and spoke to new people. Ms. Johnson commented that most people assume what they do about people in general, but she does not assume anything. Sometimes this small engagement helps her learn more about herself. She added that this is her first Town Council meeting but the first meeting she attended was that of the Conservation Commission to support her neighbor regarding geocaching. Ms. Johnson commented that she was looking at tonight's agenda and saw an item regarding the town and racism. She noted that she has not experienced anything like this and is a little concerned. She added that she did send a letter and would appreciate it if it was read into the record when the agenda item comes up because she would like to take this time to say other positive things. Ms. Johnson commented that, so far, she thanked Tolland for being an amazing community. She is thankful for Tolland taking care of the roads, for Eversource's quick restoration of power, and for her neighbor for asking for her support with geocaching through the Conservation Commission. Ms. Johnson thanked Tolland for being a welcoming, engaging, and wonderful community that her family now calls home. She looks forward to participating in anything and everything that she can.

Gary Lotreck thanked the Town Council for creating the statement against systemic racism. He explained that growing up in Tolland and attending Tolland schools was a monolithic experience. He did not really know people who were different from him and thought everybody had the same experiences, thoughts, and lives as he did. Going to college opened his eyes a little more but he did not experience true diversity of thought, experiences, and people until he started working at Hartford Public Schools and realized that many other people, in this case people of color, have very vastly different experiences than he had growing up in a virtually all white community. Mr. Lotreck commented that he is proud of Tolland for acknowledging what it took him years to discover and begin to understand - that systemic racism does exist. He explained that he does not mean the overt racists acts because he did not see a lot of that but the system that historically and purposely has disenfranchised people of color. Mr. Lotreck commented that he is proud to be a citizen of Tolland right now, more than some other times, and it is fantastic. He is happy with the Town Council for addressing this to make Tolland more equitable and a safe place for all. He thanked the Council for this and all of the hard work it is doing.

Annelise Cyr commented that she wants to bring up, before they discuss in the meeting, more about the statement written against racism. She noted that she has e-mailed the Council to hear responses and has heard from Ms. Falusi but no one else. Ms. Cyr commented that she is not comfortable that the Council is not willing to use the term "antiracist" in the statement and believes it is an important term to use in the statement against racism. She commented that any statement is something and she heard in the last meeting that they wanted it to be measurable and she assumes actionable and this is what antiracism is. Ms. Cyr explained that the definition of antiracism is the policy or practice of opposing racism and promoting racial tolerance, so it refers to a form of action against racial hatred, bias, systemic racism, and the oppression of marginalized groups. It is structured around conscious efforts and deliberate actions to provide equitable opportunities for all people on an individual and systemic level. Ms. Cyr commented that this term is critical to be put in and she would like to hear answers, when they get to this later in the meeting, from each Council member of why they are not for this.

Linda Calabrese commented that she e-mailed the Council today in reference to the proclamation on racism. Ms. Calabrese read her e-mail. She explained that she has lived on Tolland Green for twenty years and she is a retired tax collector for the Town of Tolland. She commented that the Council is poised to vote on a proclamation declaring racism as a public health emergency. A proclamation alone is not a solution. Steps must be taken to foster conversations, explore programs, and seek solutions, but they should go on record and then set the programs in motion and set an example for other towns as well. Ms. Calabrese added that she would not have guessed that there might be a racial problem in Tolland but that she is white and so is much of the town. She knows a young woman who went to Tolland High School about a decade ago who was bullied because she was black. She asked if collectively they know what goes on in neighborhoods, in the schools, or on social media. Ms. Calabrese commented that maybe they should find out. She added that even if someone has not witnessed issues here, one has to know that there are issues all over the country. She believes it is important for a town populated essentially by privileged people to make sure that everyone

feels as comfortable as everyone else. She added that Glastonbury has adopted a similar proclamation and that town has only 1.7% African American people. Tolland has only 3.4% and yet Glastonbury has adopted a similar proclamation. Ms. Calabrese commented that the reason the vast majority of the population has not experienced racial problems is because most of them are not of a race that gets looked down on. They are the privileged many, but it is not really about if they perceive a racial problem in Tolland or Glastonbury. It is about whether there is a racial problem at all. She added that clearly there is a problem that must be addressed if they are going to fulfill that all men are created equal and deliver liberty for justice for all. Ms. Calabrese commented that the proclamation is a fine first step. If they can stand up and say they care about racial equity, access to comfortable housing, good schools, and medical services, they are taking a critical first step. She asked that the Council vote to adopt the proclamation and recruit actively for people of color to help so that they can provide their insight and credibility. She added that they should read the World Health Organization's research on social determinants of health and if they dig in they can make a difference.

Kenny Trice, 53 Doe Run, thanked the Council for their service. He asked if this is a statement or a proclamation. *Ms. Nuccio responded that it is a statement.*

**6. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:** none

**7a. REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE TO THE COUNCIL**

Tourism – none

Sustainable CT – Ms. Falusi provide an update on last week's meeting. Two items discussed were the creation of a poet laureate and a Tolland town artist. They will solicit input and create a decision-making body through different segments of the community such as the library, the schools, and Tolland Arts and come up with a process to pick a poet and an artist. Additionally, they decided to create a statement on equity by the community and will have different segments of the community talk about equity. She added that equity is not limited to one part of the community. It is any group that feels it needs assistance. They will likely approach a variety of groups to help create an equity statement. Ms. Falusi added that she attended 2 equity training sessions highlighting mostly racism but also where the intersectionality is when it comes to race and other items. More sessions will take place and anyone on the Sustainable CT Committee can attend.

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

- Blight Committee – no meeting
- Planning and Zoning Commission – Ms. Falusi provided an update of last night's meeting.
- Land Acquisition – no meeting
- Board of Education – a meeting will be held tomorrow night
- Permanent Celebration Committee – Ms. Forsythe provided an update of last week's meeting.
- Conservation Commission – Mr. Jones provided an updated of the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. The next meeting will be held on Thursday.
- Library Foundation – Mr. Jones provided an update of last night's meeting.
- WPCA – no meeting; will meet next week
- Birch Grove Building Committee – Mr. Luba provided an update of the March 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.
- Parks and Recreation – Mr. Schenher referenced the minutes for last night's meeting.
- Agriculture Commission – Mr. Schenher provided an update of the last meeting.
- Economic Development Commission – Mr. Schenher provided an update of the meeting held on Wednesday.

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

- 8.1 Consideration of a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to enter into a contract with the State Library Association for a Historic Documents Preservation Grant for FY 2021/2022.

Mr. Rosen explained that this is something that is done routinely every year and introduced Kathy Pagan, the interim Town Clerk.

Ms. Pagan explained that they apply for the \$5,500 grant every year and it is only to be used for historic preservation. They are currently working on a project of preserving old maps which are currently in the vault

taped and glued on board. They started the project last year and about 297 maps still need to be preserved. This grant would get them down about 60 more. It cleans and preserves the maps and puts them in hanging folders keeping them safe.

Mr. Rosen added that he spoke with Ms. Pagan earlier and she indicated that this would likely not be the final round of grant funding to satisfy and finish this project. Another year or two will be needed so they anticipate returning to the Council in the future with another application for another \$5,500 to hopefully finish the project.

*Mr. Jones motioned that be it*

**RESOLVED** that Michael Rosen, Tolland Town Manager, is empowered to execute and deliver in the name of and on behalf of this municipality a contract with the Connecticut State Library for a Historic Documents Preservation Grant.

*Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.*

*A roll call vote was taken.*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

- 8.2 Resolution authorizing an appropriation of \$5,000,000 for the Firehouse Improvement Project and the financing of said appropriation by the issuance of General Obligation Bonds of the Town and notes in anticipation of such bonds in an amount not to exceed \$5,000,000 or so much as may be necessary after deducting grants therefor, as well as establishing a date for a referendum and the setting of a public hearing thereon for March 23, 2021.

Mr. Rosen explained that this is an important step in the Firehouse Project process. During some of the budget meetings they discussed a secondary timeline about how to get to referendum and this is the first step in that direction. Mr. Rosen explained that the public hearing needs to be set in 2 weeks. They have spoken to bond counsel who is guiding them through the process to get to referendum properly. Any conversation should take place at the public hearing so the audience can hear it and comment.

Mr. Rosen noted that Chief Littell and members of the Tolland Fire Department are in attendance this evening and thanked them for attending. Mr. Rosen noted that Chief Littell worked with a videographer to show the current conditions of the 3 fire stations that are being discussed for renovation (Stations 140, 340, and 440).

Mr. Rosen shared his screen and played the video but there was technical difficulty with the audio. The video is available on the town's webpage. The link to the video may be found by going to [tolland.org](http://tolland.org) > left navigation bar > Firehouse Capital Improvement Project > last line of the landing page. The video's duration is 3 minutes.

Chief Littell commented on the project. Due to COVID, they felt some people would not be comfortable visiting the firehouses and the video provides a bird's eye view. That said, with the restrictions loosening and the weather improving, they will open the firehouse for those who would like to visit. Chief Littell noted that he had nothing to do with this but there is a reporter in town this evening who is taking photos and someone is walking through the firehouse with her. He assigned Deputy Chief Carl Dojan to reach out to her to ensure the messaging is consistent. Chief Littell explained that times have changed, and he encouraged the community to be involved with the project. He added that they need usable space and have mandates to address. He noted that there has been some concern in the community about if 1 or 2 of the stations are storage or not used as much. Chief Littell explained that to save taxpayer dollars they only have a certain number of career staff during the daytime and that the ambulances run nonstop. He reviewed positioning to ensure coverage and that the 2 main firehouses are stations 240 and the one at Crystal Lake Road. The other firehouses have fire apparatus for fire suppression and response to Interstate 84 or the other sections of town. Tolland is over 41 square miles and it takes a long time to get from one side of town to the other. Chief Littell reviewed the apparatus and storage situation and noted that the biggest station needs to be addressed first. He noted that they have written several grants, but Tolland is under the numbers in terms of population, call volume, and other items to receive firefighter assistance grants.

Mr. Jones commented that he would appreciate any retired or active staff who would be willing to send correspondence or speak at the public hearing about their experiences and what they see on a regular basis

inside the stations. This would be beneficial for the Council and the public. Chief Littell responded that if the Council or Town Manager does not mind, he will message his staff and ask them to communicate and speak freely. Ms. Nuccio commented that as a resident, everyone has an opportunity to weigh in on these things.

The video will be shown at the public hearing.

*Mr. Jones*

**MOTION** that the following resolution be introduced and set down for a Public Hearing remotely on March 23, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

**DRAFT RESOLUTION**

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

*Resolution authorizing an appropriation of \$5,000,000 for the Firehouse Improvement Project and the financing of said appropriation by the issuance of General Obligation Bonds of the Town and notes in anticipation of such bonds in an amount not to exceed \$5,000,000 or so much as may be necessary after deducting grants therefor, as well as establishing a date for a referendum.*

*Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.*

*A roll call vote was taken.*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

*A copy of the full text of the resolution is recorded following these minutes.*

8.3 Appointments to vacancies on various municipal boards/commissions.

Mr. Rosen noted that a resignation letter was received from Megan Carpenter from the Water Commission.

Mr. Rosen noted that the Mental Health Task Force will hold its first meeting on March 29<sup>th</sup>. It will be a joint meeting with the Town Council.

Mr. Luba noted that he and Mr. Jones have received a few e-mails regarding some of the vacancies and there may be more positions to fill at the next meeting.

Ms. Nuccio thanked Ms. Carpenter for her service and anyone who would like to step up and be part of the committees in town.

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

9.1 Consideration and approval of a resolution pertaining to a statement against racism by the Tolland Town Council.

Mr. Rosen provided background information. At the last meeting the Council reviewed a draft, and the edited version was read aloud by Mr. Rosen. Mr. Rosen shared the edited draft on screen. The Council reviewed the draft provided by Mr. Rosen and had discussions.

Straw poll: 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet, replace "government" with "departments"

Results:

Ms. Falusi – no

Ms. Forsythe – yes

Mr. Jones – either

Mr. Reagan – yes

Mr. Luba – yes

Mr. Schenher – yes

Straw poll: 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet, replace "our municipal departments" with "that the Town of Tolland"

Results:

Ms. Falusi – yes

Ms. Forsythe – yes  
Mr. Jones – yes  
Mr. Reagan – no  
Mr. Luba – no  
Mr. Schenher – no  
Ms. Nuccio – no

Ms. Nuccio noted that by straw poll, the Council will replace at the 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet, “government” with “departments”.

Ms. Falusi commented that she would like to add the following, “we value the diversity of our community” in the first line following “Town of Tolland”. A brief discussion took place regarding following this with “and” or having 2 sentences. The Council discussed the edit and its inclusion.

Straw poll to edit the first sentence to read, “As elected representatives of the Town of Tolland we value the diversity of our community. “We condemn” would begin a new sentence.

Results:

Ms. Falusi – yes  
Ms. Forsythe – yes  
Mr. Jones – yes  
Mr. Reagan – yes  
Mr. Luba – yes  
Mr. Schenher – no  
Ms. Nuccio – yes  
The edit will be made.

Mr. Jones inquired if they went around and asked if they would be incorporating “antiracist” in the statement as an edit. Ms. Nuccio responded that it was not added as an edit. Mr. Jones commented that he would have been fine with it being incorporated into the statement in some fashion, but he is fine with it as it is.

*Mr. Jones motioned,*

***RESOLVED*** that the Tolland Town Council adopts this Statement Against Racism as amended.

*Mr. Luba 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 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE MONTH ONLY)**

- The Manager’s Recommended Budget went live a few days ago.
  - Tomorrow night they will have the overview of the budget and a couple of department presentations via Zoom.
  - Thursday night at 7:00 PM they will have the same with other departments.
    - An overview slideshow will be presented.
- March 17<sup>th</sup> – Public Hearing
- March 24<sup>th</sup> – the Council finalizes the budget
- May 4<sup>th</sup> – Referendum
  - Mr. Rosen has had a conversation with the Deputy General Counselor to the Governor about no-excuse absentee balloting and in terms of a timeframe, what the Town Clerk’s Office would require to make it work properly. Mr. Rosen explained that any time after April 1<sup>st</sup>, if there is an indication that absentee balloting would be allowed, would be very rushed.
- David Corcoran has accepted the town’s offer for the position of Director of Planning and Community Development. He will begin on March 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Interviews are being held for the position of Town Clerk next week.
- Adrienne Ernest was selected as the Town Manager’s Executive Assistant. She will start on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Nuccio commented that the GAE has not moved the absentee ballots to the calendar. She will keep Mr. Rosen updated.

#### 11. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

11.1 February 22, 2021 Remote Joint Budget Meeting Minutes with Town Council/Board of Education

11.2 February 23, 2021 Remote Regular Meeting Minutes

*Mr. Jones motioned to adopt the Remote Joint Budget Meeting Minutes as laid out 11.1 and the Remote Regular Meeting Minutes as laid out in 11.2.*

*Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.*

*Discussion: Ms. Nuccio noted that a resident wrote in and said she was not quoted correctly in the minutes. Mr. Rosen explained that if there is a misquote that the clerk did not write down or did not get 100% then it can be amended. He noted that he did not watch the tape or know if anyone else did but takes her at her word that it is true. Ms. Nuccio commented that she remembers the resident's conversation and testimony and what she said in the e-mail is accurate. The wording is in the e-mail that was received.*

*Mr. Jones withdrew his motion.*

*Mr. Jones motioned to adopt the minutes as laid out in 11.1 and as amended in 11.2.*

*Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.*

*Discussion: none*

*Change: item 15, speaker: Annelyse Cyr, 34 Columbine Road, 4<sup>th</sup> sentence should read, "Ms. Cyr noted that her son is black, and his friend threatened him and said that her father is a cop and that he could easily hurt her son."*

*A roll call vote was taken.*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

#### 12. CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL

- E-mail from resident concerning the Council's policy review specifically how social media policy should apply to the Council; also on the statement on racism, how will it lead to policy reviews
- E-mail from resident about attrition in the town and about the Council being in partnership with the Board of Education working for an excellent school system and how they should be investing in their future
- Information from a resident about solar versus agriculture with an attachment for the Council to review
- E-mail from a resident in support of the budget; resident feels that not properly funding the Board of Education budget will lead to increases in taxes in the future
- E-mail from a resident about antiracism noting that the minutes misrepresented what she said
- E-mail from a resident that felt that a Council member was discounting the abilities of the elected officials, wanted bigotry included in the statement, and feels that the white Town Council is capable of reflecting and denouncing racism
- E-mail from a resident that does not feel the race of the Council is important to be able to fully represent the needs of the town and the qualification is that they are elected, rejects bringing in Sustainable CT for help
- E-mail about the Council declaring racism as a public health emergency and writer feels they should proceed with supporting the document

Mr. Luba inquired about the healthcare emergency e-mail mentioned by Ms. Falusi. He is unsure if that went to the Town Council in general as he never received it. He inquired when it came in. Ms. Falusi responded that she will need to check as she does not write down the names and dates. She added that it can be stricken and included in the next one. Mr. Luba explained that he was just worried that he missed something. Ms. Nuccio commented that she checked, and she does not have it either.

#### 13. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ms. Nuccio noted that the following departments will be discussed at tomorrow night's meeting: Public Works, Finance, and General Government. On Thursday they will discuss: Community Services, Law Enforcement, and Public

Safety. Next Tuesday, they will have: Board of Education, Planning and Community Development, and Solid Waste. On March 17<sup>th</sup>, there will be the Town Manager's Budget Presentation. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Council will finalize the budget.

Ms. Nuccio explained that they go over every department and the entire budget. They ask questions and it is the Council's opportunity to understand the budget. She noted that it is incumbent upon them as elected officials to understand what is put before them so they can make a decision that is the best impact for the entire town. They ask a lot of questions and she encouraged the public to come to those meetings to learn and understand what is in the budget before them so in May, people are educated electoral voters. An educated electorate is the best electorate. She encouraged people to look at the budgets online and come up some questions. If there are questions that they would like asked, Ms. Nuccio requested that those questions be sent to the Council. She encouraged everyone to be part of the process.

**14. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILPERSONS**

- Ms. Falusi commented that she would like to encourage the Council to start thinking ahead and getting in front of the recycling issues that have been on the horizon for a while. There is not a market for recycling as there was in previous years and if they get ahead of the curve, they can start saving taxpayer money down the line. She added that she forwarded information on composting programs to Mr. Rosen. By composting they are saving on the tipping fee. In some cases, up to 40% of people's solid waste can be composted. She noted that she is not saying they will see a 40% reduction in the solid waste program, but it is something they need to look into. It will save money and is the right thing to do for the environment. Ms. Falusi commented that Ms. Jodie Coleman-Marzialo would like a liaison to be assigned. Ms. Falusi commented that the Council should look at the request.
- Mr. Jones thanked Trooper Eklund for sending the data. When it is more appropriate Mr. Jones would like to request a follow up and have them do a presentation in April or May with updated data and encourage residents to be involved and engaged. Mr. Jones clarified that he believes the Historic District Commission is the commission that would like a liaison. He noted that he would step up for this unless another Counselor has an interest. Ms. Nuccio commented that she asked Mr. Rosen about this. Mr. Rosen explained that he does not believe there is a problem with the Council creating a liaison position. Ms. Nuccio noted that it can be set as an agenda item. Mr. Jones commented that he has stepped in as an informal liaison to the Library Foundation. Mr. Rosen noted that the former Town Clerk noted that the Council may wish to have a public hearing before voting to add a Council liaison to the Historic District Commission so Commission members can have input if they have any concerns. Mr. Rosen noted that the Council would do it by resolution and vote to have a liaison. Mr. Jones noted that he will cover March as the Board of Education liaison. Mr. Jones commented that he sent a number of his budget questions to Mr. Rosen. Mr. Jones encouraged the public to attend the meetings. Mr. Rosen explained that he compiles the questions and reaches out to the department heads or answers them if he has the information. Ms. Nuccio commented that she will leave it up to the Council members if they want to send in their questions.

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

Ms. Nuccio addressed Ms. Johnson and commented that the Council does not typically read e-mails into the record. The Council has a copy, and it will be saved with the e-mails. She added that Ms. Johnson may read her e-mail, or she can use the 3 minutes to talk about whatever she would like.

Sophia Johnson commented that it is amazing to see how everyone is diligent with the way they are processing things, but she wanted to draw attention to the fact that when mentioning racism, being privileged is not a race thing – it is more of a class thing. Racism comes in all different forms. As a black person living in various communities, she has heard the worst said of people of privilege who were white. They should not pigeonhole the idea of racism to being exclusive to people who have struggled. Ms. Johnson commented that she felt rather bothered and apologized because she does not normally express such things, but with the beginning of the statement, to say they are recognizing diversity has a negative connotation - they are saying they are recognizing the differences. She recommended recognizing the inclusiveness and that it is an inclusive community. Although it has been voted upon, diversity is a difference where inclusivity is showing that they are together. Ms. Johnson noted that she went to Town Hall today to try to pick up a copy of the budget and saw a bulletin board that clearly shows the board meetings and agendas. The board also had information on discrimination policies. She commented that she does not want to speak

as a person of color that speaks on behalf of everyone, but for her she does not look to have too much sympathy to automatically assume that because she is black that she faces racism, is being alienated, or suffering implicit bias. That could be anyone. She explained that where she comes from in New York there was always antisemitism but the people in the positions of leadership spoke out against it at the time of. To do something preemptive is suggesting that there is a problem and for someone like her, she is kind of alarmed because she faces nothing but positivity, welcoming, and inviting. She does not like to perceive things preemptively, that there is going to be a problem. She likes to face problems as they arise. Ms. Johnson commented on Presidential Proclamations and believes they are all-encompassing. She does not know if it is necessary for the Council to put out a proclamation for Black History Month because the President's proclamation is all-encompassing. Lastly, Ms. Johnson noted that she loves budgets. They are an amazing tool. She added that regarding the Celebration Committee, she is coming. In her previous life this was all that she did and is looking forward to going to different things that are permanent in the community. Ms. Johnson commented on Memorial Day and if the public can speak and share ideas, she would like to do so at the Committee's meetings. She commented that as a person of color, although she can appreciate the sentiment for the Council to step out and denounce racism, for a person like her who has not experienced it, she wonders if it is warranted to put out a statement when there has not been an overt public display of racism in Tolland. She believes it is dangerous precedent to set to be proactive on something of this matter as people of color may find it offensive. Ms. Johnson clarified that she did not find it offensive, but it was uncomfortable to hear the different opinions and she did not understand what they were talking about. She has been in Tolland for over a month and interacted with many people and has yet to see a black person. She commented that she cannot say they are diverse, but they are inclusive, and this should be the highlight of any statement. Instead of saying they recognize diversity, they should say they recognize inclusivity or something other than diversity. America used to be the melting pot and now people are focusing on how people are different. She explained that someone may not have noticed that they were different. Her 14-year-old did not know he was black until he was 11 because she did not raise him to think that he was different because of the color of his skin. It was not until Black History Month that he commented to her that he was black. Ms. Johnson commented that she understands the magnanimous thing the Council is doing but she believes it is more important to address the concern when it happens. Virtue signaling can create a preconceived notion that there is something to be wary of when there really is not. Ms. Johnson commented that her family loves being in Tolland and she looks forward to engaging all of the members at some point.

Annelise Cyr, 34 Columbine Road, commented that the term diversity is an important one because they are diverse. They have similarities but there are many differences. In her family, she is an Irish French-Canadian woman and her daughter is an Irish-looking girl with red hair and light skin. Ms. Cyr's son is biracial half black half white. She noted that they are a diverse family that is beautiful and should embrace and acknowledge it. Embracing diversity in the world and realizing its beauty is step one. Her son loves his black heritage, and she encourages him to hold it. The history of being black is strong and powerful. Ms. Cyr commented that diversity is an important word and something they must continue to embrace. She thanked Linda and Gary – long term white residents for being aware and acknowledging and understanding racism in the community and acknowledging that they did not always witness it and did not always realize it. It was great to hear them say this. She loved hearing their awareness and people in the community validate what her son goes through and support him and their family in fighting to live in a welcoming and inclusive community. Ms. Cyr thanked Ms. Falusi and Mr. Jones for recognizing that she had earlier asked in the meeting and via e-mail for responses from all of the members about the opposition to use antiracism in the statement against racism. She only received responses from Ms. Falusi and Mr. Jones and they both agreed that they wanted it in the statement as she and other members in the community do. She hopes she will receive e-mails from other Council members on why they refused to use it in the statement because it was important. Ms. Cyr thanked Linda for bringing up declaring racism as a public health crisis. It is something they need to revisit – it was tabled and there was not a discussion about it similar to her question about why they cannot use antiracism in the statement. She hopes they can have a listening session and discuss racism in the community with the Council and have more actionable items.

Kenny Trice, 53 Doe Run, introduced himself and welcomed Sophia to Tolland. He commented that he was black too. He commented on the statement prepared by the Council and said that it was fine; it is not perfect. He added that he told the Council that it would be hard and for what they have done it is fine but not perfect. Historically, there have been 8 civil rights bills, so it takes time. If they asked 400 people, they would get 25 different views. This is a start. Mr. Trice added that he once told the Council that he is not looking for them to give a summons to anyone or arrest anyone because they did something that seemed to be racist. What the Council is doing is at least the first step in saying it is a diverse community and they have heard from some of the citizens that there are still issues and they have

to take steps to get there. Mr. Trice explained that the Council does not have the answers, and this is ok. The world is not perfect, and everyone is human and has their issues. He applauds the Council for this step and thanked them for doing it. They will get better at it. They need to recognize it and call it out for what it is. This is what the Council as town leaders should do – acknowledge it and work on it.

16. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Jones motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 PM

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,



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Lisa Pascuzzi  
Town Council Clerk

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Town Council Chair

## **TOWN OF TOLLAND**

### **TOWN COUNCIL**

#### **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$5,000,000 FOR THE FIREHOUSE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AND THE FINANCING OF SAID APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE TOWN AND NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$5,000,000, AS WELL AS ESTABLISHING A DATE FOR A REFERENDUM AND THE SETTING OF A PUBLIC HEARING THEREON FOR MARCH 23, 2021**

RESOLVED, (1) That the Town of Tolland (the "Town") appropriate the sum of \$5,000,000 for costs related to certain building repairs, renovations, demolition, remediation work, improvements and/or construction associated with Fire Station 140 located at 64 Crystal Lake Road ("Station 140"), Fire Station 340 located at 247 Gehring Road ("Station 340"), and Fire Station 440 located at 107 Plains Road ("Station 440"), including, without limitation, the costs of (i) the remediation, repair and replacement of crumbling foundations at Station 140, (ii) the expansion of the apparatus bays at Station 140, (iii) the construction of additional building space for storage, sleeping quarters and other purposes at Station 140, (iv) ADA code compliance upgrades to the bathrooms and kitchen at Station 140, (v) electrical, lighting, drainage, HVAC system and other building system improvements to Station 140, (vi) the demolition and replacement of Station 340 with an approximately 3,700 square foot pre-engineered firehouse building having three (3) bays and all acquisition and moving costs related thereto, (vii) the demolition and replacement of Station 440 with an approximately 3,700 square foot pre-engineered firehouse building having three (3) bays and all acquisition and moving costs related thereto, (viii) the purchase and installation of equipment, fixtures, furnishings and other materials, (ix) the preparation and printing of bid documents, grant applications, cost estimate reports and studies, informational materials, schematic drawings, specifications, architect, engineering, construction and other consulting studies and reports, and other preliminary materials, studies and reports, and (x) design, demolition, remediation, construction, site work, engineering, architectural, construction administration, legal, administration, testing, monitoring, temporary and permanent financing and any other costs and expenses related thereto, all of the above with such changes as the Town Council may approve (the "Project"). The Town Council is authorized to determine the scope and particulars of the Project. The Town Council may reduce or modify the scope of the Project, and the entire appropriation authorized hereby may be spent on the Project as so reduced or modified.

(2) That to finance said appropriation for the Project, the Town issue bonds or notes in an amount not to exceed 5,000,000. The bonds or notes shall be issued pursuant to Chapter 109 of the Connecticut General Statutes, Revision of 1958, as amended (the "Connecticut General Statutes"), including, without limitation, Section 7-369 of the Connecticut General Statutes, and any other enabling acts.

(3) That the Town issue and renew temporary notes from time to time in anticipation of the receipt of the proceeds from the sale of the bonds or notes for the Project or the receipt of grants for the Project. The amount of the notes outstanding at any time shall not exceed \$5,000,000. The notes shall be issued pursuant to Section 7-378 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Town shall comply with the provisions of Section 7-378a of the Connecticut General Statutes with respect to any notes that do not mature within the time permitted by said Section 7-378.

(4) That the Town Manager and the Treasurer of the Town (the "Officials") be authorized to sign said bonds or notes by their manual or facsimile signatures and to determine the amounts, rates of interest, dates, maturities, dates of principal and interest payments on such bonds or notes, the form of such bonds or notes; the provisions for protecting and enforcing the rights and remedies of the holders of such bonds or notes and all other terms, conditions and particular matters regarding the issuance and securing of such bonds or notes and to execute, sell and deliver the same, and provide all supporting documentation as may be necessary or desirable to accomplish such purposes and to comply with the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, Securities and Exchange Commission Rule 15c2-12, and in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes and any other applicable provision of law thereto enabling. The bonds and notes authorized hereby shall be general obligations of the Town secured by the full faith and credit of the Town.

(5) That the Officials are hereby authorized to designate a bank or trust company to be the certifying bank, registrar, transfer agent and paying agent for such bonds and notes; to provide for the keeping of a record of the bonds or notes; to designate a financial advisor to the Town in connection with the sale of the bonds or notes; that the law firm of Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C., Hartford, Connecticut, is designated as the attorneys at law to render an opinion approving the legality of such issue or issues.

(6) That the Officials are authorized to sell the bonds and notes at public or private sale; to deliver the bonds or notes; and to perform all other acts which are necessary or appropriate to issue the bonds or notes, including, but not limited to, entering into a continuing disclosure agreement pursuant to Securities and Exchange Commission Rule 15c2-12. If the bonds or notes authorized by this resolution are issued on a tax-exempt basis, the Officials are authorized to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the bonds or notes, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years.

(7) That the Town hereby declares its official intent under Federal Income Tax Regulation Section 1.150-2 that project costs may be paid from temporary advances of available funds and that (except to the extent reimbursed from grant moneys) the Town reasonably expects to reimburse any such advances from the proceeds of borrowings in an aggregate principal amount not in excess of the amount of borrowing authorized above for the Project. The Officials are authorized to amend such declaration of official intent as they deem necessary or advisable and to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal

income taxation of interest on the bonds or notes authorized by this resolution, if issued on a tax-exempt basis, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years.

(8) That the Town Manager is hereby authorized, on behalf of the Town, to execute any contracts with engineers, contractors, architects and other persons for the Project, and to apply for and accept state or other grants to finance the appropriation for the Project.

(9) That the Officials and other proper officers of the Town are authorized to take all other actions which are necessary or desirable to complete the Project consistent with the foregoing and to issue bonds or notes to finance the aforesaid appropriation.

(10) That this resolution shall become effective after approval at referendum vote.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

- (1) That should the Town Council adopt the foregoing resolution, pursuant to Section C9-16 of the Town Charter, said resolution shall be submitted to the voters at referendum to be held on Tuesday, May 4, 2021, between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., for a yes or no vote, in the designated voting locations in the manner provided by said Charter and the Connecticut General Statutes, Revision of 1958, as amended, and that the Town Clerk is directed to post and publish notice of such referendum in accordance with the provisions of said Charter and the Connecticut General Statutes, which notice shall state the question to be voted on as follows:

“Shall the resolution entitled, ‘RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$5,000,000 FOR THE FIREHOUSE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AND THE FINANCING OF SAID APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE TOWN AND NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$5,000,000’, be approved?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_”

The ballot label for said question shall read as follows:

“Shall the Town of Tolland appropriate \$5,000,000 for the firehouse improvement project and authorize the issuance of general obligation bonds and notes in the same amount to finance said appropriation? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_”

- (2) That the Town Council hereby authorizes the preparation and

printing of explanatory text by the Town Clerk in accordance with Section 9-369b of the Connecticut General Statutes for the question to be voted upon on May 4, 2021 approved above. Subject to the approval of the Town Attorney, the Town Council further authorizes the preparation and printing of materials concerning the question to be voted upon on May 4, 2021 approved above in addition to the explanatory text in accordance with Section 9-369b of the Connecticut General Statutes.

**BUDGET MEETING MINUTES \* AMENDED \***  
**ZOOM MEETING**  
**MARCH 10, 2021**

**Present:** Tammy Nuccio, Steven Jones, John Reagan, Brenda Falusi, Lou Luba, Kurt Schenher and Cassandra York

**Also Present:** Michael Rosen, Town Manager  
Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services  
Lisa Hancock, Director of Finance and Records  
Scott Lappen, Public Works Director  
Jason Lawrence, Assessor  
Kathy Pagan, Acting Town Clerk  
Chris Jordan, Asst. Finance Director  
Michelle Manas, Collector of Revenue

Meeting called to order at 7:02 pm.

Town Manager Michael Rosen began the meeting by talking about the revenues and expenditures and the tax impact of the budget. He then talked about the potential adjustment in State Aid. The impact of the FY22 Governor's Adjusted Budget would be a decrease in revenue of \$330,081 mainly from ECS. With a total loss of revenue of \$674,154 including \$200,000 from Investment Income. **The Governor** used a figure for ECS in the amount of \$9,105,528. Including the BOE budget, the overall budget increase is 2.26%, which includes \$1,290,885 in additional expenditures. With a 1.26 mill rate increase to 37.31 mills. Top expenditure driver in the Town budget is Utilities (\$36,934) and Health Insurance (\$39,167). Only addition to the Town budget is the funding of the Project Manager position for ½ of the year.

The current estimated unassigned fund balance amount is \$8,265,012. The estimate for FY22 is \$7,965,012.

The Town Manager also talked about using \$350,000 from fund balance for revenue in FY22 and **\$110,000** from the Stabilization Fund.

The Town Manager went through the department budgets including Public Works; Finance; General Government;

Throughout the presentation there were questions from Town Council members on the following topics: insurance increase; fund balance; getting breakout of taxes by commercial vs. residential; investment income; Grants Manager position; mill rate growth; grants; fuel oil; Probate costs; overtime costs; salary increases in Public Works; unemployment costs; FY21 Adopted Budget.

Meeting adjourned at 10:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Wilkinson  
Director of Administrative Services

**BUDGET MEETING MINUTES  
ZOOM MEETING  
MARCH 11, 2021**

**Present:** Tammy Nuccio, Steven Jones, Brenda Falusi, Lou Luba, Kurt Schenher, John Reagan

**Absent:** Cassandra York

**Also Present:** Michael Rosen, Town Manager  
Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services  
Lisa Hancock, Director of Finance and Records  
John Littell, Public Safety Director  
Barbara Pettijohn, Library Director  
Bruce Watt, Recreation Director  
Kevin Eklund, Administrative State Trooper  
Lori Sherwood, Administrative Secretary  
Tina Binheimer, Animal Control Officer  
Rob DaBica, Fire Marshal  
Nancy Dunn, Assistant Human Services Director  
Beverly Bellody, Human Services Director

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

The Town Manager went through the department budgets including Fire Department; Human Services; Law Enforcement; Recreation; Library.

Throughout the presentation there were questions from Town Council members on the following topics: Human Services programming and volunteers; needs in budget Human Services; Senior Center reopening; Human Services staffing; Recreation programming; training requirement in law enforcement and insurance; adding funds for community conversation on racism; overtime; Public Safety salaries; neighborhood watch program; Fire sharing ACO facilities.

Meeting adjourned at 9:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Wilkinson  
Director of Administrative Services

**BUDGET MEETING MINUTES  
ZOOM MEETING  
MARCH 16, 2021**

**Present:** Tammy Nuccio, Steven Jones, Brenda Falusi, Lou Luba, Kurt Schenher, John Reagan, Cassandra York

**Also Present:** Michael Rosen, Town Manager  
Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services  
Lisa Hancock, Director of Finance and Records  
John Littell, Public Safety Director  
Michael D'Amato, Consulting Town Planner  
Walt Willett, BOE Superintendent  
Jim Paquin, Building Official

Meeting called to order at 7:02 pm.

The Town Manager went through the department budgets including Planning/Development; Solid Waste. BOE Superintendent did the presentation for the Board of Education.

Throughout the presentation there were questions from Town Council members on the following topics: staffing in Planning; ZBA and PZC line items; hazardous waste; composting; markets for recycling; BOE budget and programs; setting future BOE priorities; Birch Grove School; magnet and charter schools; use of Covid funds; new positions in BOE budget; summer school; new COO position; transportation budget; materials and textbooks budgets.

Public comment on department presentations included statements on the BOE budget and/or supporting the BOE budget from Karan Moran, Madhu Renduchintala, Colleen Yudichak, Dana Philbin, Michelle Harrold; Sophia Johnson; Liz Costa.

Meeting adjourned at 9:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Wilkinson  
Director of Administrative Services

## MINUTES

### TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL - BUDGET ZOOM REMOTE MEETING March 17, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tammy Nuccio, Chair; Steve Jones, Vice Chair; Brenda Falusi, Cassandra Forsythe (arrived at 7:04PM), Lou Luba, John Reagan (arrived at 7:04PM), Kurt Schenher

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** none

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael Rosen, Town Manager; Lisa Hancock, Director, Finance & Records/Treasurer; Bev Bellody, Director, Human Services; Mike Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services; John Littell, Fire Chief/Director of Public Safety; Bruce Watt, Director, Recreation; Kathy Pagan, Town Clerk; Scott Lappen, Director, Public Works; Jim Paquin, Building Official; Barbara Pettijohn, Director, Library Services; Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Nuccio called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. **PUBLIC HEARING ITEM:**

Mr. Rosen explained that this evening is an important step in the budget process for FY 21/22. Four items are part of this evening's public hearing: Town Government Operations, Board of Education Operations, Capital improvement Reserve Fund, Debt Service. The Town Manager proposed budget is as follows: Town Government, \$12,655,147; Capital Improvement Reserve Fund, \$167,946; Board of Education, \$41,000,289; Debt Service, \$4,650,000. This is a total FY 21/22 proposed budget of \$58,473,382.

2.1 2021-2022 Budget Proposed by the Town Manager

Town Government	\$12,655,147
Capital Improvement Reserve Fund	\$ 167,946
Board of Education	\$41,000,289
Debt Service	\$ 4,650,000

**Total Proposed Budget** **\$58,473,382**

Mr. Rosen reviewed the following presentation:

Town of Tolland, Public Hearing, March 17, 2021.

- Historical and Proposed Budget Revenues; Historical and Proposed Budgeted Expenditure Percentages; Grand List Growth; Mill Rate Increase
- Town Revenues 2021-2022
  - Projected Decreases/Increases for 2021/2022 from Non-Tax Revenue Sources
- Fund Balance
  - An amount of \$350,000 from Fund Balance is recommended to be used as revenue. Also, \$110,000 from the Stabilization Fund
- Unassigned Fund Balance
  - 2022 EST (includes assumption of use budgeted Fund balance) \$7,965,012, 12.12%
  - 2021 EST \$8,265,012, 12.95%
- Trends in General Fund Revenue Sources
- Expenditure Summary
- 2021/2022 Expenditures Budget \$58,473,382
- Town Expenditure Drivers
- Expenditure Revisions
- Board of Education Request
  - The Board of Education adopted a budget of \$41,293,289 or an increase of \$1,275,999 or 3.19%
  - The Town Manager propose budget reduces the Board of Education's request by \$293,000 to \$41,000,289 or an increase of \$982,999 or 2.46%

- Mill Rate Impact of the Financial Plan
  - Mill Rate = 37.31; an increase of 1.26 mills compared to the current mill rate of 36.05
- Tax Impact/Revaluation Impact
  - Overall average percentage increase .85%
- Approved Tax/Revaluation Increase/Decrease over the Past 6 Years for the Average Residential Home
- Capital Budget
- What Is A Capital Item?
- Capital Budget Planning Process
- Types of Funding Methods
- FY 21-22 Town of Vernon Water Pollution Control Plant Upgrade
  - Total amount: \$218,542
- FY 21-22: Significant Capital Projects Funded by the General Fund
  - Total amount: \$167,946
- FY21-22: Significant Capital Projects Funded by Other Sources
- Past 5 Year General Fund Capital Contributions
  - Town Manager Proposed FY22 = \$167,946 or 0.29%
- Tolland Debt Management Plan Schedule; 2021-2022 through 2025-2026
- Budget Schedule: Important Upcoming Dates
  - March 17, 2021, Public Hearing on Manager's Recommended Budget; Zoom meeting; 7:00PM
  - March 23, 2021, Council Discussion; Budget Finalized; Zoom meeting; 6:00PM
  - April 6, 2021, Advertise Budget
  - April 19, 2021, Annual Budget Presentation Meeting; Zoom meeting; 7:00PM
  - May 4, 2021, Annual Budget Referendum
  - By May 11, 2021, Council to establish mill rate upon referendum adoption

### 3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ashley Lundgren, 30 Hidden Valley, thanked Dr. Willett, the Board of Education, the Town Council, and Mike Rosen for working together to create a budget for the town. She fully supports the Board of Education budget and understands that it is the Town Council's job to pull all the budgets together to make a fiscally responsible decision for the town; however, Ms. Lundgren explained that it is her job to advocate for the educational system. As stated by Dr. Willett, the budget addresses 3 challenges: recovery, remediation, and reform. Ms. Lundgren commented that they owe it to their students, known as their future leaders, to stand by the Superintendent's budget request. COVID has impacted student learning and the mental health of the student population. Intervention is needed and Ms. Lundgren requested that they look at where the school system is heading. She added that they need to advocate for all students and that there is no magic wand that will fix the problems; however, a plan is in place to recover. Further, Ms. Lundgren asked that the Council take into account the percentage of what the Board of Education requested last year, the contract obligations, and this year's request. She thanked everyone for their hard work.

Michelle Harrold, 194 Sugar Hill Road, thanked Ms. Lundgren for being an advocate for her full budget. Ms. Harrold commented that for as close as they are to the bottom for per pupil expenditures, they are even closer to the top in median household income. She explained that this is a key indicator of a community's wealth and what it can afford. This is why it is being stepped down with ECS. Ms. Harrold commented that they have been underfunding the community for at least the last 4 budget cycles and creating budgets with minimal increases that are a far cry from investing in the community that can afford it. She added that she understands that not everyone in the community can afford the increases in taxes. She would argue that those are the families and residents who need the services that are being reduced the most. Many residents could afford to pay if their students needed extra help but not everyone has that luxury, and they are the ones who need the budget. Ms. Harrold commented that they need to invest in the community, and she hopes all the questions, time, and energy spent pouring over the BOE budget over the last couple of weeks has proven that 3.5% is not enough of a mill rate increase this year. She hopes they have had a chance to use the tax calculator and see what the tax increase would be for a 3.5% and how gentle a bump it would be to increase it to 4%. She added that she is unsure if it would bring the Board to its full request, but they would be closer. Ms. Harrold commented that the students matter, and they cannot afford to reduce services as they recover from the pandemic. She asked that the investment be made in the community and they fully fund every budget and she noted that she supports the fire department.

Christina Plourd, 101 Metcalf Road, commented that anyone who has followed for the 3 past years knows that she is an advocate for all citizens of Tolland and that she has tried to help advocate for families to stay in Tolland. She explained that she will never forget the mom of 4 a couple of years ago who begged to stay in town for her kids but could not afford the increasing property taxes. The narrative that it is only a cup of coffee or a tank of gas does not work for Ms. Plourd. She thanked the Council and the current Board of Education and the staff for helping everyone find the balance for the community. Not everyone is rich. She commented that she is speaking as both a town mom and a member of the Board of Education (Board) but not on behalf of the entire Board. She is speaking on her own. Ms. Plourd commented that this Board has worked hard with Dr. Willett to understand the budget. They know where the money is going and what they are doing for the students. The Board unanimously approved the budget, and she supports the work that was done and will continue to ensure she supports it as they pull out of the pandemic. She commented that she knows that staff, families, and the community as a whole will work together to overcome the learning loss many have suffered. She believes the Board's portion of the town budget is responsible to the students and she thanked everyone for the questions to try to understand each line item, the process, and the reasoning. Ms. Plourd added that she appreciates that Mr. Rosen worked with Dr. Willett on his proposed budget to find a balance and she has faith in that partnership. Ms. Plourd commented that she realizes that there may be some disappointment that the Board's original budget was reduced but she is confident that they can move forward and work together. She noted that she supports this budget and appreciates everyone's hard work.

Sophia Shaikh commented that she does not have a question for the Council because to her there is no question that the Board of Education's proposed budget of the 3.19% increase is what the Town Council should approve. She commented that the children are the direct beneficiaries of the budget and they are the most precious ones and the ones most impacted by the decision, yet they do not have a voice in this process. Ms. Shaikh commented that she feels compelled to advocate for them. She added that everyone has faced hardship during the pandemic and whose lives have been most affected or upset but the children's. Although they have adapted, the lasting impacts of COVID-19 will haunt the children. As adults, they lament about the economy, how long it will take to normalize, and understand that it could take years. Ms. Shaikh commented that they would be remiss to think otherwise about the effects of COVID-19 and the children. This will be with the children and part of the fabric of their generation. She added that they owe it to them to give them every opportunity to flourish and to recover. The 3.19% increase builds in supports for the children that they desperately need. She added that the 3.19% is imperative for them right now. They provided them with masks, social distancing, and online learning. She asked why they would discontinue the efforts and asked that the 3.19% budget be approved as it was presented by the Board of Education. She asked that it be approved for the children.

Karen Moran, 50 Merlot Way, commented that she supports the 10 plus weeks of the budget work of the Board of Education and Superintendent and the hours of subcommittee work and the town department's work. She added that she supports the hours of questions in public session and the hours spent answering questions offline by the Superintendent. Further, she supports the collaborative work by the Town Manager and Superintendent as well as the needs of the school district which is represented by a 3.19%. Ms. Moran commented that she would still like to hear from the legislative delegation about ECS and added that they owe them some answers and direction. She also wants to know how the schools' needs will be impacted by a reduction to 2.46%. She added that if they are going to go ahead with this, she believes the community is owed an answer.

Liz Costa, 54 Josiah Lane, commented that she advocates for supporting the Fire Department and wants to ensure the dollars are spent in the right way. She advocates for rebuilding the firehouses and the investments needed in that department. Ms. Costa thanked Ms. Lundgren for supporting the budget that she worked tirelessly on. Further, Ms. Costa commented that they have one chance to support the children coming out of the pandemic. She asked that they ask Dr. Willett what will be lost as a result of going from 3.19% to 2.46% and encouraged them to listen. She encouraged them to define how they want to treat this one-time event coming out of the pandemic and how the children will be supported. She supports the 3.19%.

Madhu Renduchintala, 93 Hurlbut Road, thanked Dr. Willett and Mr. Rosen for working together to come up with a responsible budget. He commented that he advocates for the work they did over the course of 10 weeks for the 3.19% increase. They poked, prodded, and asked questions. Everything in the budget was vetted and found a need for. He encouraged the Town Council to go back through the Board's minutes and tape and see why they are asking for the money. It was vetted and the need is real.

Kenny Trice, 53 Doe Run, thanked everyone who worked on the budget – the Board of Education, Dr. Willett, and others who were instrumental in getting the budget to where it is. Their efforts are noted and appreciated. Mr. Trice commented that he supports the original 3.19% budget for a lot of reasons. Over the last several years he has heard that they have been trying to figure out how to cut and make everybody happy. He commented that they pay for it now or they pay for it later. Somewhere along the line, if they keep kicking the can down the road, they will pay for it later. Mr. Trice commented that most people like to have education as a critical part of where they live, where they go, and what they do for their children. No one likes to pay higher taxes but somewhere along the line everything goes up. If it does not, it becomes obsolete, and no one wants it. He supports the original 3.19% budget and believes it is something that needs to be considered. Mr. Trice commented that they should trust the team. The team worked on it and knows it inside out. Lastly, he supports the Fire Department and the revamping of the firehouses. It is something that has to be done and he hopes everyone will consider it because when one dials 911, you just want someone to help you. At that moment when one is in trouble, they want help, so he supports the Fire Department's budget.

Rebecca Risley, 103 Mountain Spring Road, commented that she wants to add her voice on supporting the 3.19%. The budget was worked on diligently and tirelessly with effort from the Chair and the Board. Seeing all the hard work they put in and what Dr. Willett put together regarding the needs of the children, she thinks it is something the Town Council needs to look at and consider. Ms. Risley commented that she also supports the Fire Department and support the town. She wants to see the town grow and prosper for all members of the town. She added that she realizes that everyone has different circumstances such as the mother of 4 mentioned by Ms. Plourd and it is difficult. Ms. Risley commented that she came from a single parent home and it is hard and there are other avenues to get help as well and the school resources that are being taken away and those are things that could be helpful to that family.

Colleen Yudichak, 12 Blueberry Hill, commented that she would like to echo what her neighbors are saying and 110% supports the 3.19% increase from the Board of Education. She added that she understands what the Town Manager is doing but they cannot let the kids slip through the cracks. It will cost more down the road if they end up in special education. It will cost the town a tremendously more money. Ms. Yudichak commented that she 110% supports the Fire Department. They have been in her neighborhood a few times and have been helpful, kind, and responsive. Ms. Yudichak commented that if they go with the Town Manager's budget, she hopes they do not go further below what the Town Manager is asking. She thanked the Board of Education members who fought for their budget. They did a good job, came together, and put out a good amount.

Mary Rose Duberek, 37 Ryan Road, thanked all the town departments and elected officials. She commented that she has been paying attention to this process for the last year on both the Town Council and Board of Education sides. Everyone is going through the pandemic together. She commented that she supports the original Board of Education budget. They worked hard on the budget and dotted all the i's and crossed all the t's. Ms. Duberek added that she is concerned because if it was so carefully crafted, what would be lost based on the new proposal. She noted that she supports all the other departments. It is an amazing town, everyone lives in Tolland for a reason, and she want to support it. The Fire Department is top notch and holds a special place in her heart because they have been good to her and her family. She thanked everyone and asked if they could work toward the original Board of Education budget it would mean a lot to families with children and the community at large.

Dana Philbin, 11 Harvest Lane, noted that she is a member of the Board of Education. She commented that she advocates for the 3.19% original proposed budget that was put together by longer than 10 weeks of collective hard work to find the resources and needs of the students and staff of the school system. She added that Dr. Willett has used "recovery rebuild reform" repeatedly and it is not going to be a one and done situation. Once they are through the COVID pandemic, there will be years of recovery needed for all students. For some of the younger students, this could have impacted their entire educational careers – at least the 12 years in the Tolland Public School system. She commented that it is important to look at recovery for the long haul and in all aspects such as special education, general education, or all education. The schools were there when students went remote and supported students by sending home books, paper, literature, Chromebooks, and needed supplies. Ms. Philbin commented that her concern with any reduction less than what was proposed as a collective and diverse team of the Board of Education, would not necessarily be responsible by the students. She asked what the reduction impacts would be educationally for students. She commented that as adults speaking for the students, who cannot fight for their education including services in the classroom and beyond as well as events, they need to support students in all capacities. She asked what the impacts would be by reducing the 3.19% to a possible 2.46%. Will it be personnel or education and how are they supporting the students. Ms. Philbin commented that she appreciates everyone who has been involved in the process and people who

have attended meetings and listened. She thanked them for speaking their truth and that they all want what is best for Tolland. She commented that Ms. Plourd often speaks of the young family that resonates with her and Ms. Philbin is appreciative. Ms. Philbin believes everyone has a family that resonates with them in some capacity. Tolland rallies together and does its best to support community members. This is an opportunity to support community members in all capacities. She added that she is not just fighting for the Board of Education budget but is an advocate for the educational system. She cited Andy Powell that they are guardians of education and she feels strongly about their work and that of the Fire Department. The Fire Department's presentation was impactful and people in town are important to the continued growth and progress of Tolland. It is evident in the families that move to town and stay in town. They need to continue to fund resources and people who cannot afford the tax increase. The resources they may cut in the school budget could be the resources for after school programming and additional special education programming. It may be a parent who cannot afford a Chromebook, toner, or printer paper. This is what the schools have been there for. For those who cannot afford a tax increase, they do not want to remove resources that support those families across the board – not only those in the school system but through the entire Tolland community. She supports the original 3.19% and the Tolland Board of Education and its hard work. Ms. Philbin asked that they also work on rebuilding the firehouses. When she dials 911, she wants Chief Littell and his team to be there to support her family and her neighbors.

Linda Scheidel, 81 Morgan Lane, commented that there is so much that the town has had to reduce due to the increase in taxes. No one wants to pay more taxes. She asked why there has not been anything done to help alleviate the large reliance on household taxes. This is the major thing – they need to bring in more stuff and she does not see anything being done to alleviate the homes' tax increases. She added that she supports the 3.19% presented by the Board of Education. She wants everyone on the call and reading the minutes to hear what now needs to be cut from the Board of Education's budget to accommodate the decrease. Ms. Scheidel commented that it is not Dr. Willett's annual raise because he has opted not to take one of them. She asked if it will be the support position he included in the budget so he can stop doing all the jobs he has taken on because he does not have the budget to give himself the support. She commented that it is not something they can do to entice people to come to town. The more they do not support the schools, the more families that will have to leave because they can find more support in another town.

Andy Powell, 21 Clearbrook Drive, noted that he is commenting as a private citizen and not as associated with any board, collective, or group. He commented that knowing the work that goes into producing budgets and the balancing act that needs to be done over time, they are in a special situation that they have not seen in a long time. He believes that part of what has been missed is the work from the town side such as social services, parks and rec, the DPW, and the people who have done the work to allow the other components of the town to work. He provided examples of supporting seniors and other groups. Social services are what really makes things work and they did not see much from those departments. Mr. Powell commented that he supports the Town Manager's work in being able to give them the needed resources. This ties into the continual capital investments that need to be made for the DPW as well as other investments – specifically public safety. People turn to them when it is their worst day and public safety needs equipment, storage, and modern working and living spaces to be able to do their job. Mr. Powell commented that he worked with the CERT team and saw members of public safety in action and led by one of the greatest professionals who has been recognized in Tolland County and the state. Chief Littell has put forward an amazingly professional and responsible team and they want to include citizen engagement. Mr. Powell noted that he is in full support of the bonding for the firehouses and if they can find grants for public safety it will only help the townspeople. Regarding the Board of Education, if 3.19% is the best that can be done then he supports it. Mr. Powell added that if one told Dr. Willett that he had \$10M, he would find the best possible way to provide services to students, but they need to do things in compliance with mandates and necessary work. He added that Tolland's educational system has been chronically underfunded. Since his family moved to town almost 20 years ago, they have seen services, classes, groups, teams, organizations, and experiences dropped. He noted that they got new buildings and needed them, but this was a bonding issue. Investment in education in terms of what they could have done has not happened. If 3.19% is the best they can do, then it is the best they can do. Mr. Powell commented that this all equates to a Tolland that has continuing expenses in terms of more mill rates and property taxes. They are blessed with a great town but commercially, they have challenges. They will find ways to be able to meet those in the long term. The tax base will still be reliant upon personal property taxes. They are doing the best they can. Mr. Powell thanked everyone for their service both on the Town Council and the Board of Education.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

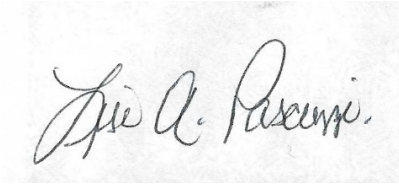
Mr. Jones motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 PM

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa A. Pascuzzi", is centered within a rectangular box. The signature is written in a cursive style.

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Lisa Pascuzzi  
Town Council Clerk

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Town Council Chair