

REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

JUNE 1, 2020

Sharon Pistilli, District 3, asked if Covid restrictions would change the way HazWaste day is conducted. Mr. Zembruski said the process has been streamlined to reduce contact between people, including completing the form online instead of on site.

VOTE: This item was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 6 ON CALL: RESOLUTION TO APPROVE \$2,147,800 LOTCIP GRANT AND AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT GRANT

Ms. Gale moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded. Town Engineer Bill Hurley was present.

VOTE: This item was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 7 ON CALL: RESOLUTION ACCEPTING FEDERAL LOCAL BRIDGE PROGRAM GRANT TO FUND DESIGN PROJECT COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE KINGS HIGHWAY WEST (GREENS FARMS ROAD) AND WAKEMAN LANE (OLD ROAD) BRIDGES SHARED WITH THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD

The Moderator moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded. Town Engineer Bill Hurley was present.

VOTE: This item was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 8 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON SELF-SUPPORTING FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$6,012,983 FOR THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR OF JULY 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021

Ms. Vergara moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

Pam Iacono, District 8, moved to reduce the motor vehicle fuel line item of \$19,902 by \$986, which represents the lower fuel pricing, duly seconded.

VOTE: The motion to reduce this item by \$986 was approved by unanimous voice vote.

VOTE: The motion to approve the self-supporting WPCA funds, as amended, was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 9 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON SELF-SUPPORTING FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$172,984 FOR THE REGIONAL FIRE TRAINING SCHOOL FOR THE FISCAL YEAR OF JULY 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021

Mr. McDermott moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

VOTE: The motion to approve the self-supporting Fire Training School funds was approved by unanimous voice vote.

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ITEM NO. 10 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$318,294,856 FOR FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021

Ms. Ringel moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

MOTION: Jill Vergara, District 7, moved to reduce the proposed budget by \$924,924, which represents savings in motor vehicle fuel and school transportation, as delineated in the attached schedule of reductions, duly seconded.

Majority Leader Vergara and Minority Leader Iacono indicated that they worked in a bipartisan manner to find savings and reductions to get to a zero budget increase, and ease the tax burden for the residents and the betterment of the Town.

VOTE: The motion to reduce the budget by \$924,924 was approved by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION: Pamela Iacono, District 8, moved to eliminate the positions of DPW Foreman and DPW Maintenance/repairman, salaries and corresponding benefits, for a total budget reduction amount of \$192,153, duly seconded.

Julie Gottlieb, District 5, noted that the Board of Finance was informed that these positions were essential and could not be cut. She asked if a new Director of Public Works would not want these positions available to be filled.

First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick explained that she is trying to reorganize departments for efficiencies and cost-savings. She said she is confident we can move forward with the staff we have in place.

VOTE: The motion to reduce the proposed budget by \$192,153 was approved with 30 in favor, 10 opposed (Jacobs, Alice Kelly, Odinak, Seibert, Wolk, Ambrose, Havey, Bove, Wackerman, Georgiadis).

MOTION: Marcy Spolyar, District 4, moved to reduce the proposed budget by \$56,330, which represents salary and associated benefits for the Chief Administrative Officer, duly seconded.

Ms. Spolyar explained that although she believes there is not enough support for this motion to carry, the position was created during an emergency meeting and she does not believe the position offers anything new to the Town.

First Selectwoman Kupchick explained that the Office of the First Selectman is understaffed, especially compared to surrounding towns. She consulted the Town Attorney and the Chief Financial Officer and requested the transfer of surplus funds from other departments to fund this position.

Sharon Pistilli, District 3, asked how the CAO's position will change once a new CFO is hired.

First Selectwoman Kupchick said she will not discuss personnel in public session, but one of the duties the CAO is handling is attending meetings on her behalf.

Ms. Pistilli asked if the First Selectwoman will be able to define specific goals for the position, with proof of return on the investment, to which Ms. Kupchick replied yes.

Matthew Jacobs, District 3, noted that the position has the highest paid salary in town, for an untested

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position.

First Selectwoman Kupchick said that the goal is to reduce taxes. She had wanted to increase the staff in the economic development and other departments, and all of the requests were cut. We need to pay for qualified personnel in order to grow the grand list and now, during the pandemic crisis, to save the current grand list. She asked that she be given a chance to do the job she was elected to do.

Karen McCormack, District 2, said that it is not fair to ask for an accounting of a new position in the first budget cycle during a pandemic.

Jay Wolk, District 5, said he recognized the great work being done by the First Selectwoman's administration during this difficult time, and said it was unfair to cut the Chief of Staff position from the previous administration.

First Selectwoman Kupchick said she needs the appropriate staff. We are at a zero percent budget increase and this position costs approximately twenty-five cents per household.

Jeff Steele, District 2, said that we are in unprecedented times. Good questions have been asked and great answers have been given. We need to pay for good talent for the betterment of the Town. There are myriad issues, and the First Selectwoman has justified the position.

Julie Gottlieb, District 5, said she is appreciative of the staff, but we need to look at the bottom line. We must be financially conservative. Everybody has to do more with less, and we need to share the pain.

WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION: Ms. Spolyar withdrew the motion to reduce the budget by \$56,330.

VOTE: The 2020-2021 budget, as amended, in the amount of \$317,177,779, was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:44 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth P. Browne, MCTC, MMC
Town Clerk

Recorded by: Ann Roche