

**ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL VIRTUAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2020**

A Special Virtual Meeting of the Enfield Town Council was called to order by Chairman Ludwick on Wednesday, April 22, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL-CALL – Present were Councilors Bosco, Cekala, Hemmeler, Kiner, Ludwick, Mangini, Muller, Riley, Sferrazza, Szewczak and Unghire Also present were Town Manager, Christopher Bromson; Assistant Town Manager, Kasia Purciello; Town Clerk, Suzanne Olechnicki; Town Attorney, James Tallberg; Chief Information Officer, Paul Russell; Chief of Police, Alaric Fox; Director of Finance, John Wilcox; Director of Social Services, Cindy Guerreri; Library Director, Jason Neely; Director of Development Services, Laurie Whitten; EMS Chief, Erin Riggott; Director of Public Works, Donald Nunes; Supervisor of Assessment and Revenue Collection, Della Froment; Administrative Secretary to the Town Manager, Debra McCarthy; Director of Human Services, Steven Bielenda

RESOLUTION #5415 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Szewczak.

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Enfield values the opinions and comments of its constituents; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Chapter VI, Section 4, of the Enfield Town Charter, any elector or taxpayer may have an opportunity to be heard regarding appropriations for the ensuing fiscal year and for the purpose of being heard on issues of vital community importance and concern; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council shall conduct a virtual public hearing Wednesday, April 29, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. that will be available for viewing on YouTube; and

WHEREAS, due to the public health emergency, public speaking will be by written testimony only and electors or taxpayers may submit written testimony stating name and address to PHBudgetComments@enfield.org by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 27, 2020; and

WHEREAS, all public comment received from any Enfield electors or taxpayers will be posted to a link provided at the Town's website at least 24 hours prior to the public hearing.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the order of business of the 2020-2021 budget hearing be arranged as follows:

1. Mayor will recite the gross number of public comments received, memorializing the fact that they were received by email in accordance with procedures provided by Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B, issued March 14, 2020 and Executive Order 7I, issued March 21, 2020.

2. Mayor will confirm receipt and review of those public comments by each Town Councilor as part of their budget deliberation.
3. After documenting receipt and review of public comment, the record for the public hearing will be closed and the Council's budget deliberations should proceed forthwith.

Mr. Bromson stated the Town is adhering to its budget timeline as he outlined in the April 15th budget submission to the Council.

Attorney Tallberg stated as indicated in the resolution, the two most pertinent executive orders are 7B and 7I, which suspend the in-person open-meeting requirements and which provide this process by which the Town is allowed to receive written testimony by email. He noted many other municipalities are following this procedure. He suggested that when the written submissions come in, they be made available to each Councilor, and the Council should review those comments. He stated after a record is made, regarding the gross number of submissions, the Council could have its normal deliberations after they close the public record and make any comments they deem appropriate as members of the Council. He stated this is what's being done to comply in the face of this global pandemic, as authorized by the executive orders.

Councilor Szewczak stated her understanding the budget is available to everyone online, so the public can review it, and Mr. Bromson stated it's his understanding it has been posted on the Town's website. Councilor Szewczak questioned whether anything is being done for those people who don't possess technology. Mr. Bromson stated it won't be practical to do so, because all Town buildings are closed. Councilor Szewczak suggested perhaps a person could pick up a copy at the Police Department. Mr. Bromson agreed they can make a certain number available at the Police Department, and if anyone requests another form, manner, or place, the Town will try to make that accommodation as well.

Councilor Bosco questioned whether there can be clarification about a referendum, and Mr. Bromson stated he will ask the Director of Finance to reach out to bond counsel to see if a referendum can be phrased in that manner, that it will proceed unless there are certain caveats. He added his belief probably not because he feels it must be very clear and certain to the electorate when they are voting. He noted that inquiry will be made, and that will be available prior to the Council's deliberations on May 5th or 6th.

Councilor Cekala stated when this is put out to the public, she requested a link be provided as to where people can find the budget, and she was informed there is a link available.

Councilor Riley requested the email address that people will be sending their comments to be in bold print. She questioned whether Council members will be reading the public's comments out loud and then answering them. Mr. Bromson responded no, the requirement is that the public will have the opportunity to have their statements made as part of the record. He added a Council member may make a comment or read a portion of a person's comment. He pointed out the Council will have these comments in advance. He clarified that comments can only be from residents or electors of the town in order to opine. Attorney Tallberg agreed with the Town

Manager and noted there is not a requirement in the executive orders to read all the comments, but they need only create a record that they have been received as part of the record.

Council Riley questioned whether all the questions and comments about the budget will be posted as part of the minutes of that meeting. Attorney Tallberg stated a record will be created at the public hearing with regard to the gross number of persons who submitted written testimony, but not necessarily the specific comments that they all submitted, unless a Councilor wished to make specific note of it in the record. Mr. Bromson responded that's correct.

Councilor Szewczak stated it should be made clear to people that they must provide their name and address when they deliver their comments.

Attorney Tallberg stated there's already a place-holder link on the Town website within the budget area where the comments from the public can be submitted.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #5415** adopted 11-0-0.

RESOLUTION #5416 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Mangini.

WHEREAS, due to the Covid-19 emergency, the Town's EMS Division would like to provide an ambulance to the Somers Fire Department; and

WHEREAS, the ambulance will be crewed by appropriately trained and certified personnel from the Somers Fire Department; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, Christopher W. Bromson, is authorized to enter into and amend the Ambulance Staffing Agreement with the Town of Somers, subject to the approval of the Town Attorney.

Mr. Bromson stated Enfield has several Town EMS employees out as a result of the COVID-19 virus, and they are being quarantined. He noted Enfield has mutual aid agreements with surrounding towns. He stated Enfield has an extra ambulance, and Somers has extra personnel, therefore, Enfield will provide Somers with an ambulance. He noted Somers will primarily help to assist in responding to DOC facilities. He explained there is an obligation to respond to Northern and Osborn DOC facilities, and it will be quite an increase of calls. He pointed out on Friday three inmates needed to be transferred within a couple hours. He stated this is a mutually beneficial collaborative agreement. which will help Enfield in fulfilling its obligation to DOC and to allow Somers to back-fill and assist in mutual aid calls back to the Town of Enfield as well. He urged the Council pass this resolution.

Attorney Tallberg commended Attorney Mark Cerrato for his work on this.

Ms. Riggott urged the Council to pass this. She noted this has been a very good collaborative. She also thanked the Town Attorney for having this drafted so promptly.

Councilor Szewczak stated Somers and Enfield do support the DOC. She questioned what the state is doing to supplement the needs of the DOC to help with COVID patients. Mr. Bromson stated there will be another call with the Commissioner of the DOC to address both short and long term needs and resources. He noted the prison used to have its own ambulance, but that's changed over the years. He stated they have provided a list of concerns to the Commissioner, and they will be having a discussion soon.

Councilor Mangini stated she's concerned about Enfield residents. She pointed out the State of Connecticut should be responsible for the Department of Corrections. She agreed it's great to have a partnership with Somers, but she'd like to further explore how the State can take some of the burden off the towns.

Councilor Riley voiced concern for the safety of EMS personnel transporting DOC residents and stated her hope DOC is providing a guard in the ambulance, and Mr. Bromson responded DOC does provide security.

Councilor Sferrazza stated Enfield has the first responder and OEMS license to do medical calls. He noted legally this isn't an option, but rather Enfield needs to respond to the best of its ability because of the licensing agreements the Town has with the State. Attorney Tallberg responded that's his understanding.

Chairman Ludwick expressed his appreciation to everyone for working together so quickly to bring this to a resolution. He also thanked the Somers Fire Department for being a good partner with Enfield.

Mr. Bromson commended Erin Riggott and the EMS staff for doing an outstanding job.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #5416** adopted 11-0-0.

RESOLUTION #5417 by Councilor Szewczak, seconded by Councilor Mangini.

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2020, Governor Lamont issued a declaration of public health and civil preparedness emergency, proclaiming a state of emergency throughout the State of Connecticut as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19); and

WHEREAS, Governor Lamont issued Executive Order No. 7S on April 1, 2020, and under Section 6, requires municipalities, by vote of its legislative body to participate in at least one of the two established programs: a) Tax Deferment Program, and/or b) Low Interest Rate Program; and

WHEREAS, the Tax Deferment Program can provide up to 90 days relief for certain payments due by taxpayers for tax and sewer use accounts; and

WHEREAS, the Town must inform the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) no later than April 25, 2020 which program(s) the Town will participate in.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Enfield Town Council hereby selects to participate in the Tax Deferment Program, under Section 6(b) of the Executive Order No. 7S, and the Director of Finance and the Supervisor of Assessment and Revenue Collection are hereby authorized to carry out all such requirements in the implementation of the program.

Chairman Ludwick stated there's actually two resolutions – one for the tax deferment and one for the low interest rate program. He noted depending on which way they go, they must re-do the resolution.

Mr. Wilcox stated the executive order says that the town must select at least one program, or both programs may be implemented. He noted he included two resolutions with the first being the deferment program, which he does not recommend. He explained the deferment program would apply to residential taxpayers, who have been impacted by the COVID virus, and their income has been reduced by 20% or more, and for a business taxpayer, their business has been impacted by 30% or more. He noted an application would have to be submitted to the Town by July 1st along with substantiating information. He pointed out this would amount to many applications, and it's believed that this is not the way to go. He added that could create a delay in tax receipts, which would cause the Town to have to take other measures to fund the operation of the government.

He stated it's recommended using the low interest rate program.

Ms. Froment stated OPM has created an application on its website. She noted administration would have to determine what criteria is utilized to determine if someone would be eligible.

Attorney Tallberg stated a decision needs to be made this evening because of the tight deadline of April 25, 2020.

Mr. Bromson agreed with the recommendation of Mr. Wilcox and Ms. Froment.

Councilor Unghire stated the federal government deferred everyone's taxes from April to July and don't require any type of application or proof someone doesn't have the funds or is unemployed. Ms. Froment responded the Town would have to require that. Mr. Bromson added the Town is just following the language and that's a mandate that the Governor has included in his executive order, therefore, the Town must comply with it.

Councilor Hemmeler stated everyone definitely wants to help the taxpayers, but at the same time they must be sure the funds are available to run the town. She noted she's definitely more in favor of the low interest rate program.

Councilor Bosco stated he likes the tax deferment, but he believes it will cause a lot of issues and confusion between the taxpayers and Town staff. He noted he will support the low interest rate program resolution.

Councilor Kiner stated he's leaning toward the deferment program due to the trauma that many residents are going through with many people unemployed and who will have difficulty paying taxes. He stated his understanding this will create a hardship for the Town, but it will only be temporary until October comes and then payment will be made. He noted he also supports the low interest rate program.

Councilor Cekala stated she would like more of a reason why it would be difficult for Town staff to implement the tax deferment program. She noted there are people in Enfield who would really benefit from a deferment and the low interest rate program.

Councilor Mangini stated her understanding the deferment program could apply to all taxpayers, and that's not being recommended by staff. She noted the low interest program does apply to all taxpayers, and that is supported by staff. She questioned if they should or could support both programs, and must they choose one over the other. She questioned if there could be a hybrid between the two programs.

Mr. Bromson stated they could do both programs, but there's no hybrid because of the specifics in the mandate, and they must follow what the executive order outlines. He stated the recommendation of the staff, for reasons stated, is to go with the low interest rate program. He went on to note he is not saying they shouldn't support the tax deferment program because it would represent a caseload increase for staff. He stated the tax deferment program will not only be a logistical nightmare, but will probably be delayed, people will be frustrated or outraged that they didn't file something, or they must file something else. He noted while the State had good intentions, the devil is in the details that the towns are left with to try and implement and figure out. He feels this would be a disaster in the making, so for that reason and clarity, and for not confusing and upsetting and frustrating residents further and giving them greater anxiety, he feels it's a lot simpler, cleaner and more easily implemented and beneficial to residents to be very clear and offer the low interest rate program. He believes the tax deferment program will be fraught with confusion, and it will create a lot of ill sentiment and frustration from the public.

Councilor Mangini stated her understanding the low interest program does apply to all taxpayers across the board, and Mr. Wilcox responded yes, it applies to all taxpayers.

Councilor Riley stated it would be great to defer taxes for 90 days and would definitely help a lot of people, but she would not like to see the town get into a worse situation, i.e., salaries or bills not being paid, and then the Town would have to take out a loan. She noted she would lean toward the low interest rate program if people don't have to fill out an application and it's automatic. She feels this is some sort of reprieve.

Councilor Sferrazza stated since March 1st, 392,000 Connecticut residents have filed for unemployment, therefore, Enfield could realize over 2,000 or 3,000 applicants if they went with the tax deferment program. He noted there's no question the Town needs to get some relief for its residents, not only because of the present unemployment situation, but the State of Connecticut's economy only grew by 1.6% last year, and Connecticut was 33rd out of 50 states. He noted additionally, there's an unfunded pension balance of \$125 billion dollars facing the State of Connecticut for municipalities' teachers and state workers. He noted he's not optimistic that when the time comes for revenue sharing, Enfield is going to get what they hope to get. He stated he wants to provide relief to Enfield residents, but if they go with the tax deferment program, the Town wouldn't have any money potentially until October 1st, and unfortunately the Town has bills in July and August. He noted he will not be supporting the tax deferment program, but he will support the low interest rate program.

Chairman Ludwick stated he will be supporting the low interest rate program. He noted this will allow the Town to continue functioning.

Councilor Unghire questioned the percentage of people that paid a lump sum in July versus the rest of the residents who pay throughout the whole year.

Councilor Sferrazza stated 92% of Enfield residents pay their taxes in July, 5% in August and 1% pay in September. He noted 98% of the taxes are paid in those three months.

Mr. Wilcox stated the taxes are billed in two installments, and motor vehicles is billed at 100% in July, so of the taxes that are due in July, typically the Town receives the 92%, 5% and 1%, and they do another billing in January for the second half of the real estate and business/personal property plus any motor vehicle supplemental bills that need to be paid. He explained when he does his analysis on that, at least 50% are paying through escrow accounts.

Councilor Unghire questioned if mortgage companies hold onto the tax money, and they then pay it all in July. Mr. Wilcox stated the mortgage companies pay the installment amount in July. He explained when a person pays their mortgage, they're paying the principal, interest and escrow, and that builds up to an amount for them to pay each time an installment is due. He noted they then pay the January installment to the town. He pointed out the bank isn't holding onto money, but rather that's how the whole process works.

Councilor Bosco stated most people aren't going to be able to enjoy a tax deferment because the bank already took their money and put it into an escrow account, therefore, it's not going to help the majority of people. He stated his belief the low interest rate program is a much better deal.

Councilor Mangini questioned whether Council members can support both programs. She questioned if under the deferment program, can towns elect to have the program apply to all taxpayers. Mr. Wilcox replied that is correct.

Councilor Kiner stated his understanding that when the Council votes on this deferment program, there are actually two separate programs within this program – one is to defer taxes to all residents and the other is to defer taxes for those people who applied. He questioned if the Council votes on this resolution, are they voting on both segments or one or the other.

Mr. Bromson stated as it reads, if the Council votes this resolution down, it's voted down in its entirety, and they would move onto the low interest rate program.

Councilor Szewczak stated she would not be in favor of a blanket deferment, but she would be in favor of an application process, however, she feels the low interest rate program helps everyone, and everyone can assess their own needs as to whether they feel paying their taxes at a later date would help them.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #5417** defeated 3-8-0 with Councilors Bosco, Hemmeler, Ludwick, Muller, Riley, Sferrazza, Szewczak and Unghire voting against the resolution.

RESOLUTION #5418 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Riley.

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2020, Governor Lamont issued a declaration of public health and civil preparedness emergency, proclaiming a state of emergency throughout the State of Connecticut as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19); and

WHEREAS, Governor Lamont issued Executive Order No. 7S on April 1, 2020, and under Section 6, requires municipalities, by vote of its legislative body to participate in at least one of the two established programs: a) Tax Deferment Program and/or b) Low Interest Rate Program; and

WHEREAS, the Low Interest Rate Program can provide, for up to 90 days, relief for certain interest payments due by taxpayers for tax and sewer use accounts; and

WHEREAS, the Town must inform the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) no later than April 25, 2020 which program(s) the Town will participate in.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Enfield Town Council hereby selects to participate in the Low Interest Rate Program, under Section 6(b) of the Executive Order No. 7S, and the Director of Finance and the Supervisor of Assessment and Revenue Collection are hereby authorized to carry out all such requirements in the implementation of the program.

Councilor Szewczak stated her belief this allows people to make their own decision without having to go through an application process, which could be overbearing to the residents and very time consuming.

Councilor Hemmeler stated she's definitely in favor of this because she believes it's an opportunity for everyone if they so choose.

Councilor Kiner stated he would have preferred the tax deferment program, but he believes this will help people, therefore, he supports the resolution.

Councilor Cekala stated she will support the resolution.

Councilor Mangini stated she will support this program. She noted she likes the fact that it benefits all taxpayers.

Councilor Sferrazza stated he wished they could have supported both programs, but with the tax deferment program, the Town of Enfield would not have had the money to pay their bills or labor force for August and September, therefore, it was never an option.

Councilor Cekala referred to Councilor Sferrazza's comments and stated the Town could pay those bills with its Fund Balance because this is an emergency, and that's why they have a Fund Balance. Councilor Sferrazza agreed with Councilor Cekala that could be done, and he noted he did speak to the Director of Finance about different options. He stated the rainy-day fund Councilor Cekala refers to is planned to be tapped into to balance the budget this year to keep the budget at a zero increase. He noted if they tap further into the Fund Balance, he's concerned about a negative impact on the Town's bond rating.

Councilor Bosco questioned if the deferment is at a low percentage rate for only three months. He noted he's unsure what happens in the fourth month. Mr. Wilcox stated it's for 90 days and also applies to sewer use bills that are issued from April through June, so each of those bills would receive three months of a lower interest rate. He noted if bills aren't paid within the three-month period, the interest rate does refer back to the original rate.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #5418** adopted 11-0-0.

BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

Police Department

Mr. Bromson stated his proposed budget will result in a zero percent tax increase, and the mill rate will remain the same from this year until the next. He introduced Chief of Police, Alaric Fox.

Chief Fox stated he submitted a budget request for the Enfield Police Department that's consistent with last year's budget. He noted there were several items on the operational side that were increased costs and beyond their control, and they offset those costs within the operating budget by corresponding cuts in other areas.

Councilor Szewczak questioned whether they will still have money in the budget for the walking patrols in Thompsonville, and Chief Fox responded yes.

Councilor Szewczak questioned if there are any things that are not as efficient as they could be. Chief Fox stated fixed items account for 93 to 94 percent and everything else is operational, therefore, it's difficult to find much savings. He noted they've trimmed beyond what they can trim.

Councilor Muller questioned how vehicle replacement is going, and Mr. Bromson stated they will be bringing online from last year ten new vehicles as he indicated in his budget presentation. He noted there is a vehicle replacement program calling for replacements each year, but they put a halt to that this year across the board. He noted the only replacement relates to a chassis replacement for an ambulance.

Councilor Hemmeler referred to the line item for Travel for \$7,250 and stated her impression this would be the year that there would not be any travel. Mr. Bromson stated they've made cuts across the board for all travel, except for mandatory reaccreditation and retraining that they are required to do. Chief Fox stated there's no travel undertaken without the Town Manager's approval. He noted there are certain re-certifications and accreditation programs that are only available out of state.

Councilor Kiner referred to Line #51, Police Services and noted the 2020 revised budget under Protection of Life and Property was \$9,025,674 and the proposed budget is \$8,655,000, a difference of \$370,000. He questioned whether the Town is putting itself at risk in any way by reducing personnel costs by that amount of money. Chief Fox stated he does not believe they are, and they will maintain their staffing level at 95 where it currently is, and he's comfortable with that.

Councilor Kiner questioned where the \$370,000 cuts are coming from, and Chief Fox stated they brought on some newer officers because of retirements about two years ago, and the more junior officers are getting paid less than the more senior officers, and when they amplify that by the number of new hires, there's a savings between the low end of the pay scale and the high end of the pay scale. He noted there's also a downgrade from one detective that they morphed into a patrolman and the elimination of the Deputy Chief and effectively the replacement of that position with a patrolman, which accounted for a savings of about \$41,000. He stated there also appears to have been an over-calculation within the current budget of a couple of positions that did not have to be funded as high as they were in the current budget, and that's part of the offset as well.

Councilor Mangini stated her belief Chief Fox is doing a wonderful job, and she's getting a lot of good responses. She thanked him for his work and the work of the Police Department. Chief Fox stated he's honored, and the credit goes to the men and women.

Councilor Sferrazza stated there are times when officers can't keep social distance, and he's very grateful to the officers that have to put themselves in that position because it's not just their health, but they have families that they go home to. He stated there are probably programs that would enhance the Police Department going forward, but in light of the economic situation and this Special Virtual Meeting

unprecedented crisis, they have to keep the budget to zero. He stated as the year unfolds and the dust settles, he would be willing to listen and see what can be done for this department and other departments.

Chief Fox stated the Council has been very supportive and it is appreciated.

Chairman Ludwick questioned when will the town hear about the accreditation, and Chief Fox stated they've received the preliminary assessment that they were going to write a positive recommendation subject to a couple of tweaks they wanted. He noted they went to work on the tweaks right away and sent out the documentation. He stated DPW was very helpful and remediation was underway right away. He noted the conference is scheduled for July, and he doubts that the conference will be live and in person. He stated he expects to hear very soon that it will be of a virtual nature. He stated he's cautiously optimistic that they will more than pass with flying colors.

Chairman Ludwick requested Chief Fox share some of the good things happening. Chief Fox stated the message they get across to their officers is to "kill them with kindness", i.e., the driveway chalk art contest last Friday was a huge hit. He noted WTIC Radio, Fox 61, and the press ran with it. He noted he received an email from a resident asking if the Police could recognize a birthday for her 12 year old twins, so school resource officers visited that home and maintained appropriate social distancing, and they sang Happy Birthday to the twins on the PA, and they actually brought the kids a couple of presents that they acquired on their own. He noted no Town funding was involved. He stated that's the caliber of the Enfield police officers.

Social Services

Ms. Guerrerri stated her budget has no increases unless they were contractual, or benefit obligated.

Mr. Bromson stated Social Services touches all parts of the community from infants to seniors, and they do an incredible job, i.e., programs for food, tax credits and reaching out to all Enfield people. He noted that has been made so much more difficult during this pandemic, but they continue to do this in an exemplary way. He stated Social Services did have grant money for travel within the department, and they continued it. He noted this past summer, Councilor Unghire, Kasia Purciello and representatives from the Enfield Youth Council attended a conference in Washington, and it was incredible. He noted they were going to have a presentation for the Council, and that can be done in the near future. He stated those are the types of things that bring back knowledge and the ability for Social Services to seek other resources to help at risk people and assist youth in very positive ways.

Councilor Unghire stated she's thankful they have those grants, and they're getting all kinds of ideas that they can bring back to Enfield and then implement them. She noted this has been a great success.

Councilor Hemmeler referred to Enfield Transportation Services and questioned \$7,000 for Other Professional Services. Mr. Bromson stated the budgets are very extensive, especially the Social Services budget, therefore, if they don't have an immediate answer, they will provide that answer in writing with the whole Council in the next day or so.

Councilor Hemmeler referred to Youth Services and Professional Services for \$112,000, and she questioned exactly what that is. She questioned the figure of \$51,000 for Travel under Youth Services. She referred to Neighborhood Services and questioned the \$20,000 for Miscellaneous. Ms. Guerreri referred to Youth Services and noted those are grant-funded items and largely contracted with professional services for evaluation of the grants. She noted those are paid for by the grant and mandated by the grant. As concerns the \$20,000 for Miscellaneous, Ms. Guerreri stated that's the money for the relocation fund, which is a requirement by the State Legislature, i.e., if someone has to be relocated due to events beyond their control, i.e., a house fire. Mr. Bromson added due to the innovation of the Director of Public Works, they tried to limit the amount needing to be spent in this area.

Councilor Cekala referred to the Grants Manager for Social Services and questioned if there's an estimate of what kind of money they're missing out on by not applying for grants. Ms. Guerreri stated she does not have a dollar figure because there are so many different directions they can go in building on what they already have, i.e., philanthropy, federal grants, state grants.

Councilor Cekala questioned whether the Town has a grant writer in another department that can help Social Services, or do they have the ability to do a grants manager for multi-departments. Mr. Bromson stated probably some of the best grant writers reside in Social Services, and it takes an extraordinary amount of time to pursue grants, and that's why they were exploring this position to focus on grants. He noted they established a committee from all the different disciplines, headed up by Kasia Purciello, and they've been receiving a lot of grants from Joe Courtney's Congressional Office, and they also added a server, and they'll now be receiving state and local grants. He noted they will continue to do this with that committee, and they'll then revisit the formal position next year.

Councilor Cekala stated a Grants Manager for multi-departments sounds like a good idea, and not just a Grants Manager for Social Services. She feels grant writing is really something they need to continue focusing on.

Councilman Mangini thanked Ms. Guerreri for doing a great job.

Councilor Riley thanked Ms. Guerreri and her staff for doing a great job reaching out to the public at this time. She stated she was disappointed they were unable to get the new computer system up and running, so Social Services can better track things. She questioned if there are any other options that the State could provide to help in this area. Mr. Bromson stated they were hoping to address this in the budget, but given time constraints and the reality they had to deal with, they had to eliminate this for now, but they're going to work towards that and hopefully be able to come back with funding and be able to do it after they adopt the budget.

Ms. Guerreri stated the work of the staff has been phenomenal during this time. She noted the timing couldn't be better to have their new Elderly Services Coordinator, who is doing the principle outreach to all the isolated seniors, and they're working closely with the Food Shelf to ensure they're all being recognized and cared for.

Councilor Sferrazza agreed with Councilor Cekala in that grants are revenue sources, so that they don't have to use tax dollars. He noted unfortunately, in the State of Connecticut, no police departments are eligible to apply for any of the federal Department of Justice grants that they benefited from over the years. He stated this provided funding for DUI equipment and officers. He stated the reason they're not allowed to apply for federal grants anymore is because Connecticut's State Legislature has mandated that Connecticut's police departments do not cooperate with the ICE law enforcement people. He noted that although this is not specific to Social Services, while they're discussing grants, there's a whole chunk of money they will not be having because police officers want to help colleagues on the federal and state level.

Chairman Ludwick questioned the possibility of pursuing private sector grants. He noted major corporations donate a lot of money to communities, and he questioned if there's a way to developing that through the United Way. Ms. Guerreri stated they are definitely keeping their eyes on grants, and she will be working closely with Ms. Purciello and the committee. She noted the United Way is working with them on providing some funding towards helping families right now that are struggling.

Chairman Ludwick stated perhaps they should be tapping into those corporate groups that are giving money to help communities. Ms. Guerreri stated an on-going fund development is what she believes Chairman Ludwick is describing, and they do a lot of that through their Family Resource Center especially with LEGO and United Hauling. She noted they are looking into those types of resources.

Chairman Ludwick questioned whether there's anything which Ms. Guerreri wishes to highlight, and Ms. Guerreri stated there's commendable behavior in all five divisions. She noted the case worker at 110 High Street continues processing applications for the rebate program. She stated they're providing activity baskets from the Early Childhood Center, so children have activities to do; mailing hand-written letters from classroom teachers to children; Youth Services bringing chalk to the youth in the Thompsonville section to participate in the Police Department's sidewalk chalk competition; reaching out to isolated seniors, and the transportation employees are still providing transport for people.

Chairman Ludwick stated a lot of good things are still going on even during difficult times. He went on to note that people should still be signing up for the elderly tax credits. Ms. Guerreri indicated they're still taking applications.

Councilor Unghire commended Ms. Guerreri for her Youth and Family Services Department. She noted she has been dealing with them a lot over the years, and it has been a pleasure. Ms. Guerreri

stated they are a great group. She expressed her appreciation for the support and guidance provided with the public service announcements. She noted it has not been released yet, but the next public service announcement relates to youth interviewing each other about the impact that COVID is having on them.

Mr. Bromson stated the Town Hall building may be closed, but they are open for business, and they're doing a lot, and they do their updates every Thursday. He noted there will be more signage around Town Hall to inform people they can call Town Hall.

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Bromson stated the Water Pollution Control staff is present every day because this is a very important service to the Town. He noted this service goes on at the same time they have a \$36 million dollar upgrade going on at the plant. He also commended Buildings & Grounds and the custodial staff for keeping the grounds and the buildings clean. He noted all of these people are at risk during this pandemic.

Mr. Nunes stated Public Works provided a level budget, and most of those impacts came from their 1029 union raises, and their municipal solid waste contract went up a little bit. He noted medical also went up a little. He stated with this budget they're still able to do water treatment, and they will still be doing a temporary boiler at JFK Middle School and addressing the PCB's, which they are mandated to do. He noted this is possible because they were able to cut and lower other areas.

Councilor Szewczak stated her understanding they're eliminating the HVAC Mechanic, and Mr. Nunes responded yes and noted they had multiple interviews and are unable to find a candidate.

Councilor Szewczak questioned whether the design for the transfer station is a CIP or DPW issue. Mr. Nunes stated that will be a CIP issue. Mr. Bromson stated it's acknowledged that there is a need, and they want to move forward and address that, however, with the sacrifices needing to be made in this budget, they can't address it now.

Councilor Szewczak questioned if there could be more education about solid waste and the amount of trash people are putting out. Mr. Bromson stated they will be looking at that going forward. Councilor Cekala expressed her appreciation for all the work DPW is doing.

Councilor Mangini referred to the Hazardville Memorial windows and questioned whether CIP addresses that project, or perhaps Public Works can take care of the air conditioners that are falling out of the windows and secure those windows. She stated she looks at this as a public safety issue. She questioned whether over \$2 million dollars is a realistic figure for a project to address those windows and window walls. Mr. Bromson stated that was a preliminary figure. He noted Councilor Mangini's point is well taken. He noted they will always do their maintenance and public safety comes first. He stated Public Works will ensure the safety of those in the building, and they will do the maintenance.

Councilor Mangini thanked Mr. Nunes and all his staff for being so diligent in serving the Town.

Councilor Riley thanked Public Works for all their services, and she feels they're doing a great job within the circumstances. She stated she would like to see a priority list of projects that they'd like to do if money or funding becomes available. Mr. Bromson stated that's an excellent idea, and that is being done.

Chairman Ludwick stated if information can be provided in the next few weeks as to how they ended up with the snow budget. Mr. Nunes stated they're definitely ahead, however, he doesn't have the numbers at this time, but he can provide a report.

Chairman Ludwick invited Mr. Nunes to highlight what's been happening in his department. Mr. Nunes stated through this pandemic, they're still maintaining status quo, i.e., they're still picking up trash, construction is ongoing, pump station work is still happening, Building & Grounds is still doing work, and the custodians are in the front lines. He noted everyone is handling things well, and they're making progress. He thanked his whole staff for their work.

Chairman Ludwick questioned whether there will be an announcement as to when the public can submit comments concerning the budget. Mr. Bromson stated they will advertise heavily as to when public comment opens. He noted the Virtual Hearing is April 29th, and people can submit testimony soon, and it will be open until Monday, April 27th.

Chairman Ludwick thanked individuals for their help in making this virtual meeting possible – Paul Russell and the IT Department and Deb McCarthy. He noted this meeting will air tomorrow on ETV, Channel 16, and it's also available live on YouTube. He thanked everyone for their presence this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #5419 by Councilor Szewczak, seconded by Councilor Mangini to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #5419** adopted 11-0-0, and the meeting stood adjourned at 7:05 p.m.