

Public Comments for April 29, 2020 Public Hearing on Budget FY 2021

1. TO: TOWN COUNCIL FOR APRIL 29, 2020 MEETING

COMMENTS REGARDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 PROPOSED ANNUAL OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET
FROM: GEORGE YOUNG, 8 HOLLY LANE, ENFIELD

As James Carville said after Bill Clinton won the 1992 election: "pocketbook issues drive voting".

I understand that the Town Manager is presenting to the Council his best effort at this time to keep the budget in line for the next year without an increase in the mill rate and no increase in taxes. That is so far afield from what is happening. There is another underlying increase in taxes similar to when the monies in the operating budget were transferred to the WPC and out of the regular budget to a separate entity and the separate bills just keep coming. This year the Council has removed the cost for Fire Protection that it was previously billed by the water companies and transferred it to the Fire Districts to now be a bill that they would have to pay. We do not know how much of an increase in our mill rate for the fire district this will be, but it results in another tax increase. In addition, the assessment value of the properties the Town was sued for and agreed to this year will also be reflected in the amount of monies that are not going to the Fire District which will put a burden on them. I know the Town has to make up that \$1 million it lost because of that revaluation but so does the Fire Tax District#2 that the properties sit in.

For the last 4 to 6 months or more we have been told that the Roads 2020 project was so important to be done to keep the momentum going for road improvement. Then we were told that there would also be a Roof Replacement project which was critical. These were both part of what was to be a referendum to be voted on in November by the public. These projects were so important at the time. I know that Holly Lane has never been done by the Town because it is the original road put in by the developer and paid for by the purchasers of those properties 50+ years ago. This is a 1,000 foot road and the cost at \$300/foot would be \$300,000. I'm sure that Covid-19 changed the thought process for going for a referendum. This is a vote for a future expenditure and you should let the residents make that decision. What a great time to do a project like this when you are employing local people to get a job done and re-start the economy. The trickle-down effect of this project is important to companies that win the bid to do the job. This is a time when the price of oil products are at an all-time low and so are the interest rates. I would encourage the Council to go ahead with this and relieve the pressure on future budgets to scramble to repair roofs, etc. As previously stated, let the Voters decide the issue.

Since Governor Lamont announced on 4/1/2020 a 90-day grace period for all mortgage payments for up to 90 days and many participating lending institutions have agreed to waive late fees, etc for this period of time I imagine that many banks will not have funds escrowed to pay the taxes of the homeowners due on July 1, 2020. Does the Town have any plans to defer any of these payments and if so, what are they? What about the same type of deferment for those who do not escrow their taxes? What type of impact has the Town planned on for this non-collection period and have they contacted any banks or other financial institutions to determine what the impact would be on the Town and the Fire Districts who get paid 100% in August or September

+of the billed amount regardless of the amounts collected by the Town?

Once again we are asked to either pay today or wait until tomorrow to fund the Water Pollution Control Facility. Waiting until tomorrow generates another annual deficit in the WPC. Why does the decision to raise the rate become either the full amount or keep it the same? What is wrong with splitting it down the middle and do a \$6/quarterly increase for the base rate. As usual we have no idea how customers are paying at each rate schedule so we have no idea what the effect is when the rate is changed.

Have there been any Covid-19 related layoffs in the Town or the School this year? Are there any planned for next year? Are the School Resource Officers still getting paid or have they been reassigned.

Are there any other type of items that are in the Town budget that could be reclassified to CIP where there might be funds available?

1. Dear Mayor Ludwick, Deputy Mayor Szewczak, Town Councilors, and Town Manager Bromson,

As a member of Joint Facilities, and an Enfield resident, I am requesting a closer look at the proposed budget to include the Roofs Referendum. Our Town Buildings, especially our School Roofs, are in dire need of repair. Our committee has worked hard on defining the issues, building by building, and have brought forward what we thought to be a plan that Enfield Residents would understand and want. By placing the referendum on the ballot for November 2020, we will be giving the Residents an opportunity to say yes or no to our plan. If the referendum passes, as we believe it will, this money will not be immediate, will be spent over a 5-year period, with a 70% reimbursement from the State. By continuing to replace the roofs in stages, we are actually costing the tax payers more money. I do not believe this referendum will impact the budget so much that we should not at least try. Together our committee along with the Director and Deputy Director of Public Works, will do our best to keep the referendum a reasonable amount. I would also like a closer look at the proposed upgrade to our Transfer Station. If at this time we can not do everything we proposed, I do believe we should at least look at the building itself. This building needs to be updated for safety issues and working conditions. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you with any questions or comments you have.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to our community.

Sincerely,

Marie Pyznar