

RTM Meeting
November 10, 2020

The call

1. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Director of Public Works, to approve an appropriation of \$200,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund for Covid-19 and Security Upgrades for Town Hall re-opening.

Minutes

Will RTM members please mute their mikes, remember to unmute when recognized to speak and then mute after you comment. Please be sure to notify the secretary or the moderator if you arrive late or need to leave the meeting and that your video is on when a vote is being taken,

Good evening. This meeting of Westport's Representative Town Meeting is now called to order and we welcome those who are joining us the evening. My name is Velma Heller and I'm the RTM Moderator. Procedures for this Electronic Meeting: Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order No. 7B, this meeting is being held electronically. It will be live streamed on westportct.gov, and shown on Optimum Government Access channel 79 or Frontier Channel 6020. Members of the electorate who wish to have their comments read during the public comment period for each agenda item may email their comments to RTMcomments@westportct.gov. We will make every effort to read comments if they state your full name and address and are received during the comment period for each agenda item. Public comments will be limited to three minutes. Please note that meeting materials are available at westportct.gov along with the meeting notice posted on the Meeting List and Calendar page. Tonight's invocation will be delivered by RTM member, Lauren Soloff.

Invocation, Lauren Soloff, district 9:

I spent this past Election Day in Room 201 of Town Hall counting ballots along with about a dozen other Westporters. Democrats and Republicans were put into pairs, we took an oath, and we got to the business of opening envelopes, checking ballots, and scanning and hand counting when necessary. At times it was mundane and tedious work, but it was mainly fascinating and inspiring. The most fundamental aspect of democracy unfolded right before our eyes - tallied vote tapes were printed, numbers were checked and double checked, and observers from both parties stood in the doorways making sure we were doing our job. I thought a lot on that day, and throughout this week, about how that same solemn process took place in every town and city, in every state throughout the country, and I finally felt something that I had not for several years – that we might actually be a “united” states. That this single act of voting and counting every vote was maybe the one thing that we could agree on, the one thing that could keep us united. And as I say these words, even though some are casting doubt on this process, I remain hopeful and determined that ultimately this will be the case. As an RTM, we gather at the beginning each meeting to say the Pledge of Allegiance. I admit that there have been moments over the past three years where I have struggled with what it actually means to pledge to ideals that so many leaders appear to be actively working against. So during these turbulent times I have viewed this pledge as almost prayerful - As something we aspire to achieve. As something that requires sometimes mundane and tedious work – for some it is counting ballots, making phone calls, writing letters, and knocking on doors. And as members of the RTM and as leaders in this community, our work includes respecting facts - not dangerous fiction,

promoting civil discourse - not bullying or belittling, and recognizing that there are times when it's necessary to step out of our comfort zone, to break norms, to be on the right side of history and take a stand for the ideals we again commit ourselves to as we collectively say the Pledge of Allegiance. Please join me.

The Pledge of Allegiance which follows presents a montage of RTM members compiled by Matt Mandell, District 1 Representative.

Dr. Heller:

Somehow, Lauren, what you had to say made it more meaningful. Thank you so much for your thoughtful remarks.

There were 36 members present and no absent. Ms. Kramer arrived late.

Announcements

Birthdays Greetings to: Tatiana Plachi, who is our very dedicated member of the Town Clerk's staff, Lauren Soloff, Christine Meiers-Schatz, Lisa Newman and Amy Kaplan. Congratulations to all and have a very happy birthday in November.

We are fortunate that we have with us this evening Nicole Klein who has been invited once again to join us to replace Greg Kraut who resigned from the RTM effective October 28, 2020. We thank Greg Kraut for his enthusiasm and engagement as an elected Representative of RTM District #5 and wish him well in his future endeavors. We welcome Nicole Klein, a former RTM member, who has been duly sworn in as District #5 representative, once again.

Finally, some sad news of the passing of Gordon Joseloff, who served two terms as Westport's First Selectman (2005-2013), spent 14 years (seven terms, 1991-2005) on the Representative Town Meeting, became Deputy Moderator and was then elected Moderator. During his exceptional 10 year tenure as RTM leader, several of us had the privilege of working with Gordon. There is so much more to learn about the accomplishments of this remarkable Westporter: as founder, editor and publisher of WestportNow; his technological initiatives that he was able to implement as First Selectman; his extraordinary career as CBS News correspondent, senior producer and bureau chief in New York, Moscow and Tokyo; and even his grass roots community involvement as volunteer firefighter, and Emergency Medical Technician. I refer you to the full obituary in WestportNow and articles in 06880 to get the details on this very exceptional Westporter. Gordon Joseloff will be remembered for his contributions to Westport. I will remember him as someone I could always count on for good advice. Let's have a moment of silence in remembrance of a good man.

RTM Announcements

Matthew Mandell, district 1:

I'm sure, driving around town that you've seen these new signs that went up after our last meeting. They say "BYOB, Bring Your Own Blanket." This is an idea, backed by the town, to have people continue to dine out, even as it gets cold, by bringing your own blanket, "BYOB", hoping that people will continue to support our restaurants even as it gets cooler so people can decide to eat inside or outside. With the virus coming back, it is a safe and intelligent way that we can continue to enjoy eating out, supporting our businesses and having a good time as long as we are socially distant. This

has worked in Europe for years and years with them giving out their own blankets but we thought that wouldn't work in a COVID world so bringing your own makes sense.

On a personal note, I would like to say something about Gordon. The Chamber of Commerce honored him with our First Citizen's Award in 2018 for the phenomenal work he did for WestportNow on top of all that he did as First Selectman and Moderator of the RTM. After this election, you're looking at all the red; you're looking at all the blue; you're looking at the Republicans; you're looking at the Democrats. The one thing we can find solace in, the strength of this body is it puts party second and always Westport first and that's something I wanted to say, since the election is over. I really like this body. We're going to continue to work together to make our world a better place.

Jeff Wieser, district 4:

If I could just add something, Gordon, most of us know him from different areas but all of us know him from WestportNow which is a gift that he gave to the town many years ago and one of the gifts has been the great contributions of the photographer, Dave Matlow, who has been a stalwart friend of Gordon's. At the Rotary lunch today, Dave Matlow gave a very stirring talk about Gordon and his friendship, which he pointed out, was credited totally to our RTM member, Jessica Bram, who introduced him in 2002 as 'a guy who was interested in photography and might like to be involved in WestportNow.' It's funny the webs we weave. That was great. So thank you Jessica. Thank you Gordon. And thank you Dave.

Dr. Heller: Many things to be thankful for at this time.

Arline Gertzoff, district 3:

I would just like to add to the things said about Gordon. I had the distinct privilege, I went to Sunday School at Temple Israel in Norwalk with Gordon 68 years ago so I've known Gordon since I was a little girl. The contributions that he made, not much more can be said. I'd like to add to what Lauren said about poll workers. This was my 21st time as a poll worker, 5:30 in the morning until 9:30 at night but I wouldn't not do it unless I could not. I feel it's a wonderful contribution to our democratic process and I plan to continue doing it as long as I possibly can. Thanks to all who got out and voted and all who worked and all who have been so supportive in the town. Yeah, we've got a few rascals out there, but, what are you going to do? Onwards and upwards, we need to go.

Jessica Bram, district 6:

Just to add to the comments about Gordon Joseloff, as many of you may know, he was a very important part of my life and I've never met a smarter person. In spite of his accomplishments, he was so self-effacing and very, very, very kind. Very often, people who are so accomplished and successful in their lives don't have the inherent kindness in them. He was genuine and authentic. I remember when he went to the RTM meetings, he made a point of always wearing a jacket and tie. I don't know if you all remember that. He said it was very important to respect the role he was filling by wearing a jacket and tie. I think that says a lot about how he respected our body and being on the RTM. So, I will miss him very much and appreciate how the town is honoring him.

Dr. Heller: Our next RTM meeting is scheduled for Tuesday December 1st at 7:30 PM.

The secretary read item #1 of the call - To approve an appropriation of \$200,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund for Covid-19 and Security Upgrades for Town Hall re-opening.

Presentation

Pete Ratkiewicz, Director of Public Works:

In your packages, you've probably seen an early plan and you've probably seen a flurry of activity since that plan was submitted and recommended to the Board of Finance. The purpose of this project is to prepare to bring people in to Town Hall for person-to-person meetings during this Covid-19 pandemic that we are experiencing. Currently, we meet with folks in the back of Town Hall in a tent and Town Hall is actually closed to the public. But, realizing that the weather is changing, by the end of this month, we are going to need to transition that tent to the interior of the building so that we can do person-to-person meetings, where needed, within Town Hall. So, we've come up with a plan to provide access control to Town Hall that will allow us to contact trace in accordance with our current COVID-19 guidelines. Originally, we had planned on doing extensive modifications to the interior lobby of Town Hall as one enters the front door by making a meeting/conference area and waiting area and walled off the lower conference area so that there was some form of access control in that location. We brought this to the Board of Finance and they did approve it and forwarded it to the RTM. When we got to the RTM Public Works and Finance Committee meeting on October 27, there was some push back. Admittedly, I needed to look at what the discussion was and try to come up with a better solution. Most of the objections to our plan were to walling off the lower lobby of Town Hall because, as most RTM members probably know, during normal times, that is really a gathering area outside of the Town Hall upper lobby and during meetings in the auditorium, if you are speaking in the upper lobby, it carries into the auditorium so the lower lobby is an area where a lot of discussion goes on. That was one of the main objections and I'm going to show you a share screen as to what was in the original package that I sent to the Board of Finance. [Showing a floor plan.] The original plan that we submitted to the Board of Finance involved the entrance lobby to Town Hall and modifying it such that there would be walls across the entrance lobby, another set of doors in a waiting area, a receptionist office, and a conference room. This is what the Board of Finance originally approved. What this would do is provide an area where the public would come in the front door, check in with the receptionist during this period of COVID, identify where they were going, who they were meeting with in Town Hall and then they would be greeted with the person they were meeting with and brought down to room 201. This is an interior version of what we are doing today which is: People come to the door, they ask for the person they want to talk with and, if they have to have an in-person meeting, there has been a tent set up in the rear of the building for the past six months and they have a meeting there in the open air. In this plan, the point where you would check in was right in this rather confined area. What we did after feedback which was 'We really don't like this waiting area; it is extremely small, really confined and this modifies this area, possibly permanently', we decided that we would change that and remove all of the walls and work with the existing doorways and the existing walls and the resulting red line here [on the second plan] is the perimeter that we would allow folks coming in through the front door to wait or meet or be escorted down to room 201 during this version 2.1 of COVID protocols. What this does is it provides us with a way of contact tracing so we know who came in, when they came in, who they were with, in the building and once they were done with the meeting, they would come back out. So, this really makes room 201, where we used to have the Board of Finance meetings into an indoor tent. We have temporary curtains so we can make this into two areas so we double the meeting area and, in addition, what this plan does, it allows meetings in the upper lobby and the lower lobby, as well. So, we're really increasing the amount of meetings that can happen; although, judging from what we've

observed over the past six months or so, this will be more than adequate for what is happening in Town Hall right now. Capitalizing on the online services, essential services still come into the tent. We feel that this is actually a much better plan than what was approved by the Board of Finance. We resubmitted it to the Board of Finance as a rather urgent matter and they actually met at two o'clock today and approved the recommendation to the RTM. Let me go into detail by going through this comparison chart as to what was in the original plan and what has changed: To reiterate our goals for this project, going into November/December, we want to make the interior of the building available for limited in-person meeting use just like we use the outdoor tent today where people come to the door, they press the intercom, they identify who they want to talk to and that person (Tax Collector, Town Clerk, Planning and Zoning, Conservation) comes out and meets them in the outdoor tent. We realize, going into November, that it is going to go down as low as 30 degrees and it's going to be very uncomfortable. So, we will get rid of the tent and use room 201 as an isolated area, for the time being, under this phase of COVID. Realize we've gone from stage 3 a week ago and we are now at 2.1. Our mid-term objective, going forward, is once we start relaxing, we know this is going to hit a peak and it will change, if COVID restrictions relax, we will be able, perhaps, to start having meetings, very similar to what we did at the library at the beginning of October. If the library is available, that may be a better space but, eventually, we will work our way back to having public meetings at Town Hall. The Governor gave us a pretty good look at what that phase would be by stating that the meeting body, the committee, the Board of Finance, the RTM itself would meet as long as they could socially distance. They could allow press and limited public into that meeting. They did not identify how they would address FOIA requirements on that but, at least the first two parts, the committee and perhaps the press allow something very similar to what we did at the library. We're thinking that's phase 4. There is no timeline on this whatsoever but in the long term, someday, COVID is going to go away. We hope we will reopen Town Hall with full access to the public. Just to summarize the changes from what we submitted to the Board of Finance which was in your packet, we will have no new interior walls, no conference room in the lobby. The lobby does not change other than we have to reconstruct fire doors and replace hardware in order to make them compliant with the electronic access controls. There will be no receptionist office. There will be a receptionist desk. There will be a receptionist, at least in the initial stage, to enforce mask wearing and take temperatures, if necessary. We did take the suggestion of the Public Works and Finance Committee meeting to have a temperature and facemask scanner for this time period. We would actually have two: one on the employee entrance and one on the public entrance. So we would reconstruct the fire doors and replace the hardware which we would do anyway, new locks, panic bars, and electronic controls on the two fire doors on either side of the auditorium. We would install one new door to the central staircase. I can show you where that would be. This is the entrance lobby with stairs up to the auditorium, fire doors on the left and right, through the lobby and there is this staircase that goes up with one new door and that completes one large lobby/waiting/discussion area that we can socially distance and, theoretically, you could have discussions in the upper or lower lobby that are not critical. Maybe you are coming in to pick something up from Conservation or a permit from Public Works, a document from Planning and Zoning. These are not critical discussions. You may not need to go all the way down to room 201 but, on the other hand, room 201 would be a meeting area to discuss a site plan or something else. We would also be doing temperature and facemask control by no-touch device as was suggested by the RTM Public Works and Finance Committee. All other aspects of the original plan remain. We do have to replace the front entrance doors. They are not in good condition right now. We have to do them according to historical standards. This structure, Westport Town Hall, is on the National Register so we have to be very careful how we replace those doors compliant with those requirements. We would use room 201 and 201a as "indoor tents". We will install reception desk with COVID shields like you see in the grocery store. In the process, we will

establish minimum access control to the building. That really helps us in the long run anyway and it's something that, down the line, we would like to do throughout the building. We already have fobs on many doors in the building that provide us with access control. We would like to expand that access control and what that does is if an employee is terminated, there is instant control on their access card. It is also a way we can make our own fobs with ID cards for new employees. Meeting management, as we go into these new phases, as the COVID restrictions relax, we still want to be able to control where in Town Hall access is available for a public meeting. We have to have public bathrooms available so all of the second floor has to be available for folks to walk through. As part of this fobbing that we are proposing, we are providing access control by the Maintenance Superintendent from his iPad or his iPhone. He will control what is opened and what is closed in the building. The condition of the building that is long overdue, the locks are ancient. If we are going to replace them, we have to bring them up to current standards. In the packet that was sent to the Board of Finance and forwarded to the RTM, there was a PowerPoint that ran through these categories of cost. I'm just going to run through very quickly: With the removal of the walls, we still have to do framing on the front door. The fire doors will require some reframing but it results in a reduction of about \$4,000. Windows and doors are a reduction of about \$11,000. Finishes are a reduction of about \$10,000. Accessories are an addition of the two no-touch mask and temperature scanners of \$6,100. Electrical, the estimate for elevator controls and additional fobs, there are about eight doors that we have to fob, minimum at about \$3,000 apiece. HVAC goes down a little bit because we eliminate a vent. The original subtotal was \$168,710; Alternate subtotal with the elimination of the walls and the addition of additional electronics is \$165,600, a small reduction of \$3,000. The new grand total with architect and contingencies is \$200,940. I'm rounding that to \$200,000 because I think I can do it within that number. So, that is pretty much the size of it. I'm going to leave the new plan up which shows the new area or, if you wish, I can turn off share.

Dr. Heller:

It would be helpful to turn off share so we can see who is here. If we need to go back, we will do that. Thank you very much. It's complicated but you made it clear.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

If I can add to that, really, what we're trying to do is the same concept that was originally presented but we're using the existing structure and as we reverse out of this and go back to normal, we don't have to deconstruct anything.

Dr. Heller:

I would like to ask Mr. Marpe or Mr. Stern if you would like to add anything to this at this time.

Jim Marpe, First Selectman:

First of all, thank you for paying tribute to my immediate predecessor, Gordon Joseloff. I hope you all get a chance to see my comments. I'll save them for the Board of Selectmen's meeting Thursday morning. I've thought a lot about Gordon the last 24 hours and an admonition that he made to me as I came into office, by the way, Lauren Soloff's comments at the beginning of the meeting rang particularly for me. When I transitioned into this job, Gordon had elected to retire from it, it was as smooth a transition as anyone could hope for. We worked together so that I was as reasonably well prepared as I could be to come into this office where I'm sitting right now. I'm forever grateful for his help in making that happen. We can only wish for the same at the Presidential level. I can certainly say that exemplified, among other things, who he was and why we miss him so much now. The other

thing he told me: "Whatever you do, don't use Twitter!" He was actually prescient understanding what might happen. I didn't mean to take up time with that but he had so much impact on so many people.

In any rate, I just want to add to what was said. If you listen to our resident, Dr. Gottlieb, Dr. Fauci or anybody else who has knowledge of COVID, we're actually headed into a bad time. No matter what you hear about vaccines and hope, we have a period ahead of us when our health is still at risk and I feel an important part of my obligation is making sure that our employees stay safe during the COVID period and also our residents who come to Town Hall. We have been very fortunate in the last eight months, the actions we've taken, we've been able to maintain and operate all our functions for the Town in a safe and healthy way. At the end of the day, that's what this investment's all about, making sure that we continue to function when we meet in person with people we have to and when they would prefer to but, at the same time, protect our employees and protect them, as well. This is not intended to be, our goal here is to get to the point where we all long to get back to normal whenever that would be, sometime in the next year or year and a half or two years, but, what we're doing here, I think, will facilitate, over the near term, maintaining our public health in Town Hall but also, I think will help with the transition to that, through whatever stages we have to go to: additional lock down or be able to open up to additional in person public meetings, this is what we're about here. So, we're not trying to make any policy changes here. We're trying to keep the people safe and healthy. As we get to that point where we think we can reopen, it is my intention to work with members of the Board of Finance, RTM to make sure we're doing that in a smart way and in a way that allows all of our residents to have the access they desire. Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak.

Dr. Heller: Mr. Stern, you are here. Did you want to add anything?

Brian Stern, Chair, Board of Finance:

No thank you. What Jim and Pete said is fine. I'll just waste your time.

Committees report

Jay Keenan, district 2:

First, let me thank Pete for going back to the drawing board, taking into account what the committee said and coming up with what he presented tonight, the revised plan. Public Works and Finance met twice. We met on Oct. 27, where we were presented with the first plan. There were some concerns and Pete came back with the second plan. So, we met again last night to review the new plan. The new plan consists of two new front doors to Town Hall, UV air sanitation of the lobby and room 201, new door access to the central stairwell at the bottom right hand side of the auditorium which you saw in the plan, replacement of existing fire doors on each side of the lobby, and if it wasn't clear, those doors exist now but there will be new doors and new hardware, a reception desk with a COVID screen in the lobby, temperature and face mask control no-touch devices, installation of new door hardware throughout the second floor, and wiring to provide access control. Several of these items are in the capital forecast in different ways, one is ADA upgrades, they are sort of spread out in different items in the capital forecast so a couple of those will be taken care of. The ADA upgrades to all the hardware and access control to all the doors, I think I've said that twice. There were two concerns that were raised by the committees. The first one was more of a policy thing. Once COVID is over, we have more of an open-door policy for Town Hall access. This will be something that continues as more of a security thing. The other thing was would the reception desk stay there and would that be something that had to be manned and would that be additional employees and things like that. The committee voted 4-0-2 to recommend approval to the full RTM; two members that

abstained, Mr. Gold and Mr. Lowenstein, they abstained in anticipation of a discussion of the post-COVID open-door policy on Town Hall. That's it. Thank you.

Jeff Wieser, district 4:

That report was combined with the Finance Committee.

Before you ask if there are public comments, could you remind people of the address for public comments because we don't have any yet. If anyone is listening who wants to make a comment, the address is rtmcomments@westportct.gov.

Dr. Heller:

We always state that at the beginning of the meeting but sometimes people aren't on so what we will do is go on to the resolution and come back if we need to. Ms. Kramer is here and we have 36 members present.

Mr. Wieser read the resolution and it was seconded.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Director of ~~Parks & Recreation~~ Public Works, the sum of \$200,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund for Covid-19 and Security Upgrades for Town Hall re-opening is hereby appropriated.

Dr. Heller:

The resolution has been moved and seconded and amended to correct the typo to read "Public Works".

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Members of the RTM

Carla Rea, district 8:

My first question is do other Town Halls in the area come up with the same provision that we are with people telling us where to go, who they are going to see?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Yes. There are other Town Halls that have access control. It is more common than you would know. You go into Greenwich, you go into a single point of entry. You go into Stamford, you go through a single point of entry.

Ms. Rea:

No, no, no. I'm not talking about this. I went to Norwalk Town Hall. Nobody there asked me where I was going or who I was going to see and I don't think it's something that should be allowed. I think it's an invasion of privacy. I think once you take my temperature; I have my mask; that should be enough. I don't think I should tell you who I'm going to see. That's my first comment. Second comment: If there is a fire, do we have a fire exit in the back of the building?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Yes. All fire exits are maintained. All egress and access is maintained exactly the way it is right now.

Ms. Rea:

So, we can go out but we've got to park in the back, when it's going to be cold, snowy, raining, and go around the whole building in order to come in. Why? I think it's dangerous.

Mr. Ratkiewich: Or you can park in one of the five spaces in the front.

Ms. Rea:

How many are there? Five? Six, if we go all the way down to the road? But to go around, I think it's very dangerous, older people, younger people who might slip. I think it's going to be a mess of lawsuits. I think it's a terrible decision not to have a way to come in through the back. That's my opinion. The other thing is how often are the employees tested for this virus? I'm going to protect the employees but the employees are protecting me? How often are they tested at Town Hall to be sure that all they employees don't have the Coronavirus?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

I'm not sure that I'm qualified to answer that question completely. We have an Infection Control Officer. His name is Kevin Doherty. I think he would be able to give you a better perspective on testing of town employees and others that are possibly infected.

Ms. Rea:

The other thing is are we going back to normal on Town Hall, the way we know the Town Hall before the coronavirus when this is over?

Mr. Ratkiewich: Again, I'm not sure I'm qualified to answer that either, Ms. Rea.

Ms. Rea: Who's qualified? Somebody has got to give us the answer.

Mr. Ratkiewich: I don't think anybody knows what's going to happen from here on out.

Ms. Rea:

Yes. You know. Because, if the coronavirus goes away in a year or two, five years, 10 years, whenever it's going to go away, we would like to go back and forth, come in and be free, entitled to our own privacy, to come into our own Town Hall like the other Town Halls are doing. So, I think somebody should answer that question.

Mr. Marpe:

I said in my comments, when we get back to whatever normal is, however we decide that, yes, we can return to that access. We may want to discuss exactly what that looks like and I'll be happy to report if I'm still sitting in this office. It may be two successors from me. We don't know. When we get back to that point, I think that's a policy decision that is worth getting input from the RTM, the Board of Finance, the public, in general as to how they want to use Town Hall and how they think it should be used. So, I'm not foreclosing that option, Carla.

Ms. Rea:

My point is I think Town Hall should go back to the way we know where people are free to come and go. We are a free society. We should be free to come and go without anybody measuring our temperature or ask us for masks when they are not needed any longer.

Mr. Marpe: We pray for that day.

Ms. Rea: Are you qualified to tell me how often employees are tested in Town Hall?

Mr. Marpe: No, I'm not.

Ms. Rea;

I'm finished with my questions and I'm going to make my comments. I think this is a terrible decision. We park in the back and we've got to come all around the front. When it rains, when it snows, when it's below zero, when it's windy, I don't think it's the right solution. I don't like the idea that I've got to come in and tell you who I'm going to see. Once you check me, you take my temperature, I have my mask, I have the freedom to see whoever I want to go see. So, as of now, I will be voting against this. Thank you.

Noah Hammond, district 4:

I'm just wondering, did we look at a technology approach as opposed to a physical retrofitted Town Hall to modernize the approach to meetings in Town Hall? I haven't been to an in-person meeting and I've negotiated lots of deals over video. I'm wondering if that was on the table before we got into retrofitting what we have and it might benefit us in the long term.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

In a way, this is a technological solution, not that the remote meeting solution has not been considered and actually encouraged, right now. We hope, going forward, that the efficiencies we've realized doing meeting like these and on other platforms that are very similar during the day, will allow us additional efficiencies. It seems to have worked out fairly well and a lot of the residents appreciate not having to come to Town Hall to do business by doing things remotely. We've leveraged a lot of technology right now to try to accelerate our move to an online platform where residents have the option of not coming to Town Hall to get their permit or get their dump pass or get their whatever they need. So, we are trying to move in that direction but, in the meantime, unfortunately, we're in a bit of a time crunch and we're not completely there yet. So, we really do have to emulate an indoor tent in this phase of COVID. We were at level 3 a week and a half ago and now we're back to 2.1 which brings us back to July. The cases are going up and we have to take a stance that's careful but, at the same time, we need to bring people out of the cold. This is a solution that is not changing the structure of Town Hall. I've got to replace a couple of doors that I really should be replacing anyway. It's utilizing the existing structure and, as I stated earlier, we can reverse back out of this to whatever state we need. I don't think any department in Town Hall that has realized the efficiencies of online meeting is going to abandon that technology. On the contrary, we are going to embrace it as much as we can because it's very, very useful to us.

Peter Gold, district 5:

I appreciate Carla's sentiments about the public having access to Town Hall as it was prior to COVID. I think it is a public building with public employees and I think people should come in and be able to do whatever business they need. And I appreciate Jim's comments that we can decide that at a later date. I hope that decision comes down to open access. My concern is with the door locks. I don't understand it. I'm sorry, Pete. You told me we have eight door locks, presumably all on the second floor, at \$3,000 a lock which is \$24,000 which is a little bit more than 10 percent of the total cost. Presumably, these door locks are for some kind of COVID security precaution because we're not putting door locks on the third floor or the first floor. I don't understand why they're necessary if they're for COVID because the person comes into the building, stops at the reception desk; the reception desk says 'Who do you want to see?' Sorry, but that's the way it's going to work. 'I want to see so and so...Pete Ratkiewich in Public Works; Pete Ratkiewich comes and gets the guy in the lobby, escorts him to room 201 or meets with him in the lobby and then escorts him out the door. Why do we need to upgrade the door locks? If so, why not upgrade them on all the floors?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

I'd absolutely love to upgrade them on all the floors but I'm doing the minimum necessary to secure the second floor for this phase and future phases. If I were to do all the floors, I think it would probably be cost-prohibitive and, in this case, I'm really securing the second floor. That's really the goal. The electronic locks do add some functionality for the Building Superintendent that now has control over those locks from a remote point. That's frankly where we are going and that's where we are now. We do have fobs on the building and they can be used remotely. In effect, we are just adding to the system that we have already. We are going to expand it slowly. Down the line, if you look at the capital forecast, there is a larger plan for the modernization of Town Hall, if you are going to modernize Town Hall, we want to go with current technology. I'm not saying we want to go with Cadillac technology but we do want to go with industry standard and this is where the industry is going. We do, down the line, have to replace all the handles in Town Hall with ADA compliant handles. The handles that we have on the doors in most of Town Hall, right now, are non-ADA compliant. That's one of the goals and, if we are going to do this, even on a small basis, for this transformation, just for COVID, we might as well go in the right direction. That's the reasoning behind it. The \$3,000/door is for electronic locks. If I can do better on that with wireless locks, I will. But, right now, I'm going with that figure because that's what we have apparent. Again, down the line, we would like to do this on all doors because it gives us controls for the whole building. It is called building control systems and that's where we have been going with all buildings.

Mr. Gold:

I understand that. But, for COVID purposes, you have the security you need because the person is met at the lobby, escorted to 201 and escorted back out of the building. So, you know who's in the building. You know where they've been. When it is time to renovate the building, you want to change the locks at that time, you want to change the doorknobs at that time, it's another discussion. It's not necessary as part of this COVID process as far as I can tell.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

It is partially necessary. We do have to secure the elevator. We're trying to secure the perimeter under this first phase and even under the second phase. The door locks will eventually go in anyway. As I stated earlier, we have a fob system on Town Hall right now. We're simply expanding it to function the way we need to during this phase. Can we function a different way? Yes. We could put padlocks on the doors and we could open the padlocks when we need to move one door to another. You could argue a lot of different ways but this is the way I'm proposing to try to modernize Town Hall to be consistent with what's coming in the future.

Mr. Gold:

I understand modernizing Town Hall. I think you have a secure perimeter because you have an employee escorting the visitor at all times. He's not going to go in the elevator without somebody with him. He's not going in the elevator at all. You are only going to take him to 201 or else you are going to meet with him in the lobby. I understand it down the road in the future. I'm a little concerned about it down the road in the future because of the possibility of decisions being made to say 'Okay, we now have these locks. We are going to lock all the doors, all the time.' If somebody wants to come in to get a dog license or look at a plan in Planning and Zoning, they have to make an appointment. This would facilitate that decision; whereas, if we don't have door locks, it would be harder to do that but, fine. I understand what you're saying.

Andrew Collabella, district 4:

I apologize for not making last night's meeting. I would have been able to if my school had been able to not virtually meet. I'm going to Grad School at Fairfield University and, because of what we're going through, I am not able to attend any classes on campus. The reason why is because they don't have anything in place like Mr. Ratkiewich is proposing for Town Hall to bring us back to somewhat of normalcy considering our outcome and our future is a little more positive, more negative cases, but more of a positive outlook health-wise. I do feel this plan is a proactive approach. I feel it is a step in the right direction. It's better than nothing. Currently now, on my job, I'm not even allowed to go into Town Hall. In Norwalk, we are back to phase 2. Wear a mask in any building at any time. If you are not wearing a mask, you are asked to leave and go home. We've had numerous employees written up for that. Most of the employees in the City of Norwalk, because they don't have anything in place like this, are working from home. If I have to call one of the Personnel Administrators, I'm not able to go up to City Hall like I used to. There is no space for them to be socially distant. They have to work from home and I just think what is trying to be put forth is a very proactive approach for an unknown future of levels and phases. I know it was brought up about safety of freedoms. Yes. Our freedoms are still there. Right now, they must be altered because we must act accordingly to not only protect ourselves but to protect others. Why is that? So, when I go, when I have to go to City Hall in Norwalk, which is a rare occasion these days, but when I have to, I have to sign in, have my temperature taken, escorted to that room and then they call and escort me out. Why is that? Because, in the event that I do become contagious or contract the virus or someone else does, they can do contact tracing. To me, on an administrative level, it is neutral value basis; it is effective, it's responsive, it's justice and it's fairness. I think what Pete is trying to put forth for \$200,000 is completely worth it.

Harris Falk, district 2:

Pete, my only question is if somebody needs to use the ramp to access the building, what is going to be the procedure for that?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

The ramp will have an electronic control on it. The individual that goes up the ramp will press an intercom that goes up to the receptionist. The receptionist will then call the person that the individual is going to see; they will come down and take the temperature check at the door and bring that individual in. There's not a lot of traffic up that handicap ramp that comes into the building so I think that's more the exception than the rule on a regular day but that is the procedure right now. So, we do have control on that door that goes right back to the receptionist's desk. If need be, the receptionist can go down and open the door and escort them to room 201 which is right inside. Most of the time, the folks going up the handicap ramp are going toward Human Services or having a meeting in room 201 anyway.

Mr. Falk: Great. I just wanted to make sure it was accessible from the receptionist.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

They would also have access to the lobby and the elevator up to the auditorium, eventually.

Sal Liccione, district 9:

This is for Mr. Marpe or Sarah Harris. My question is, to what Carla said, are the employees being tested? Mr. Marpe, our rates are increasing in Westport. What is Mr. Marpe going to do about that? I would like the RTM to know when employees are tested so, please get back to us.

Dr. Heller:

Your question is you want some response in the future? Perhaps Mr. Marpe would like to say something.

Mr. Marpe:

We will come back to the RTM on employee testing. We can't for all sorts of HIPAA reasons, reveal testing results as I'm sure you understand. An example of what we've done to respond to the increasing positivity in test results took place last week when we rolled back to 2.1 and put some additional strictures in place that downsized public gatherings. We can't control what people do privately but those are the steps we'll take. If we go into the red zone, I don't know if we will or not but the trend suggests we might get there, we'll have to take steps to limit publically sponsored and allowed activities. We will announce those things. The Governor and the people who work for the Governor have put together guidelines. There are mixed messages within the guidelines. But the reality is there are clear steps about downsizing gatherings. An example of how we've changed, tomorrow, as you know is Veterans Day and VFW, Post 399, is sponsoring our annual gathering because we can't do that in Town Hall. Two weeks ago, we were assuming 100 people would attend but because of going to the orange phase, based on public health guidelines, that had to be downsized to 50 so it's really by invitation only event. I'm sorry it has to be that way but those are the kinds of things we have to do to get through the current phase we're in in the pandemic. There will be

a better day somewhere down the road but, right now, those are the kinds of decisions we have to make.

Candace Banks, district 6:

It's kind of great that we're discussing this because I've heard from three constituents this week who feel like they need to get into Town Hall and are saying 'Why can't I get in there?' So, I feel like this appropriation meets the needs of some of our residents who, for whatever reason, can't handle their business on the phone or don't know about the tent in the back. I feel like this discussion we're having is pretty timely. I hear the privacy concerns. I think about what I've been doing for the last eight months since the pandemic hit. Let's see...I've gone to funerals, I've gone to church, I've gone to a couple of restaurants and I've had a couple of doctor's appointments and each, admission to all of those events has been laborious. I've had my temperature taken. I've got to give my address; in some cases, my cell phone number. It's a bummer. I can't imagine anyone in that scenario would take that information and keep doing it if we didn't need to. At some point, we'll get to the point where we won't have to give so much information because, as much as I hate to give it, the person who has the additional responsibility of taking it from me probably would like that off their plate, as well. You are never going to hear me vote against ADA improvements. There are plenty of town buildings, schools, where we need to make accommodations for people with disabilities. The silver lining is during this pandemic we can do some of these projects so I'm supportive of it for that but probably the most important thing, and I had a conversation with Pete about a completely different issue and I thought Town Hall was closed. I thought the people were working remotely. I didn't realize and he gently but firmly reminded me that yes, people were working in Town Hall and, in fact, our Town Clerk, with the mail in ballots was working so much more. Through this time, I think our town employees are doing a terrific job and the case of Patty Strauss and the people in the Town Clerk's office and how they've handled all the mail in ballots and it's commendable but I also feel that we need to support them. Just like on the school side, we need to support the teachers and make them feel safe in their roles, I think we need to do the same duty to our town employees too. I think that it's a good balance. The residents need to get in for whatever reason but we've got to take steps to insure contact tracing to keep our staff safe too so I fully support this.

Karen Kramer, district 5:

I want to let you know that I definitely support this but I would also like to know about a back door. I know with my broken foot, I don't feel like walking around from the back to the front. Is there a back door that will be open? Pete, is that possible?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Right now that is not possible and you probably don't want to come in that back door. You would be much better off parking in a handicap spot and coming up the handicap ramp. There are more stairs on the back door than there are on the front or on the handicap.

Ms. Kramer:

Forget me but there are people who will need this a lot longer than I will be, hopefully, in this boot. Carla had a valid point on that. Everything else, I totally understand. We have to come up to date. We

have to keep everybody safe. In the future, after COVID-19, do you think we can have a back door again?

Mr. Ratkiewich: The plan that I have put forth does allow for that.

Ms. Kramer: Aside from that, I think you did a great job and thank you very much.

Dick Lowenstein, district 5:

First of all, I want to thank Carla Rea and her eloquence in stating the same points I made in the committee meeting. She did it much more effectively and with better grace than I did. I would like to have also flipped the entrance to Town Hall from the front to the back, but there was significant push back as we heard tonight. We had the absentee ballots counted in Town Hall on Election Day and I believe that was done in a large room, larger than room 201/201a. Couldn't that be the site for doing the same thing during the pandemic? I would also like to point out that the Westport Public Library, which is the only other public building aside from school buildings has been open every day from 10 to 6 except for Sunday and their entrance is much more accommodating. There is no mask required; no temperature taking at all; people are kept socially distant. I don't know why Town Hall cannot borrow the library model. Finally, I do realize that more and more people have less and less reason to go to Town Hall as more papers are being scanned and made available for people to look at without looking at a paper file. I think a lot of the money that is being spent on this would be better spent giving money to town departments for scanning of their historical documents so there will be less and less need for people to go into Town Hall.

Seth Braunstein, district 6:

I have a couple of things to say. First off, I want to start that I'm going to support this appropriation because I do think it is necessary to a) make accommodation to people who want to use Town Hall and feel that they are not as comfortable in accessing things virtually and b) I feel like we're asking an awful lot of our town employees where we've seen no diminution of effectiveness for people who have been manning that building the period of the pandemic and I will reiterate what others have said that we have a duty to their safety. I think this plan helps to provide a better, safer working environment. The third thing I'd say, a bit in response to Dick's previous point, I would hope that we wouldn't view this as an either/or. In response to what Mr. Hammond said earlier, we do have to provide as much virtual online access as possible, as well, so we need to think about those being mutually achievable goals, not one that would take the place of the other. Finally, the real incremental thing I'd want to add here is I want to applaud Director Ratkiewich for the flexibility he has shown in being responsive to some of the discussion points that emerged during the committee meetings and taking a pretty fresh look at what was said and coming up with an alternative solution that I think does less permanent modification to our Town Hall while still achieving, ultimately, the same end goal.

Kristan Hamlin, district 4:

I'm just assuming from the timing of when this agenda item came forward that there's no possibility of anyone having the knowledge of the new Pfizer discovery that was announced this week. They said it has a 90 percent cure rate, very different from usual vaccines and it supposedly would be widely available in April. I don't know how long it would take for all of this reconstruction and construction to happen in Town Hall but I'm wondering if, by the time we finish it, we're a month away or a couple of

weeks away from widespread availability of the vaccine which, I thought I had heard Dr. Fauci say was coming in April, so, I'm wondering if, when you came up with this plan, you were aware of the fact that a vaccine was discovered with a 90 percent cure rate and, if not, how that affects this and whether we should make a motion to consider the impact of that vaccine and the confluence of the timing of the vaccine coming out and the timing of when this construction would be finished and whether it only buys us a couple of weeks before the vaccine is widely available. So, I'd like someone to tell me if they knew about this vaccine and if you knew, didn't you consider its impact before moving forward with this \$200,000 plan when in April it will be widely available?

Sarah Harris, Operations Director:

We've been looking at reopening Town Hall since May. We've looked at this through several different angles and have thought about this thoroughly. The reality is that none of us know what is going to happen. We've all diligently followed, through our Emergency Operations Command Center, through the advice of our Health District and the guidelines coming from the State as to reopening and considered the research that is out there with all of the decisions that we've made. When this conversation first came up, Pete Ratkiewicz and I had a conversation and he said to me that we really want to invest in physical improvements. We've gone so far with technology and isn't this the time to focus on technology but we agreed we've lived with the reality of what COVID looks like at Town Hall through the entirety of the summer and the reality is that we have a lot to be proud of with our technology, it is not enough to provide town services 100 percent of the time. As mentioned, some people are just not comfortable with digital solutions so it is important that we give the option for the public to meet with staff and have their questions answered if those can't be done over the phone or through email. But we have considered the vaccine and the first thing that comes to mind is, sure, vaccine, sounds great but how soon is everyone going to be vaccinated? I don't think that any of us feel that we can rely on a future unknown even if the science today is very convincing and comforting, the improvements that Pete is putting forward right now are scalable and they're smart and they're not the type of improvements that we are going to look back in a couple of months and say we never should have done them. They are already part of the larger plan for Town Hall. Yes, we've considered the vaccine and we've got some really great support behind the decisions at the time with Pete, Jim and I here tonight but we've got a lot of town officials with us on the decisions brought forward.

Ms. Hamlin:

So, my question on how long the construction will take and whether that will end up dovetailing with what has been predicted as widespread availability by April. So, when will the construction be finished? If we are only buying a couple of weeks, what is the timeframe for the construction?

Mr. Ratkiewicz:

Kris, I don't know where you're coming up with instantaneously, in April, everything is going to be fine. That's something that came out two days ago and is a prediction no one knows whether it is going to come true. Even if it does, our information from CDC and the Department of Public Health in the State of Connecticut is that vaccines are not going to be available for the general public immediately once the vaccine is tested, and verified effective. No matter what you've heard today or tomorrow or a week ago, as a government entity, we have to be conservative. We have to plan for the worst and hope for the best. I think that's what we're trying to do here. I'm not going to agree with anybody who

says the vaccine is going to be a panacea in April. My prediction is a year from now? maybe? we might be able to say COVID is gone.

Ms. Hamlin:

Pete, I'm not asking you as Public Works person to have a better estimate than Dr. Fauci who said April for widespread availability. I'm asking you when is the construction going to be finished so that we can benefit from this construction so I can evaluate what I read that there is going to be widespread availability in April from Dr. Fauci, I need to evaluate that. So, I'm asking you when is the construction going to be finished such that we would benefit from it so I can figure how much time we're buying in terms of improvements. When is the construction finished? That's the question.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

The planned construction is to be complete by about January. But, I have to go out to bid, as you know, on certain items. We are going to GC it ourselves to try to fast track it but we don't have a date certain for you at this point because we're just at the funding stage.

Ms. Hamlin:

So, the aspirational deadline is January which would be really fast compared to everything that has happened in the past. Give us a range, January versus what? When is the last date that you think it would actually be finished? When do you realistically think the project will be finished so that we could start benefitting from it?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

I think the reduction of actual wall construction is going to accelerate the project to the replacement of several doors and electronics. We will open, probably, by the end of this month in one form or another but the ultimate completion of the project would be the middle to the end of December. That's my prediction.

Ellen Lautenberg, district 7:

Currently, I don't know what the frequency is of people coming to Town Hall and meeting outside but, if all of the meetings are taking place in 201, then you'd have to rotate when employees would meet there and you'd have to have some kind of schedule in order to do that?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

I have the benefit of sitting outside the tent for the last six months and watching what the activity is in that tent and that includes the pandemic plus, Tropical Storm Isaias. I think I can only describe it as manageable with the one tent and some outside area now so I think we are providing the equivalent or better by providing two spaces in 201 and 201a and some informal spaces within the large lobby. I don't have any doubt that we will be able to handle the volume that we have seen outside. It's surprising how many people are doing things online, to be honest, and I think a lot of people are embracing that. I can't give you the number of people per hour because it varies during the day but it isn't overwhelming. I've never seen a line outside the tent. On the interior of the building, we do plan on doing appropriate marking for social distancing and lane-ing in and out of 201 if there is actually that much volume. But I don't anticipate that.

Ms. Lautenberg:

So, you're viewing the lobby as overflow or area for another conversation.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

I think during the day, there are a lot of transactions that happen within four or five minutes and then the people are on their way out. So those type of transactions can happen, within that general lobby, easily.

Ms. Lautenberg:

In terms of, what a couple of people have already mentioned, access from the rear of the building, having never tried to walk around from the rear to the front of the building, is there a way to develop signage for people to have the simplest access, just as a suggestion.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

There is a walkway around the building on the south side of the building that goes from the back parking lot to the front door and around the building. The only part with no sidewalk is the narrow part on the north side of the building. The nature of the driveway is that you really don't want to put a walkway in there. Over the summer, we installed a handicap ramp in the back so if someone who is handicapped or compromised or in a wheelchair wants to get on the sidewalk, they can do it; however, I don't believe there has been an issue of availability in our handicapped parking area which is directly adjacent to the handicap ramp. All others have to go about 50 or 70 feet around the building, probably less than most town halls in Fairfield County.

Ms. Lautenberg:

So, we need to find ways to accommodate people that need to come to Town Hall in this pandemic. We have no idea what the length of time is going to be and also because a lot of these changes are part of your long-term plan, I will support this.

Wendy Batteau, district 9:

A couple of my questions have been already addressed so I won't ask them. With respect to what Ellen said, is it possible to upgrade the walkway from the back to the front and create some kind of good fence or handrail around it so that people won't be nervous? I have used that walkway in the past and I haven't found it that stable or easy to navigate. One suggestion and also I had questions regarding scheduling but I think that's been answered. I have a couple of other comments that I'd like to make---not about this project. 1) It's good to see Jessica back. 2) Somebody mentioned Patty before and it occurred to me that this is probably going to be our last meeting during Patty's tenure.

Dr. Heller: No that is not true. It will be in December.

Ms. Batteau:

Never mind then. Pete, could you address the question about making the walkway more secure?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

It's a 4.5' concrete walkway right now. We've asked Parks and Rec. to clear away some of the vegetation overhanging but that will clear away shortly anyway. It's certainly more than ADA

compliant. I walk it every day. It's on the south side of the building. It's in pretty good condition. I've inspected it several times.

Ms. Batteau: It must be improved since I last used it.

Mr. Ratkiewich: I'd be happy to walk it with you.

Ms. Batteau: Only if you wear three masks!

Lou Mall, district 2:

One of the things I've always been concerned about is the safety and security of Town Hall. When we did the Kroll study, we looked at the eight schools but we never took the time to look at the safety and security of our town employees. I really want to say that I like this approach that you've taken, Pete, versus the initial proposal and it brings to mind the value added that members of the RTM bring to the table. Jay Keenan, with his attention to details, always catching things that the rest of us don't see, Jay really added value to this. So, I'd like to thank Jay for doing that. While I'm on the subject of value added, I came away from last month's meeting after two in the morning with a greater appreciation of our colleagues on the RTM, of the value that they've added, Kristan Hamlin with her legal expertise and Wendy with her editorial skills and so many others; Amy Kaplan, who certainly epitomized the importance of compromise and collaboration and so many other people who contributed to that discussion that we could come up with a sense of the meeting resolution that we could all be proud of and could live with. I just want to toot the RTM horn a little bit tonight. I just want to say how proud I am to be on this body. The other thing I'd like to say, before I'm put on mute, is this past week I've been thinking about the sheer numbers of people who voted. We are talking about 145 million and it all comes down to people opening envelopes and counting and so forth and it's the Town Clerks, like Patty Strauss, of America who brought it all together. We are so fortunate in this town to have the volunteers and have someone like Patty leading the count and taking care of our institution. I just want to thank all of you for making a major contribution to making this a better town.

Dr. Keller: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mandell:

I am also on the Westport Reopen Committee and I do my research into what's going on. Kristan brought up the vaccine to the virus and I think we should discuss how that really does relate. The vaccine, if it's approved would be under emergency circumstances, it would be three weeks from now, at best. The vaccine would be a two phased virus vaccine where you take one and then two weeks later take another one and then it is 28 days for it then, probably, to take effect. They say that they can put together 50 million doses by the end of the year; twenty-five million would come to America and since it's a two dose vaccine, it would mean 12.5 million Americans would have it by the end of the year. The other doses would go elsewhere. They are looking to have a billion doses somewhere through the end of next year. Then again, that is two doses so it's 500 million people throughout the world, etc. So, the concept of when we would be able to be free of the virus due to the vaccine could be a year off, as Pete mentioned. In the meantime, there are people who wouldn't take it because they are worried about it, that it has not been fully tested so we would still be sitting and waiting. Pete's concept of being conservative in terms of Town Hall and moving forward and opening

up as best we can under those circumstances is prudent. We should be doing that. We hope the vaccine works. We hope that it can be rolled out. We hope that other vaccines around the world will come to fruition and then can help us out but we can't rely on it and that's where we're at. As to what's going on in Town Hall, I support these changes. I think they are the right thing to do. We need to be sure we know who goes into Town Hall. We need to be able to contact trace them. So far in Westport, none of our businesses have been traced back to causing any viruses nor do we want Town Hall to be the spot where there is a spreading event. So, we want to make sure we know who they are. Escort the people. But I also want to say that members of the committee, and I'm one of them, said that when this is all over, we want Town Hall to go back to the way it was, the people's house, our Town Hall. We should be able to walk into it freely and find what we need to do. Whether or not there will be a receptionist in the future, we used to have one and they would direct people around. It's good customer service and that's something we could be looking at but I want our Town Hall to return to the way it was and we should put it on the record that at least this particular RTM member wants that but, in the meantime, with the virus, we need to make sure our employees are safe and that our residents are safe and that we've done the right thing in doing this.

Kristin Schneeman, district 9:

I want to preface my comments by saying a couple of things. I appreciate all the things our town employees have done during this pandemic. They've worked incredibly hard. I feel a little bit invisible because most of us aren't going into Town Hall right now. Hopefully, they know how much we appreciate everything they continue to do. I am in the biomedical and public health space as part of my day job so I'm fully on board with Matt's analysis of where we are and where we are likely to go over the next year in terms of vaccines and treatments. I'm such a fan of Dr. Fauci that I have a Dr. Fauci bobble-head on my desk. I'm finding myself having a hard time with this project separating out the pieces that are about COVID-proofing Town Hall so that people can come in and I fully support having people come in in the winter. We can't have the tent outside in the winter. People need to have access when they can't do things online or prefer not to. I'm having trouble separating out COVID-proofing versus security upgrades which we might just want versus some things which sound like they're modernizing Town Hall in ways that we would like to see happen like replacing the front doors or doing more ADA compliant pieces, all of which are good but I'm not entirely sure are related to the COVID access piece. I'm hearing a number of people say in different ways that we probably want to do the COVID access pieces in a way that is pretty light weight so that we don't overinvest in that and, hopefully, make them go away fairly seamlessly when it's time to do that which could be a year from now. Pete, can you go back to the problem we are trying to solve on the COVID front. The tent seemed to go reasonably well when the weather was good. It seems like the number of meetings we could have in the tent was reasonable. There was not a lot of demand for meetings that we can't do in the tent. I keep coming back to the issue. We just need one point of entry at the front door with the handicapped entry available for people who want to use that. But we want to channel people through the front door. I understand that. It seems like you've laid out a plan where people could meet in two areas of the lobby, upper and lower, at some conference tables, maybe with some Plexiglas protection, I'm not sure, and then 201 is available where people might not want to have an open air conversation. It might need to be more confidential. So, I'm just wondering if you could maybe disentangle pieces that are addressing COVID versus just security and what are related to that versus what is the modernization to Town Hall. Is that possible?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

I'm not making any secret that there is a portion of this project that is security upgrades that go along with it. I don't think that they are outrageous security upgrades. We're installing cameras. We're starting to complete an electronic lock conversion on access control and establishing basic access control if we need it. We can also turn off all access control and open it up like it was last January or January of 2019. It's a flexibility portion of it but the installation of electronic locks is both an opportunity and it also falls in line with what we want to do because it gives us flexibility in control. I don't need to have someone there physically with a key if I have a fob system. I can open and close doors from a control panel. I can open and close doors from a cell phone if I have the right app. So, it's part of an upgrade but we are going to be replacing locks on doors which we do need to do. We need to follow the general idea of upgrading Town Hall. We have a fob system right now that we are simply expanding to these new doors to improve access control. A basic tenet of security, the very basic concept of security in a building is access control. That doesn't necessarily mean you have to exercise access control at all times. It means that you try to establish access control so that you can have it. In this time period, right now we definitely need it and modernizing this is not a big stretch. It's really going to help us with contact tracing. It's really going to help us with just knowing who's in the building, where they are, where they're going and it's not incompatible with the general plan for Town Hall in the long run. If you look in the capital forecast for last year, there is a line item for improvements to Town Hall. It happens in future years, starting 2022 or 2023. The first part of it is ADA compliance throughout Town Hall. This is a big project that we haven't advanced at this point. The second part of it was completing the renovations to Town Hall. This was the project that was started before I took this position but it's still on the books and what I'm trying to put forth here is I'm not doing anything that's against that plan. It's compatible with that plan. It would be complementary to that plan.

Ms. Schneeman:

I'm still not sure where I stand on this. If we are talking about security upgrades to Town Hall and modernization of Town Hall, I prefer to keep those as separate debates, as comprehensive plans, than with the COVID.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

The request is some security upgrades. It's not only COVID renovations but security upgrades. That's part of the appropriation request. The security upgrades right now amounts to cameras, controls on the exterior doors, improvements to the exterior doors, those are all security upgrades. To be honest, we've needed cameras on Town Hall for a long time. I gave the example today at the Board of Finance meeting, at the last election, when Town Hall was a voting station, somewhere in the middle of the afternoon or evening, someone knocked over one of our light poles in the back parking lot. I don't know who it is to this day. I don't have cameras to this day. I will have cameras in the back parking lot to at least give me a clue and other entrances to Town Hall. This is not inconsistent with other Town Halls in Fairfield County. It is consistent with our Police Department camera system. It's consistent with our Board of Ed. camera system. All of these cameras are available to the Police Department and it enhances their network. That is a major security upgrade that has been needed for a long time. So, it's things like that that are built into the security part of this. The COVID part is getting that perimeter that we can control, that in and out, for the time period that we need to. As Matt

said, we need to do this. Do we need to do it in a year? I don't know. Is it going to be half a year? I don't know but I want to be flexible so I can react to anything.

Christine Meiers Schatz, district 2:

My biggest concern here is with the person who will be sitting at the security desk. There's a big difference between a \$200,000 appropriation and what could turn into a yearly recurring salary expense for somebody there. It is my understanding that the person who will be there immediately is a reassigned traffic safety person. I just want to put on the record that I hope that we can address the safety concerns for those at Town Hall through technology and not through adding a yearly salary cost. As far as for what we do after COVID, a suggestion was floated of possibly having a receptionist there for customer service. I think we have to be careful. We are the Representative Town Meeting for the whole population but as compared to the people that we represent, as a body, we are on the older side. I think the newer generations that are coming up are going to be less interested in having in-person, customer service people or receptionist and more interested in being able to do as much online as possible and not even needing to come into Town Hall in the first place. You can say these are mutually achievable goals. We only have so many resources so I hope that, in general, that is the direction we are moving as opposed to head count.

Ms. Bram:

I think this is a great plan and we all have to do things we have to do such as air travel. It never will go back to what it was before. I just want to make one point, a disagreement. Now that I am among the handicapped population because for now I'm using a walker. I'm not walking yet. I will say there are capacity problems with handicap spots. I've noticed the ones in the front. Sometimes they are full. I don't know about the back. Now that I'm in the position I'm in, you start to notice things. You start to notice where the ramps are and it's not uncommon to find handicap areas fully subscribed. The one currently in front of our building is actually quite small so my request is that in this design, there be plans for contingency expanding it in the future so if we need to increase the number of handicap spots, that can take place. I don't know if you can do it in the front so it would need some design, some thought to do that.

Stephen Shackelford, district 8:

I am confused about the timing, Pete, in your discussion with Ms. Hamlin. When do we expect this to be done and how much time between when we open Town Hall and when this will be done if we approve this?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

I may have to take some interim measures to get Town Hall opened by December but the goal is to have everything complete by then. We've already started investigating costs with contractors. As I said, we are going to try to GC it ourselves. So we're already actively anticipating a go on this and we're going to act as quickly as we possibly can. Do I have a schedule right now? I do not. I'm at funding stage. Without funding, I can't go out and get commitments from contractors. I'm working as quickly as I can and this plan is one that can be enacted quickly because it does not involve wall construction. I do have to replace a couple of doors. I can do that when Town Hall is closed. I can do

that in the evenings. A lot of the work can be done in off hours. So, we can build this in. All I can tell you is I'm going to get this done ASAP because I need to.

Mr. Shackelford:

Pete, the plan has other COVID related pieces like improved HVAC pieces which is supposed to help with minimizing COVID spread. Also, the accessories. There are a number of things here that are COVID related. And the access restriction is directly COVID related, right?

Mr. Ratkiewich: It is COVID related but it is also security enhancement at the same time.

Mr. Shackelford:

You mentioned that this is not unusual for Fairfield County. Do you have any sense for how many of our fellow towns have Town Halls as open as ours was before COVID where people could walk through or how many have stricter access controls?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Yes. If you go to Norwalk or you go to Stamford, you have to go by a guard before you get into the building. There is a single point access in Greenwich. But that it all skewed because of COVID. Many towns have done what we've done and shut down Town Hall. It's not unusual in today's day and age in any commercial structure or office building to have to go by a check point before you get into the building. It's a basic security measure and in no way am I suggesting that it's a permanent feature of our Town Hall. But what I'm saying is right now, that's what we need. So, I'm modeling it after that.

Mr. Shackelford:

Last question: You mentioned something about if you have the right app, people could remotely open the key fob doors. Is that true of the ones you're planning to install?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

We're able to do that now. We have a fob system on Town Hall right now that if I'm standing outside the door and I forgot my key, I'm the Director, so I could call my Building Maintenance Superintendent and ask him to please open the door for me and he will open the door for me.

Mr. Shackelford:

And we're just adding additional fob units like that so that anybody inside, if someone comes to visit them, they could let them in without having to go through a receptionist?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Theoretically, Stephen, we could set it up like that. We could set it up as a remotely operated service. It becomes an expense instead of an employee expense. Right now, our plan to use traffic agents. They don't add to headcount. They are a part-time employee that are already on the books. We're just using them at Town Hall. It's an expense for this operation but it's not like I'm adding OPEB or pension to our burden.

Mr. Shackelford:

I'm sorry, I said last question but I have one more question. Remind me, the pricing in here for labor and materials, how was that arrived at.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Back in July, we hired an architect, April Tome, who has done a lot of work for us on town buildings and is very familiar with this building because she has redrawn the plans and done quite a few renovations. I asked her to help us with this. I'm not throwing these numbers out. She actually has a plan and has gone through and estimated these values. She graciously revised the plans when I turned around and said 'We can't go that way, we have to go this way.' And that included an opinion of probable cost. She estimated that for me. We discussed it back and forth and I'm comfortable with the numbers.

Mr. Shackelford: Will it be bid out for the little pieces of work?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

The town GC's it. We act as the General Contractor and we hire out the various trades to do the work so we already have contractors that are on retainer for doing the electronics. We can go out to bid for any of the door replacement or carpentry work that's involved. The HVAC would be bid out separately. We take each element and bid it out. It's a little faster that way when we do it in house on a project like this.

Mr. Shackelford:

Thank you for the flexibility in changing the plans after the committee meeting. I like this one a lot better and I appreciate your working on that. That's it for me.

Mr. Wieser:

Being among the people who beat up on Pete in the first meeting, in Public Works and Finance, I wanted to jump in and thank him for what he's done fairly quickly. To recap just a minute, when it was on the agenda and it came to us a couple of weeks ago, he had a plan and it involved walls and lots of permanent changes to Town Hall. As a group, we said 'What are you trying to solve for here? Are you trying to solve for COVID or are you trying to add more conference rooms? What are you trying to do?' The solution he was trying for was a temporary fix, and hopefully it will be temporary, so we didn't need the walls and we didn't need some of the permanent things that were going up and going to be in Town Hall forever. We really needed something to take care of COVID but if it had the opportunity to enhance the building for the future, that would be ideal. When Pete came back in a week and a half with these changes that don't change the structure, but modernize it, make it more secure both during COVID and possibly after, if we choose to make it more secure after, the infrastructure will be there in place. So he has taken \$200,000 which was going to go into a lot of temporary things and put it into something permanent and, in my mind anyway, very useful going forward. So the talk about what is COVID and what is permanent, this solution, I think, is as close as we can get to permanent while taking care of the COVID need and there is a need because Town Hall workers need to be made secure. In terms of the timing for what's going to happen, Pete, I think it's going to be staged. The front doors, you said, need to be architecturally significant and it may take a while but those don't have to be there to complete the thing you're talking about here so that could be who knows when. It's not really going to affect how you check for COVID. As far as I see, the one thing we did is we made the receptionist area temporary by removing walls and you could put a receptionist in next week. That would do a lot to secure the building for the staff. That could really help move this along. A couple of great points: Jessica's view about the front parking lot. There probably will have to be more handicap parking. We're probably going to have to have people out there policing the 15 minute time limit because there are a lot of people who stay there a lot longer than 15 minutes and those spots are going to be in much greater demand probably. Those are things

that can take place, not as a result of the money we're spending tonight but as a result of opening up Town Hall in a COVID environment. What Pete has done in the last week and a half, I think, is astounding in terms of being flexible to a couple of RTM committees who I think provided really good input to him and he listened and he really responded too. So, I salute the process as others have. I guess that's all. I just thank Pete for being so responsive to the committees and coming up with this great plan.

Mr. Gold:

I just want to make sure I was clear earlier today. I'm not sure I was. First of all, Pete, I do appreciate all the work you've done in coming up with a revised plan. I think it's much better than the first one. I understand the need to create a secure space within that red line that you have on the plan. I fully appreciate the need to do that. I think, as I tried to explain, that that can be done without putting locks on all the doors that aren't there. I think, to Kristin Schneeman's point, I would have preferred to see this as separate appropriations with things that are absolutely necessary for COVID security which, if you have somebody coming into the lobby and stopping at a receptionist desk and the receptionist calls whoever they are meeting with to come and get the person and they walk them to 201 or meet with them in the lobby and then walk them out, there's no need for the locks. They are not wandering around. You know where they are. You can do the contact tracing because they signed in at the desk. I would have preferred to see the security things, the ADA things, as Kristin pointed out, separated from the COVID things. My concern with the locks is not so much that they are locks as for the implication of what they can be used for going forward in the future. As Matt said, this is the people's house. The people should have the right to come in. Yes, you should check in, like in an office building but, once you pass security, if I wanted to go see Planning and Zoning and then I wanted to go see Eileen Flug and then I wanted to go see Patty Strauss or her replacement, I should be able to do that. You made the point that we have that basic access control "if we need it". We haven't had a discussion of whether or not we need it because it has been wrapped up in this COVID discussion. I appreciate Mr. Marpe's point of his commitment to discuss whether or not we want to have a more open Town Hall or a more closed Town Hall in the future when COVID is passed but, by that time, we've already spent the money. Again, I would have preferred to see it separated out. I think you can do the perimeter that you need to do without the locks but I can't separate it out from this appropriation. That's my point.

Ms. Meiers Schatz:

This is a question for First Selectman Marpe. Brian Stern made a great point at our committee meeting. He wondered if, instead of having a traffic safety cop, we could have a rotating position from current Town Hall employees at the desk. With that idea in mind, the traffic safety cop who would be sitting at this desk, what are we pulling him away from? Why not have that traffic safety cop instead helping with all the incremental student walkers going to school because of COVID or other things and maybe take up Brian's idea for the rotating receptionist.

Mr. Marpe:

I'd like to separate what you were saying into two pieces... the use of additional traffic safety officers at the schools, I think that's a different discussion. Your thesis implies that our employees in Town Hall have the capacity to go sit in that front desk. I would question that thesis. First of all, not all of our employees are here on any given day. That's one of the secrets of our success of not having any outbreaks in Town Hall. We work in platoons, cohorts, whatever the right term is here so not everybody is here so the ability to leave their desk and come out and do a job is frankly quite limited in terms of time available. There's also the point of training and preparing people. There's some

process here to be addressed as well and a desire to have some consistency of service. Quite frankly, we want the person who is sitting there and it may be a couple of different people, we are trying to make sure that we've got consistency of how you deal with the process of checking people in, taking temperatures and so forth. I think that needs to be something that is consistently observed and a person who is prepared to do that process and has a sense of Town Hall, as well. Different employees have a sense of their departments but not all of Town Hall. I think it's a combination of training, time availability and the ability to plan and use those folks. As to whether the traffic safety officers could be used in different ways, that's a discussion for another time.

Ms. Meiers Schatz:

I wanted to make follow up points to that. First of all, with technology, people can have mobile desktops where they could be doing their work at the desk in between people coming in and with COVID, the people coming in, it probably would not be all that frequent. Also, I do have full faith in our town employees that they could follow a protocol for consistent check ins that would be adequate for our purposes. To the second point, when we are talking about our town resources, I don't think that it should be a separate discussion as to whether we use our traffic safety officers for schools or whether we use them for our Town Hall desk because the fact of the matter is we have limited resources and we have to decide what to do with those resources and when we decide to deploy those resources in one direction, it's necessarily taking them away from something else. So, they aren't separate silos but I hear your points.

Ms. Hamlin:

I would like to ask these questions of Jim Marpe, as well. I understand why we would want to have someone sitting at a front desk and insuring people coming into a building only with masks and also that their temperatures are taken. If you go to a hair salon now, they all have these little temperature things and they zap your forehead. Everyone is required to have masks and there is some Purell that they give you at the front door. It's not really an elaborate mechanism involved to do that. I understand that presently we don't have somebody sitting at the front desk. I agree with Christine that there is some remote work that could be done at the front desk by a secretary or someone. I just don't understand why, since this is going to be so temporary, what I've read is that 50 million doses are available in December and you need two each so that's 25 million people. They say 25 million people will be able to receive that vaccine by December and I just forwarded to a bunch of people that article. Then I forwarded a separate article from Fauci saying it will be widespread available in April. It seems to me, the things that we need to accomplish, locking the back door, locking all the doors, making sure people only come in through one door, zapping them, it's not very expensive or high tech, doing what Christine said, having them take turns working with their computers in the front and not letting people in unless they have masks, I'm just not sure why we're doing something elaborate and permanent for something that is just going to be a matter of months. The construction is not going to be done until January so this is the kind of thing that should be done on a temporary basis. Starting now, you should have someone up there. You should lock the other doors. Make sure people only come in with masks. Since the construction is going to be January or February and we are going to start having vaccines in December, I almost feel like we should take the time to study the impact of this vaccine, look at it, evaluate it, get some more information because you didn't have it when you brought this agenda item before us. It really is something that's going to have an effect so is there something you can do, Jim, on a short-term basis to enrich protocol without going full hog on this?

Mr. Marpe:

Kris, there are people far better trained to deal with questions about vaccine and its arrival and when it will be dispersed. So, that's not something I can possibly answer. The reality is by the end of November, first of December, we will have this partially in place. The plan that Pete has put forward is designed to be essentially in place by the end of January so that we're operational there. I don't think we'll be anywhere close to having comfort that people will be vaccinated and that COVID is going away as has been said a couple of times already. We have to take a conservative approach. I'm responsible in the end for managing the people who work in Town Hall. This is an approach that we think works. I don't know how many of you have managed offices. Someone mentioned the term "secretary" a little while ago. We really don't have secretaries in the classic sense of what that term is meant to be. A lot of that work is gone. I do a fair amount of my own typing. That's not the way Town Hall operates anymore. The reality is I doubt the receptionist is something we'll have for the long term. Earlier, somebody was talking about a generation, certainly, much younger than mine, which is used to doing things whether it's online or some way self-served thanks to electronics and we actually have plans to put in place some enunciator boards and things that will help people find their way around Town Hall. It's on hold now just because of the challenge we face. So, I hear what everybody has to say about hope for the vaccine but I think what we're doing here is a responsible plan for those of us day-to-day who are responsible for the people who work in Town Hall but also the people who come to Town Hall. That's why we're putting this forward.

Ms. Hamlin:

One other question I have for you Jim is, I've gone to a lot of Fairfield County town halls and Norwalk and Stamford have receptionists but the towns that our size like Darien, Wilton and New Canaan do not. What percentage of the cost is increased security, independent of COVID? What percent of these measures are strictly COVID related measures?

Mr. Marpe:

I think Pete would have to answer that question. Nobody's really mentioned the front doors. The existing front doors are very difficult to open. That's, in part, why we're replacing them to make it easier to come in the front door for people who come in that way. That's not about security. That's about ease of access. Again, there are piece parts to all this, some of which serve both interests here both COVID protection and overall security.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

I just don't have it broken down that way. A lot of aspects of this project function for both. I'm sorry. I don't have it broken down that way.

Ms. Hamlin: Thank you to you both.

Ms. Batteau:

I'm taking points from pretty much everybody. From Pete, it seems to me that the initiating impulse here is that we're coming into winter; it's getting cold; people shouldn't be forced to meet outside in tents; it's getting too cold. So, we want to get this done sooner rather than later. I have to say, I agree with Peter. I don't understand the need for the locks when people are going to be escorted wherever they are, at least, at this point. I look at both (Kristan and) Kristin's points and Christine's points and I'm wondering. I know you don't have it broken out COVID versus security related versus simply ease of access-related issues but, is it possible to consider this in stages so that we would do what we really needed to do to facilitate people using the indoors for COVID so that we get that accomplished sooner since December is probably going to be cold and then we could have a further discussion of

Matt's point of view of Town Hall as the people's house. It seems to me that a lot of people are concerned about that. I think that's a discussion worth having.

Ms. Rea:

Pete, I have a question. Do you have cameras inside Town Hall so you can see how the people move around, where they are going? You talked about needing cameras on the outside. I'm wondering, do you have any cameras inside the building?

Mr. Ratkiewich: Not at this time but it is part of the plan, yes, in the stairwells.

Ms. Rea: In the stairwells so are you also talking about the hallways or just the stairwells?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Right now, just the stairwells. In case someone decides to exit during this time period and we don't know it and we have to trace them, we'll trace the cameras.

Ms. Rea:

So, you won't be able to follow somebody after they walk in and check in and see if they are actually going where they said they were going to go?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

It's not like I have a station or a security person looking at 16 cameras. Cameras record events. They are good for going back and tracing and they are very useful for contact tracing.

Ms. Rea:

For contact tracing...If I come to Town Hall, you take my temperature. I have my mask. I tell you I'm going to see Patty Strauss and then I decide to go to some other department which I did not tell you about so you did not know and then there is a Coronavirus case, you with the camera can actually tell where I went, correct?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Not in this plan because it's only going to be in the stairwell. If you're outside the stairwell, we won't see you. Even so, I would have to check that out. It's not like I'm tracking you.

Ms. Rea:

There are only two handicap parking spaces on the side of the building. I know because I use one, unfortunately, because of my back. As Jessica said, many times, the two spaces are taken. When you take the handicap ramp to come up, let me tell you, either it's not salted right when it is ice or snow or rain or it needs the pavement refinished because it's very slippery. It's actually more dangerous than me walking on the street when the weather condition is such. So, I think you should look into that. It's not that I don't appreciate what you or the administration are doing to make us safe, I just think it would have been nice if any RTM member could have been asked questions about what ideas we had because I really feel as a handicapped person that I have a tough time coming from the back to the front. I can see lawsuits any time somebody falls down. So, I think it's very dangerous because of that and I don't see why we don't have a second person at this point in the back with a

little desk where the door opens. By the way, make sure the door opens because the new door in the bathroom at Compo Beach is almost impossible to open so I had problems. Why can't we have two checkpoints to make it easy for the people to come in from the back?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Right now, that's the only way we can do it. There is no room in the back. It is completely impractical to take one of the back staircases and install a table. We learned that at Election Day because they tried to do that because, first of all, it is obstruction of the staircase. There is no room in there to actually do that properly. And, it's not a handicap entrance at all.

Ms. Rea:

You've got to understand, there are steps and there are railings. I am handicapped on my back and with the railings, I take one step at a time and hang on for dear life. It's easier than going around the handicap ramp. The handicap ramp, first of all, is outdoors. It takes me longer to come in and be dry and second of all, it's very slippery when there is ice, when there is snow, when it's rainy. I don't know if it's a question of maintenance, if it needs a new surface to it but I have found it has more negative impact on my body than to take those few steps in the back. We can put a little tent in front of those doors and put somebody there. You can put a table on the platform and measure the temperature and see that they have the mask and if they do, they come in from the back. I feel very uncomfortable because I don't feel very safe, that's number one. We've had this problem since last January, February, we've been locked up. It's almost a year later. It's not that I don't appreciate what you've come up with but at least we should have input. But we didn't. I think it's terribly wrong and it took so long. We knew we were going to be with this COVID for at least another year. I'm very upset. I think we are looking at lawsuits too. People are going to fall down and they're going to sue you. I'm really upset that you are not willing to make the access for us easier. Wendy said put up railings so handicapped people can hang on it. There was no answer about that. The RTM is being blackmailed. People say 'You've got to do it now or it's never going to happen.' It's too late. And I'm also tired of the discussion among the RTM members, some of them, not all of them. Town Hall has got to be open to everybody and I'm wondering if we can put something on the resolution that we want to see Town Hall to go back the way it was and if we can take a vote on that.

Dr. Heller: Are you proposing an amendment?

Ms. Rea:

I don't have the resolution in front of me but I would like something that says when COVID goes away, we want Town Hall to go back to the way it was.

Dr. Heller:

I would like to direct that to Mr. Marpe who spoke to that issue. Mr. Marpe would you address that.

Mr. Marpe:

I think I was on record earlier as saying when the COVID goes away, I don't know how to describe that right now, what that metric is, but when the Westport/Weston Health District and the State Department of Health feel that we have achieved that point, then I am absolutely open to going back

to the way it was, with your input. This is a personal opinion: I don't think that needs to be an amendment to this resolution.

Ms. Rea: I believe you, Jim.

Dr. Heller:

Carla, I just want to respond that what Mr. Marpe said he did say before, as well. It is now on record. It is in the minutes of the RTM.

Ms. Rea:

Okay. Everybody is positive. God forbid this thing goes on up until the next election and we have a new administration, this will stand?

Dr. Heller: It's in the minutes.

Mr. Marpe: What makes you think it'll be a new administration?

Ms. Rea:

Whatever you want to do is fine by me. Good luck. My point is, I want to make sure.

Dr. Heller: It's in the minutes and it's on record Carla.

Ms. Rea: Fine. Thank you.

Dr. Heller: And thank you Mr. Marpe.

Jimmy Izzo, district 5:

I've had the pleasure of listening to some fine conversation this evening. I want to thank the administration. I want to thank Peter for a great job. I want to thank the committees who did the homework and many people, I wish you read the reports and went to the committee meetings and all that. I'd like to call the question and get to the vote.

Point of order, Mr. Gold: Did you want to go back for public comment?

Dr. Heller:

No. There were no public comments shortly after our announcement and it is too late now but I will ask Mr. Wieser. Were there public comments that came in?

Mr. Wieser:

There was one comment that came in at 9:20, well into our conversation, which supported the modification and urged the members to vote yes; referred to the vaccines and whether or not there would be enough data to have that effect. The final paragraph:

The proposed modification, while costly, I feel is necessary to protect our town employees and the public. I suggest the protocols being implemented in Town Hall last for a minimum of 12 months and review if there is a need to extend beyond that. (Michael Kaplan. 7 Fallow Street.)

Dr. Keller: That answers your question Mr. Gold.

Mr. Mandell:

I am not in favor of calling the question. I would rather have Mr. Izzo remove it if no one else wishes to speak.

Ms. Rea: Me too.

Dr. Heller:

You have been asked to remove that because no one else wishes to speak and we can go without it.

Mr. Izzo:

Okay, I'll remove it. My dear friend Matthew Mandell, my colleague from district 1, I will remove it, Matthew. (Get a haircut.)

By roll call vote, the motion passes 33-2-1. Rea & Schneeman opposed; Lowenstein abstains.

Dr. Heller:

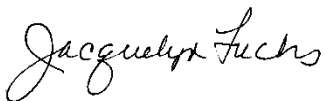
The resolution passes. The motion is carried. I want to thank everyone for their input. I think it was very helpful. I want to thank Pete and the administration for your creativity and flexibility and your responsiveness to all of the input from the committees. Clearly, you've heard other things tonight that are important to people and I hope you are responsive to people. That's the most important thing. I want to thank you all tonight for asking the hard questions because it's important to do that and I think we've come up with a very fine direction for eventually opening Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia H. Strauss

Town Clerk



by Jacquelyn Fuchs

ATTENDANCE: November 10, 2020

Revised 11/6/20

DIST.	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	NOTIFIED MODERATOR	LATE/ LEFT EARLY
1	Richard Jaffe	X			
	Matthew Mandell	X			
	Kristin M. Purcell	X			
	Chris Tait	X			
2	Harris Falk	X			
	Jay Keenan	X			
	Louis M. Mall	X			
	Christine Meiers Schatz	X			
3	Mark Friedman	X			
	Arline Gertzoff	X			
	Jimmy Izzo	X			
	Amy Kaplan	X			
4	Andrew J. Colabella	X			
	Kristan Hamlin	X			
	Noah Hammond	X			
	Jeff Wieser	X			
5	Peter Gold	X			
	Richard Lowenstein	X			
	Nicole Klein	X			
	Karen Kramer	X			
6	Candace Banks	X			
	Jessica Bram	X			
	Seth Braunstein	X			
	Cathy Talmadge	X			
7	Brandi Briggs	X			
	Lauren Karpf	X			
	Jack Klinge	X			
	Ellen Lautenberg	X			
8	Wendy Batteau	X			
	Lisa Newman	X			
	Carla Rea	X			
	Stephen Shackelford	X			
9	Velma Heller	X			
	Sal Liccione	X			
	Kristin Schneeman	X			
	Lauren Soloff	X			
Total		36	0		

Appendix I – Item #1

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Director of ~~Parks & Recreation~~ Public Works, the sum of \$200,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund for Covid-19 and Security Upgrades for Town Hall re-opening is hereby appropriated.

BOND RESOLUTION

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, the Town of Westport, Connecticut (the “Town”) hereby appropriates the sum of Two Hundred Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$200,000) to pay capital costs associated with COVID-19 related upgrades to Town Hall including installation of access control modifications, structural and HVAC modifications, security system enhancements, electrical, supplies, materials, administrative, engineering, financing, contingency and other related costs (the “Project”).

Section 1. As recommended by the Board of Finance and for the purpose of financing Two Hundred Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$200,000) of the foregoing appropriation, the Town shall borrow a sum not to exceed Two Hundred Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$200,000) and issue general obligation bonds for such indebtedness under its corporate name and seal and upon the full faith and credit of the Town in an amount not to exceed said sum for the purpose of financing the appropriation for the Project.

Section 2. The First Selectman, Selectmen and Finance Director are hereby appointed a committee (the “Committee”) with full power and authority to cause said bonds to be sold, issued and delivered; to determine their form, including provision for redemption prior to maturity; to determine the aggregate principal amount thereof within the amount hereby authorized and the denominations and maturities thereof; to fix the time of issue of each series thereof and the rate or rates of interest thereon as herein provided; to designate the bank or trust company to certify the issuance thereof and to act as transfer agent, paying agent and as registrar for the bonds, and to designate bond counsel. The Committee shall have all appropriate powers under the Connecticut General Statutes including Chapter 748 (Registered Public Obligations Act) to issue the bonds and, further, shall have full power and authority to do all that is required under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and other applicable laws and regulations of the United States and the state of Connecticut, to provide for issuance of the bonds in tax exempt form, including the execution of tax compliance and other agreements for the benefit of bondholders, and to meet all requirements which are or may become necessary in and subsequent to the issuance and delivery of the bonds in order that the interest on the bonds be and remain exempt from federal income taxes, including, without limitation, to covenant and agree to restriction on investment yield of bond proceeds, rebate of arbitrage earnings, expenditure of proceeds within required time limitations and the filing of information reports as and when required and to execute Continuing Disclosure Agreements for the benefit of holders of bonds and notes.

Section 3. The Bonds may be designated “Public Improvement Bonds of the Town of Westport,” series of the year of their issuance and may be issued in one or more series, and may be consolidated as part of the same issue with other bonds of the Town; shall be in serial form maturing in not more than twenty (20) annual installments of principal, the first installment to mature not later than three (3) years from the date of issue and the last installment to mature not later than twenty (20) therefrom, or as otherwise provided by statute. The bonds may be sold at not less than par and accrued interest at public sale upon invitation for bids to the responsible bidder submitting the bid resulting in the lowest true interest cost to the Town, provided that nothing herein shall prevent the Town from rejecting all bids submitted in response to any one invitation for bids and the right to so reject all bids is hereby reserved, and further provided that the Committee may sell the bonds, or notes, on a negotiated basis, as provided by statute. Interest on the bonds shall be payable semiannually or annually. The bonds shall be signed on behalf of the Town by the First Selectman and the Finance Director, and shall bear the seal of the Town. The signing, sealing and certification of said bonds may be by facsimile as provided by statute. The Finance Director shall maintain a record of bonds issued pursuant to this resolution and of the face amount thereof outstanding from time to time, and shall certify to the destruction of said bonds after they have been paid and cancelled, and such certification shall be kept on file with the Town Clerk.

Section 4. The Committee is further authorized to make temporary borrowings as permitted by the General Statutes and to issue a temporary note or notes of the Town in anticipation of the receipt of proceeds from the sale of the bonds to be issued pursuant to this resolution. Such notes shall be issued and renewed at such times and with such maturities, requirements and limitations as provided by statute. Notes evidencing such borrowings shall be signed by the First Selectman and the Finance Director, have the seal of the Town affixed, which signing and sealing may be by facsimile as provided by statute, be certified by and payable at a bank or trust company incorporated under the laws of this or any other state, or of the United States, be approved as to their legality by bond counsel, and may be consolidated with the issuance of other Town bond anticipation notes. The Committee shall determine the date, maturity, interest rates, form and manner of sale, including negotiated sale, and other details of said notes consistent with the provisions of this resolution and the General Statutes and shall have all powers and authority as set forth above in connection with the issuance of bonds and especially with respect to compliance with the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and regulations thereunder in order to obtain and maintain issuance of the notes in tax exempt form.

Section 5. Upon the sale and issuance of the bonds authorized by this resolution, the proceeds thereof, including any premium received upon the sale thereof, accrued interest received at delivery and interest earned on the temporary investment of such proceeds, shall be applied forthwith to the payment of the principal and interest of all notes issued in anticipation thereof or shall be deposited in trust for such purposes with a bank or trust company, or shall be applied or rebated as may be required under the provision of law. The remainder of the proceeds, if any, after the payment of said notes and of the expense of issuing said notes and bonds shall be applied to further finance the appropriation enacted herein.

Section 6. In each fiscal year in which the principal or any installment of interest shall fall due upon any of the bonds or notes herein authorized there shall be included in the appropriation for such fiscal year a sum equivalent to the amount of such principal and interest so falling due, and to the extent that provision is not made for the payment thereof from other revenues, the amount thereof shall be included in the taxes assessed upon the Grand List for such fiscal year and shall not be subject to any limitations of expenditures or taxes that may be imposed by any other Town ordinance or resolution.

Section 7. Pursuant to Section 1.150-2 (as amended) of the federal income tax regulations the Town hereby expresses its official intent to reimburse expenditures paid from the General Fund, or any capital fund for the Project with the proceeds of the bonds or notes to be issued under the provisions hereof. The allocation of such reimbursement bond proceeds to an expenditure shall be made in accordance with the time limitations and other requirements of such regulations. The Finance Director is authorized to pay Project expenses in accordance herewith pending the issuance of the reimbursement bonds or notes.

Section 8. The Town of Westport, or other proper authority of the Town, is authorized to take all necessary action to apply to the State of Connecticut, and accept from the State or other parties, grants, gifts and contributions in aid of further financing the Project. Once the appropriation becomes effective, the First Selectman, or other appropriate official of the town, is hereby authorized to spend a sum not to exceed the aforesaid appropriation for the Project and is specifically authorized to make, execute and deliver any contracts or other documents necessary or convenient to complete the Project and the financing thereof.

Section 9. The Committee is hereby authorized to take all action necessary and proper for the sale, issuance and delivery of the bonds (and notes) in accordance with the provisions of the Town Charter, the Connecticut General Statutes, and the laws of the United States.