TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING – VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON
April 22, 2025
Special Town Council Meeting
Council Chambers

APPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Black-Burke called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Nuchette Black-Burke, Deputy Mayor Darleen Klase, Councilor Mary Armstrong, Councilor Ronald Eleveld, Councilor Kristin Gluck Hoffman, Councilor Anthony King, Councilor Ojala Naeem, Councilor William Pelkey and Councilor Walker

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase seconded by Councilor Walker to move Adult Day Care Enterprise Fund from #5 to #2 on the agenda.

Motion Passed 6-0-0 (Councilors Gluck Hoffman, Naeem and Pelkey absent)

2) ADULT DAY CARE ENTERPRISE FUND

Cheryl Rosenbaum, Caring Connection Manager, gave an overview of the budget. The FY 25 expenditures are expected to come in over budget by $47,520 or 23.2% primarily due to Capital Outlay for the purchase of entry area furniture and an outdoor pavilion, funded by Covid Relief Funds, as well as Services for training and certification costs, funded by an increase in the Alzheimer's Aide grant.

The FY 26 proposed budget reflects an increase of $6,560 or 3.2% as compared to the FY 25 budget due to Personnel costs for market wage adjustments and increased staffing for projected census increases.

Ms. Rosenbaum stated that she will be retiring at the end of the fiscal year.

Mayor Black-Burke told Ms. Rosenbaum that she will be missed. She thanked her for her dedication, service and all she has done along with her incredible team.

Deputy Mayor Klase thanked Ms. Rosenbaum for all that she has done and said she would be sad to see her go but understood about her retirement. She asked Ms. Rosenbaum if partial funding comes from the home care program for elders. Ms. Rosenbaum said that was correct.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked if Ms. Rosenbaum heard anything on the State side regarding funding for programs and does she know what percentage of the budget it is for her. Ms. Rosenbaum said that they have heard that it's business as usual and it will be no different than other years when we apply for some of the clients who are on the program. Those are the clients who get funding from North Central Area Agency on Aging. With regards to the other program, it is business as usual.

Councilor Eleveld congratulated Ms. Rosenbaum on her retirement. He stated that there was a projection of $483,000 in revenues but the year end estimate came in at $433,000. What was the reason for the shortfall? Ms. Rosenbaum said she was a little more zealous than what actually came in, which is a little lower than projected.

Councilor Eleveld said that for next year they are looking at receiving $504,000 in revenue. Ms. Rosenbaum said the fourth quarter is when they see a big jump, which they are already seeing. She feels confident they are heading in the right direction.

Councilor Eleveld said this year you're estimating you're going to have about a $107,000 loss. He asked what's the cost of keeping up 330 Windsor Avenue in total? Town Manager Souza stated there's a combination of operational costs at the Caring Connection. The Caring Connection contributes $65,000 in rent which goes to support the 330 Windsor Avenue utilities and minor repairs at the facility. They also make a transfer of approximately $62,000 for transportation services to the General Fund. When you combine those two, it is approximately $120,00-$125,000 that they're contributing. If the Caring Connection did not make those contributions, then the town would need to make those up in some form or fashion, since we have shared transportation between Dial-A-Ride and the Caring Connection.

Councilor Eleveld asked if we were to take those two numbers out of the equation for conversation's sake, the net results is that they would have a small profit. Town Manager Souza said that is correct.

Councilor Eleveld said that if the Caring Connection was not involved at all, we would still be liable for the $130,000. Town Manager Souza said there may be some reduction on the transportation side, but not a lot because they are shared in nature. As said, there might be some reduction in transportation side of the equation, but we still have to maintain the building.

Councilor Armstrong said she sees on Page S-13 nursing. Is that provided on the premises or do you have visiting nurses? How is that handled? Ms. Rosenbaum said that they have a full-time nurse that is second in command in the program. She supervises the nursing part of their medical model at the Adult Day Center. She supervises the CNAs, the certified nurse assistants, who provide care as well as the entire medical piece of the program which is all provided on site.

Councilor Walker congratulated Ms. Rosenbaum on her retirement. He noticed on Page S-9 that their marketing efforts are geared towards Hartford, Bloomfield, and Windsor Locks. He believes that two of them have their own senior services recreation programs. Ms. Rosenbaum replied they have their own senior centers but don't have Adult Day Care programs.

Councilor Armstrong said that on Page S-9 she saw where they provide services to caregiver siblings who are states away from each other using these services when their loved ones are in Connecticut. Ms. Rosenbaum said they have some clients who one of their children lives here in Connecticut, and one may live in Florida. The children share caring for the older person. When the person is here in Connecticut, they're part of our program when the person is in another state, they attend a different adult day center there. Councilor Armstrong said we provide care for that person that is here in Connecticut. Is that correct? Ms. Rosenbaum said that is correct.

Councilor Armstrong stated that they don't communicate with that person that is out of state. Is that correct? Ms. Rosenbaum said that they communicate with the family member that's here. They also communicate with their family member in Florida, or wherever the state may be, so they're not here alone. They're here with a child, and then they go to another child in another state where they're cared for there.

Councilor Armstrong stated you involve clients and ongoing intergenerational community programs with schools. Can you tell me a little bit how that is done? Ms. Rosenbaum replied sometimes we will have a school like the Montessori school come to do an intergenerational program. I do have to say that since COVID, it's been harder to make some of these connections. Recently one of our staff members brought her daughter in, and she was involved in a program for our clients. We try, when possible, to bring in young people at holiday time for celebrations. They're invited to join us. They bring big smiles to our clients. So, when we can involve children in a classroom situation, we do that. Children are always encouraged to visit.

Councilor Armstrong thanked her for her responses and told her good luck on her retirement.

3) INFORMATION SERVICES

Town Clerk's office

Scott Nolan, Town Clerk, stated the overall FY 25 expenditures are expected to come in under budget by $10,220 or 2.3% primarily due to Personnel costs as a result of a partial year vacancy. The FY 25 General Fund expenditures are expected to come in under budget by $6,420 or 1.7% due to the same reason.

The overall FY 26 proposed budget reflects an increase of $2,650 or 0.6% as compared to the FY 25 budget mostly due to Personnel costs and is offset in part by less use of special revenue funds. The FY 26 General Fund proposed budget reflects an increase of $5,200 or 1.3% mostly due to Personnel costs.

Mr. Nolan gave an overview of FY 25 accomplishments and FY 26 goals.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked if Mr. Nolan can describe to her what the no excuse absentee ballot voting means. Mr. Nolan stated if you recall last November, there was a question on the ballot in which Connecticut overwhelmingly came out to support the legislator reviewing this issue. At this time, we don't entirely know. We're still waiting to hear what no excuse absentee ballot voting would mean. My guess is, it would remove the six questions on the application process. It would eliminate those just to allow any qualified voter the opportunity to vote absentee.

Councilor Walker asked about Page N-5 under 'election support'. There's a figure in there and he'd like to know how much of that amount we get from the State of Connecticut to reimburse for election support? Mr. Nolan stated none at this time. He is not expecting any additional grant money for the upcoming elections. Councilor Walker then stated that the town has to pay for all of that correct? Mr. Nolan said correct.

Councilor Eleveld said we have a list of fees and it appears that the vast majority of those fees are state regulated. Mr. Nolan said in the Town Clerk's office they are. Most of the fees are set by *Connecticut General Statutes*.

Councilor Eleveld commented that most of these fees look like they are from 1999. The *Town Charter* is $10. That was set in 1999. Is it time to maybe consider increasing some of those? Or is there just no demand? Town Manager Souza stated there is no demand. All of this information is digital or online now and that's why we haven't adjusted them because there's so little demand.

Councilor Eleveld asked if we are checking the prices relative to other communities for certain services? Mr. Nolan said yes. In some cases, he's checking the market rate as well.

Mayor Black-Burke said in thinking about the Citizens Academy, she's wondering about the particular costs associated with that. Is it something that could be offered twice a year? If we were to do that, what would be the financial burden? Is there a financial burden? Ms. Jubrey stated the actual cost is very low. There aren't a lot of supplies. There may be refreshments or the gift we give them at the end which are certificates. So, it's under $200. However, there's a lot of staff time involved. Staff comes out on the night they are slated to give their presentations. Town Manager Souza added that they've had conversations about other ways of being able to continue that engagement. Some of those thoughts that have arisen is maybe a shortened version, instead of doing what we presently do for 8 weeks in 12 different departments, is maybe doing something that would be in an evening or on a Saturday. Then maybe hitting Public Works and then Public Safety perhaps. Something off cycle of that October or fall timeline.

Ms. Jubrey brought up some exciting news. She stated that the town is embarking on some sort of a youth citizens academy. Something in that nature. Molly is actually working with a teacher at the high school, and there is a class that when they finish their AP Exams, they are taking it on as their capstone project, because we really want to hear from the students what they think that should look like. What we do for adults in the fall may not meet their needs, so we are not sure what shape or form this is going to take. But we're going to gather everything we can and figure it out.

Public Relations

Enita Jubrey, Assistant to the Town Manager, and Andrew Goldberg, gave a brief overview of the budget. The General Fund FY 25 expenditures are expected to come in under budget by $7,140 or 1.7% due to Personnel costs as a result of a partial year vacancy.

The FY 26 General Fund proposed budget reflects an increase of $15,710 or 4.5% as compared to the FY 25 budget mostly due to Personnel as well as increases to contractual costs for software.

Ms. Jubrey outlined FY 25 accomplishments and FY 26 goals.

Mayor Black-Burke asked Ms. Jubrey about the software fees. Are these just regular renewals? Ms. Jubrey stated we carry three software fees in this budget. We carry Granicus, which provides the video streaming and your iLegislate programs, See Click Fix, and social archiving, which is split between Public Relations and the Town Clerk's office, which is basically a records keeping of social media record retention. They've each increased by 5%. The companies basically told them they're going to go up 5% per year. That's what we're anticipating.

Councilor Eleveld stated for the benefit of the public what are the addresses that people can send a note to in order to be added to the mailing list or email list? Ms. Jubrey said the easiest way to find the Public Relations employees' addresses is through the front cover of the *There's A lot to do in Windsor* magazine. Their emails are there. They are also available on the website. If they look for the stay connected page, they can sign up for library newsletters, for recreation newsletters, the Town Manager's report or town announcements. So, it's all in one place.

Councilor Eleveld said that would allow them to know if there's a vote coming? Ms. Jubrey said that's correct.

Councilor Walker said he has a question that is a follow up to the question he asked earlier under election support. That's a statewide, unfunded mandate. While he knows other towns have the same problem, his question is if the Connecticut Secretary of State planning to do anything here? Also, to the Town Manager, is CCM reaching out in response to other towns having the same unfunded mandate? Town Manager Souza answered the Council of Small Towns, as well as CCM have been actively advocating for some State assistance relative to early voting and the other mandates that are either here in place or expected to come down the line relative to elections. Unfortunately, there's been none other than some Grant monies that were received in Fiscal Year 25 that were used for early voting at this point. There's no clear decision relative to state funding if it would be part of the budget, the State's budget or not. Mr. Nolan said he agrees with what the Town Manager said. He added that the Connecticut Town Clerks Association is also closely following this issue. They meet monthly with the Connecticut Secretary of State's office and she has commented more than once that while she's advocating that municipalities get funding, we are not anticipating there being money available. Councilor Walker said so the taxpayers foot the bill? Mr. Nolan said that was correct.

Councilor Armstrong asked about Page 7 under the second bullet of 'products and services.' Can you tell me how you act for the Town Manager as a first responder for calls, complaints, issues, problems and questions? Ms. Jubrey said they monitor the social media platforms. And while they do not regularly engage with people posting, if there's a specific question such as when is Town Hall open, they will respond and act as the first responder to give that information to the person that's seeking it. If there's a question such as there's a pothole on my street. What do I do? We will respond and let them know, go to See Click Fix. It's very easy to use and things of that nature. Also, she mentioned the inside front cover of the magazine has their names, phone numbers and their email addresses so they can use that resource as well.

Mayor Black-Burke said in regards to SeeClickFix, she thought it is listed in the pay statistics, maybe it wasn't. Is that calculated? How is that looked at? How is the response rate in terms of acknowledgement? Town Manager Souza said our goal is to acknowledge within one business day, and then, periodically, the Town Manager's office looks at the number that have been closed out, and then we work with the departments to make sure those are being closed out. The two largest departments in terms of frequency are Public Works and Health Department in terms of the number of SeeClickFix issues that they receive. So those are the primary departments that we work with and help monitor the acknowledgment and the responses.

Councilor King stated we all talk about how people say they don't hear things. How often are we going back and looking at the tactics we're doing to see what the response rates are? One on the top on his mind has to do with printing as it gets more and more expensive each year to do. Mailers are more expensive as well. We are doing a lot of those. When we hear "I don't hear about that", do we go back and measure them and ask ourselves if we should still be doing that practice? Ms. Jubrey stated they are particularly interested in engagement and for people to engage with the information they put out there. We do monitor those statistics and we look at QR codes that we place out on various rack cards, or what we're putting out on social media. This helps us to track and see when they spike and then we'll say because that was at this particular event, we handed this out, and a lot of people engaged with it. Mr. Goldberg added more information on how they track social media.

Councilor Eleveld said the engagement with Windsor High school and getting kids interested maybe in looking at how that works, are there any thoughts in trying to lead to potential careers in Windsor? Ms. Jubrey said we're always looking into that kind of workforce development. She’s had discussions about getting some of our younger employees involved in some of these things, so that the students are able to see themselves in their place and say, this may be a possible career that I could go into. We're always looking for that. We're looking for opportunities, for the students to join in and tag along on work days, or whatever it may be. We're really excited to hear what they might come up with.

4) LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

Gaye Rizzo, Director of the Library Services and Cailey Klasson, manager of the Wilson Branch presented the budget. Ms. Rizzo stated the FY25 General Fund budget is expected to come in under budget by $3,760.

The FY26 General Fund budget reflects an increase of $73,350 or 3.7% due to Personnel Costs. It is and always will be the overarching goal of Library Services to maintain excellent staff, programs, materials, technologies – all the resources necessary at any point in time to respond to the evolving informational needs of our library patrons.

Ms. Rizzo gave an outline of what the library has done in the past year along with FY 26 goals.

Councilor King asked what is our annual take in for late fees? Ms. Rizzo stated that they brought in $12,196.80 last year. Councilor King then said if we were to eliminate late fees, we would be losing $12,000. We’d have to add that amount to the budget, is that correct? Town Manager Souza said yes that’s correct. Those funds do not go directly to the library. They go into our General Fund.

Deputy Mayor Klase said that the Library Association, of which she is a member, talked about late fees. If she recalls, there was a reason you didn't want to do too much in late fees, but there's a reason you do put late fees in place. Is she correct? Can you talk about that a little bit so we are actually in the minority. Ms. Rizzo stated that Windsor is in the minority. She gave an explanation as to why she feels having late fees are important.

Councilor Eleveld asked if the Library lends garden implements? Ms. Rizzo said if you are going to plant a bulb, you need a bulb planter once a year. So, the library has a bulb planter available for use. We have tables that can be borrowed as well. Councilor Eleveld said these are available for use like a book? Ms. Rizzo said yes you borrow them then bring them back.

Mayor Black-Burke said in regards to the Wilson branch, on J-12 it references the Upper Albany Neighborhood Alliance. Is that just a donation or is it a grant? Ms. Klasson said they are basically refunding us for the supplies that we buy for the tutoring program. She believes it is a grant. Ms. Rizzo added that we're getting reimbursed for certain items and there's no actual grant that's been given to the town or any promised amount to us.

Mayor Black-Burke asked about the process for getting the money from the Upper Albany Neighborhood Alliance. Ms. Klasson stated there is an application and we apply for that yearly. This is just for the tutoring students and it's not open to the public. It's reimbursement for the basic things such as snacks, juice, notebooks, pens, pencils, etc. They did provide a trip to Bright Nights in Springfield during the holidays as well. Town Manager Souza added that if we don't get funds via the application, the tutoring program would still continue. We have part-time monies within the budget that pays for the part-time coordinator.

Deputy Mayor Klase stated that on Page J-5, they talk about proctoring exams for long distance learners. She's wondering what that was about. Ms. Rizzo stated we aren't doing as much of that now as we were in the past. But colleges, for example, would have students come locally and you needed to have a Master's Degree librarian overseeing the proctoring of that exam. Then you have to submit it in a folded, sealed envelope and send it over within 'X' number of hours back to the school. We would collect $25 for doing that.

Councilor Armstrong said she appreciated Ms. Rizzo's comment about converting the reel to reel. Do you get many people coming in for that? Is there a cost for converting it? Ms. Rizzo said there are lots of people that come in and it doesn't cost anything to do. All the supplies have been donated to the library for this.

Councilor Armstrong asked if the library has Kindles available to the public? Ms. Rizzo responded that they don't have Kindles now as they did not move often when they did have them. Books are now on MP3 players and there are CDs that you can borrow.

Councilor Armstrong asked about providing meeting space. Is there a cost for that for the community? Ms. Rizzo said if you're a nonprofit community group that's Windsor based, there is no fee. The only fee we collect is if you are a private company that wants to rent the meeting room space, and it's $45 an hour to rent the meeting room.

Councilor Armstrong asked if the photocopiers and printers are leased? Ms. Rizzo said the only thing they do not own is the fax machine. That is not on a lease. The supplier gives them a percentage of the proceeds that he collects. At the branch library, they own their fax machine.

Councilor Armstrong said there is a price for using the copier. Ms. Rizzo said it's $0.20 per page if it is black and white and $.50 per page if it is in color. Town Manager Souza added that those funds are segregated and Gaye uses those for purchasing a replacement copier on a given life cycle.

Councilor Armstrong asked if there was a limit to the copying. Ms. Rizzo said there is no limit.

5) CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ENTERPRISE FUND

Laura Casey, Discovery Center & Montessori School Director, stated that despite their growth and continued success, the Child Development Fund is estimating a loss of $45,930 for FY25, compared to a budgeted loss of $6,360. This is primarily due to our inability to fully enroll students in full-day Primary spaces.

Looking ahead to FY26, we are projecting a loss of $3,800, compared to a budgeted loss of $6,360 for FY25. In addition to the slight increase in capacity due to the new state ratios, we are implementing a tuition increase across all programs. This increase, coupled with additional full-time spaces based on current interest, will help generate the necessary revenue to meet the market demands for staff salaries, rising service costs, utilities, and repairs.

Councilor Eleveld asked if the staffing levels takes effect in July? Ms. Casey said one of the elementary staffing levels took place in October. For the toddlers it took place once every child in the classroom was two. That meant we couldn't implement that until January first, so it wasn't for the whole fiscal year.

Councilor Eleveld stated that last year they budgeted for 21.3 employees and they've had a challenge finding staff. You ended up with 20 employees so you missed the mark. He presumes with the increased mark, we brought in more students, more revenue and potentially modified your loss. This coming year, you're looking at 21 employees. Is that because of the increased staffing and you don't need as much people? Ms. Casey responded with the increased staffing and the ratios for the children we would need less staff for the elementary group.

Councilor Eleveld stated you're raising rates. He believes the early childhood program at Oliver Ellsworth is being cut back. Town Manager Souza said that it is his understanding as well. He doesn't have the details, but he knows there is some reduction at the pre-k level. Councilor Eleveld asked if we are looking at possibly picking up some of those kids? Ms. Casey said anyone that is interested can certainly join our waiting list, but for the fall right now we are already full.

Councilor Armstrong asked as far as the tuition goes, is that a sliding scale for families? Ms. Casey said we do not currently have a sliding scale. However, we do participate in the care for kids, state subsidy. So, families who meet the State subsidy guidelines are welcome to attend the program with that subsidy if the family is qualified, of course.

Councilor Armstrong stated that on Page S-21, it says the program does not have room for students under three years of age until July 2026 due to the births of siblings of enrolled children who receive priority and placement. Councilor Armstrong said that the program does provide for infants, correct? Ms. Casey said they start at six weeks.

Councilor Armstrong asked in regards to the parents' involvement, is it volunteer or are they paid? Ms. Casey responded it is all volunteer.

Deputy Mayor Klase stated she has a couple of questions. The rates for an infant are at around $1,585 per month. Is that correct? Ms. Casey said that was correct. Deputy Mayor Klase asked what is the comparison to a private center? Ms. Casey said they are slightly higher by $1,000 and are still lower than Montessori schools west of West Hartford.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked if Ms. Casey had any comparison to non-Montessori models? Ms. Casey said they are right there with private and profit centers in the area.

Councilor Eleveld said you are not directly competing by undercutting your competition in the private sector, correct? Ms. Casey said no, we are not. People come to Montessori for this specific, unique Montessori experience. Councilor Eleveld has heard from the public that they are undercutting their pricing, but it sounds like you are in the same neighborhood as them relative to pricing. Ms. Casey said from the research she has done and the comparisons that she'd done, that is correct. We are within 5%.

Councilor Eleveld asked Town Manager Souza how much the rent is at the school? You're paying $18,000 a year in rent. Is that the cost of operating the Milo Peck building? Town Manager Souza said that if you take into consideration deferred maintenance costs, it does not meet the overall cost. So those funds get segregated into a separate fund, which is used for the operation of that program and building repairs. Obviously not the major capital piece, but day to day repairs at the facility.

Councilor Eleveld said if they were not having to pay for that, they would end up turning a profit for this past year. Town Manager Souza said that is correct. Councilor Eleveld asked if they were not in the building, we would still end up having a good chunk of that cost? Town Manager Souza stated we would certainly have a challenge on how we would maintain that given its age and how it has been constructed in various stages over the years.

Mayor Black-Burke asked if the staff that are utilized in after school, the Discovery center, do they have to be Montessori certified as well? Ms. Casey said they do not. We actually have an employee who works in the Montessori program in the morning and then he's the lead staff in the afternoon.

8) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilor Armstrong, seconded by Councilor Eleveld to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Motion Passed 6-0-0 (Councilors Gluck Hoffman, Naeem and Pelkey absent)

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary