

**RTM Meeting
May 2, 2022**

The Call

1. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the estimate and recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town of Westport for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
2. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town Railroad Parking Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
3. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town Sewer Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
4. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Wakeman Town Farm Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
5. To take such action as the meeting may determine, to require that property taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, shall be due and payable in four quarterly installments, and to designate the dates of the first days of July, October, January, and April as the dates upon which such installments shall be due and payable, and that all taxes in an amount of \$100 or less shall be due and payable in a single installment on the first day of July.
6. To take such action as the meeting may determine to require that the motor vehicle tax shall be due and payable in a single installment.

The following items will also be considered as time permits as follows on Monday, May 2; Tuesday, May 3, and/or Wednesday, May 4:

7. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Public Works Director, to approve an appropriation in the amount of \$400,000.00 from Westport's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for planning, design, and permitting of the redevelopment of Parker Harding Plaza, Jesup Green, and the Imperial Lot.
8. 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 in the amount of \$232,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the design and permitting of the replacement of the Hillandale Road Bridge over Muddy Brook.
9. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by Director of Public Works, to approve a Special

Appropriation in the amount of \$852,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for asphalt paving projects at Bedford Middle School and Staples High School.

10. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Board of Education, to approve an appropriation in the amount of \$439,000.00 from Westport's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, for Middle School Project.

11. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Superintendent of Schools, to approve an appropriation in the amount of \$148,656.00 for Coleytown Elementary School Modular Classroom Funding.

12. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Westport Historic District Commission, to approve an appropriation in the amount of \$30,000.00 to the Historic District Fees & Services Account for the purpose of accepting funding in the amount of \$30,000.00 from the State Historic Preservation Office. The funds will be used to hire an Architectural Historian to update Inventory Forms.

The meeting

Moderator Jeff Wieser:

Good evening. This meeting of Westport's Representative Town Meeting is now called to order and we welcome those who are joining us this evening. My name is Jeff Wieser and I am the RTM Moderator. The acting Secretary tonight will be our Town Clerk Jeff Dunkerton. Our Secretary Jackie Fuchs is recuperating in the hospital. We are all thinking of her. I believe she may be listening in. If anyone wants to send her good wishes at jfuchs@westportct.gov, I'm sure she would love to hear from you.

A notice about procedures for this electronic meeting: Pursuant to Sections 163-167 of Senate Bill 1202, there is not a physical location for this meeting. This meeting is being held electronically and live streamed on westportct.gov and shown on Optimum Government Access Channel 79 and Frontier Channel 6020. Meeting materials will be available at westportct.gov along with the meeting notice posted on the Meeting List & Calendar page. Members of the Westport electorate attending the meeting by telephone or video may comment on any agenda item. Comments will be limited to three minutes. Emails may be sent to RTMmailinglist@westportct.gov, which goes to all RTM members. These emails will not be read aloud during the meeting but you can be sure that we will all receive them if they have not already been sent.

This evening, we are happy to welcome Anna Rycenga a longtime volunteer in Westport. Anna, tell us about yourself and then give us your invocation.

Invocation, Anna Rycenga:

Good evening. Thank you, Moderator Wieser, Deputy Moderator Karpf and the RTM Members for inviting me to present the invocation for tonight's RTM Meeting. It truly is an honor to be here. I see so many familiar faces on screen and it is so great to see you

all. My name is Anna Rycenga and I feel blessed to live in our wonderful Town of Westport since 2010. Well, some of you may know me as the Chairwoman to the Conservation Commission but also for all my charitable and volunteer contributions to many organizations and causes throughout the State and in our local community. A lot of these organizations I work with benefit families in need with food, toys, socks, winter coats, books, toiletries, school backpacks, diapers, prom dresses, clothing and the list goes on. Many times, at these events, people have asked me what motivates me. My response is always the same, I can relate as I understand the struggle. Everyone's childhood life is unique and many of us can write a book about our own life, which could be an example for others. Every one of us will have a lot of little stories, moments of their life, which could teach others. For me, there is no need to look at others for motivation. I just look inside of myself and look back at my own past life to understand my strengths, uniqueness, and use that, to move my life and other's life forward. Many residents in Connecticut living in poverty, are families with children. Once upon a time, I was that child. In my childhood, growing up extremely poor, in a single parent home with two siblings, living paycheck to paycheck, times were tough but I thought this was normal until I prematurely took on the worries and concerns of an adult. For me, it was disheartening, stressful and upsetting, not having the financial means of the essentials like food and clothing, but that whole experience had a silver lining. My mother's motivation, strength and love were like no other to overcome the struggles we were faced with and to develop the strength and empathy I needed for my future. As I became a woman, I started understanding how my experience in life, enabled me to be resilient, how to persevere and it also taught me the value of fellowship with my family and the community. One way of showing my gratitude was by giving back to those less fortunate. I realized I would not be where I am today, were it not for the circumstances and challenges I faced growing up. I realized one of the more well-known benefits of giving back and volunteering is the impact on not only the recipients but the community. It allowed me to connect with my community and make it a better place for those in need. Even helping out with the smallest tasks can make a real difference to the lives of people, animals, environment and organizations. This fulfilling feeling of giving back and contributing is unparalleled and truly has become part of my everyday life. However, I am not able to achieve this alone. The Town of Westport community has significantly and generously contributed positively for many of the charitable events I have organized. Each of us, through our contributions as volunteers and benefactors, holds the power to change the course for those in need. This has been proven to me after each event and we leave our mark in our town with the time and resources that we dedicate. That is what becomes my gift 22 years later and the Town of Westport's legacy for making a true difference. A dear friend of mine shared a powerful message with me today to use your mind and body every way you can, it is the greatest instrument you will ever own and we have this day and the rest of our lives, to make a difference, change our behavior, and take action for those in need to make us feel as though we are part of something greater than ourselves. Thank you, Westport and for all your support. We clearly are Westport Together. To that end, thank you for having me, it has been an honor to provide tonight's invocation. I thank you, for all you do and wish you all a great meeting this evening.

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you Ms. Rycenga. Thank you for all you do and for being here tonight. And thank you Ms. Karpf for finding you and getting you here. You are welcome to spend the evening with us but we hope you have something better to do.

Ms. Rycenga:

Well, my Conservation budget is on the agenda so I'll stay for a while.

The pledge of allegiance montage followed.

Mr. Weiser: Thank you Mr. Mandell.

Acting Secretary Dunkerton called the roll. There were 33 members present. Absent: Meiers Schatz, Cohen, Schneeman.

Mr. Wieser:

The April minutes are not out yet but if there are corrections, still contact Jackie Fuchs. We're not letting her off the hook just because she is in the hospital or you can contact Jeff Dunkerton.

We send birthday greetings to Peter Gold, Noah Hammond, Kristin Schneeman and new to the list this year, Don O'Day. Happy birthday in May.

The next RTM meeting will be tomorrow, May 3. We will go over the Board of Education budget. There may be another meeting on May 4 if we don't get through our agenda tonight. The next regular meeting will be on June 7.

Announcements

Mr. Wieser:

I will kick off the announcements by pointing out that today begins Professional Municipal Clerks Week, and so it is a good chance for me to thank, for myself and on behalf all of you, the great staff we have in the Town Clerks Office. Jeff Dunkerton and his staff perform many functions in Westport, and it comes closest to us as they make sure the RTM runs smoothly at all times. So Happy Professional Week and a big thank you to Mr. Dunkerton, Tatiana Plachi, Ruth Cavayero, Lori Gandini, Jennifer Longobardi, and Karen Westergard. I hope you have a pleasant week to get you out of the office. Oh, you're going to be here late for three nights so you won't get out of the office early. Congratulations Jeff and thank you for all that you do.

RTM Announcements

Kristin Mott Purcell, district 1:

I wanted to share with you that the Westport Garden Club will be hosting their annual Garden Sale May 13 on Jesup Green next to the Library. The sale starts at 9:30 and will run through one o'clock. The members have been carefully curating their own gardens to pull out the most innovative and interesting plants that you have ever seen. It's a fun event. It starts at 9:30 with a wheelbarrow take off for the peonies, the roses and some

really interesting plants. Think about joining us the 13th of May on Jesup Green starting at 9:30.

Matthew Mandell, district 1:

My first two announcements are straight up Chamber. The next couple of weeks back to back there will be some great events in Westport. The first is Supper and Soul which returns after two years where you actually get to go to a restaurant, have a meal and go to a concert at the Library. Eleven restaurants are involved. It is Saturday night, May 7 and the Library has upgraded their sound system with a brand new state of the art system so this is a professional venue. So, come see Supper and Soul this coming Saturday night. It's a great date night if you want to take your lady out for Mother's Day or ladies, tell your man to take you out. Any which way you want to do it, it's a great date night for Westport. If you take your ticket back to any of the restaurants, you get happy hour pricing on drinks after the show. One week later is the Dog Festival on Sunday, May 15 from 10 to 6 p.m. It's everything dogs, fun for the whole family, 3,000 people, 1,000 dogs and the obstacle course is back. If you want to have your dog run the obstacle course, the fastest dog gets a year's supply of dog food. Since the next meeting is June 7, there is a big event on June 4. Gilbertie's turns 100 years old this year and they are celebrating with a gigantic party. There will be a scavenger party all month long that leads to Gilbertie's in the end. There will be food trucks, vendors, petting zoo and I have put together a concert of Mystic Bowie. He will be there along with Kale Wale who will be opening up for him. Come, spend the day at Gilbertie's, 100 years in the town and in the State and we've invited a whole bunch of elected folks o come. We're not sure who's coming yet. I think a bunch of them are coming down from Hartford. It's not every day that you have a business that is 100 years old. So, Supper and Soul, Dog Festival, Gilbertie's, a lot of stuff happening.

Liz Milwe, district 1:

Our Spring Fling for the RTM has been changed to a Summer Soiree on June 9. It is going to be a fun evening. Most of it will be outside so everyone will feel comfortable. I'll be doing it together with Kristin Mott Purcell. We'll be sending out some messages about logistics and bringing food and whatever. My second announcement is that we haven't done a pancake breakfast at Wakeman Town Farm in many years and we're bringing it back. It's on June 18 from 9 to 11. If you want to come have breakfast, you sign up on the Wakeman Town Farm website.

Mr. Wieser:

If there are no further announcements we will move on to the business of the agenda. Tonight we are looking at the annual budget for the town. Our annual budget meetings are a little different from our monthly meetings. On tonight's agenda, we will review the Town Budget, some administrative issues that go along with the financial administration of the Town and a few appropriations, if we have time. We will review the Education Budget tomorrow night and vote on the combined Town and Education Budgets the two requests of the Board of Education and any additional items not addressed tonight. If needed, we will meet again on Wednesday. We have a lot to do over the next two days, and we hope to move things along to avoid that Wednesday meeting. In accordance

with RTM rules, no new agenda items can be addressed after 11:30 p.m. unless a 2/3 majority of RTM members present agree to continue past that time.

Here is a brief explanation of the agenda and procedures for these meetings: We will begin with a presentation of the Town side of the Budget, by Board of Finance Chair Shari Gordon and the administration. Many committees have met to review their corresponding departments, but as practice dictates, we will hear only from the Finance Committee. If other committees wish to report verbally, they may do so when we turn to that section in the budget. In any case, I expect that RTM members have reviewed the specific committee reports which are available to the public on the website. At the conclusion of the Finance Committee report, we will then turn to the public for comment, and then to the RTM for debate and voting. We will vote in two parts on the Town budget. First we will discuss the Operating Departments of the Town and after voting on that portion of the budget, we will turn to the four agencies of the Town: The Health District, The Library, Earthplace and The Westport Transit District. If your comments relate to those agencies, please hold them until we get to that section of the proceedings. When we turn to the public tonight after we hear from the Finance Committee, members of the Westport electorate may address any individual area of the Town budget or the budget as a whole. We will maintain a three-minute limit on the comments, so please keep your emails brief.

When the RTM begins its review of the budget, if there is a motion with respect to any item in the Budget, I will open the floor back up to the public to comment on that specific item, again with a three-minute limit. Unless there is a motion on any item, I will be calling out each general budget area in turn. If any RTM member wishes to make a motion or discuss a particular area or any line item as it relates to the budget in that area, comments are limited to 10 minutes. If a committee wishes to report verbally, please raise your hand when we come to that area of the budget. If no one wishes to discuss that area, I will consider all the line items in that area approved and move on to the next area. If a motion to restore or reduce is made and seconded, we will hear the committee report if the report addresses it, then hear comments from the public, and then turn to the RTM. A word about voting: The RTM may approve or decrease a budget line item by a simple majority vote. The RTM may restore an amount requested of, but not recommended by, the Board of Finance by a vote of 70 percent of the RTM members present and voting, but, in any event, not less than a majority of the RTM, which is 19 votes. The RTM may not increase any budget item beyond the request to the Board of Finance. An abstention is not a vote and is not counted as a vote. I ask the Finance Director Gary Conrad to please keep a running total of the amounts approved by the RTM. At the end of our review, we will vote on the first Resolution of the Town Budget.

Regarding conflicts of interest, I'd like to remind everyone of the Town Charter provision on conflicts of interest. Charter Section C38-2 states that "No Town employee or any member, whether elected or appointed, of any Board, Commission, Agency, Committee, Department or of the Representative Town Meeting of the Town shall participate in any official capacity in the hearing or decision upon any matter in which such person has,

directly or indirectly, a personal or financial interest. In the event of such disqualification, such fact shall be entered on the records of the commission or board.” Article 6 of our own RTM Rules of Procedure adds the provision that “All members should be most sensitive to permitting an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest to exist, even though a complete disclosure of all circumstances would show that an actual conflict did not exist in a particular case.” Mr. Mandell will not be voting on the Earthplace budget; Mr. Gold will not be voting on the Transit District Budget and Ms. Talmadge and Ms. Milwe will recuse themselves from the Wakeman Town Farm budget in committee. Ms. Shaum is recusing herself from the Health District.

Finally, while we may move through some areas of the budget rather quickly, it’s important to note for members of the public listening in that, since so much of the RTM’s work is done in the committee meetings in preparation for these meetings, RTM members have already spent countless hours over the past three to four months attending Board of Finance and Board of Education meetings and budget workshops, studying the budget, and conducting RTM committee meetings along with the town and school administrations and department heads, to make recommendations to the RTM as a whole. What you see tonight is the culmination of all that effort, and I thank the RTM members, Committee Chairs, the Town and School administrations, department heads, staff, and Board of Finance and Board of Education members for all of this effort on behalf of the Town of Westport.

The secretary read item #1 of the call – To adopt a budget for the Town of Westport for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.

Committee report

Finance Committee, Seth Braunstein, District 6:

As Jeff laid out, the Finance Committee has a report on the meeting that occurred on April 26 and this is the first of two reports that the Finance Committee will be presenting. There will be another report tomorrow evening that summarizes the meeting that we had back on April 13 with the various members of the Board of Education and the schools’ management and leadership. Tonight I will attempt to hit the high points. I don’t want to grind through the full seven plus page report that was prepared. I would definitely recommend that you take a look at that if you haven’t already. It’s got some excellent detail in there. What I will do is highlight some of the most important changes that the town is contending with as we contemplate this year’s proposed budget. First off, as we move forward this evening with the final steps of this budget process and it is a process that began all the way back in December, it’s worth taking a moment just to recognize that we live still in a very complicated time. We are contending with the residual challenges of COVID, figuring out how to successfully assimilate a large number of new residents and working hard to maximize equal opportunities to housing. And we are most certainly beginning to contend with a period of more significant inflationary pressures. From the Board of Selectman, the Board of Finance, the Board of Education, to the Department Heads and all of the incredibly dedicated employees and

volunteers our town is so fortunate to rely upon, there has been an unwavering focus on attending to the well-being of our community. So, a hearty and well deserved thank you is in order to all the dedicated folks who have a hand in getting us to the point we are at tonight. The big picture take away from tonight's discussions and, frankly, all the work that has been done across each department is that the town has been vigilant, responsible, and largely far sighted. While I'll get to some of the more pertinent elements of this year's budget that we will be considering this evening, I think it might be helpful for us to recap some of the truly significant accomplishments that the town's leadership has engendered over the years. Through consistent and conservative annual contributions to the pension and OPEB liabilities we are appropriately funded and should continue to maintain a disciplined approach to be certain that we can keep the promises we've made to our town employees and retirees. With the OPEB Account having built up over the last twelve years from literally \$0 to ~\$90 million, the account is about 84 percent funded. Looking at the employee pension funds which are also reevaluated each year, total funding in the pension account is at almost 94 percent. This "catch up" in funding of these two liabilities is one of the Town's great successes of the past dozen years and deserves to be recognized as a source of great strength provided by the taxpayers. In terms of some of the more notable operational variances in this year's budget and these are some of the things we delved into at our April 26 meeting, there were a couple of things that stood out.

- An increase in the Parks & Recreation budget of 7.2 percent which was mainly driven by increased minimum wage rates for seasonal employees, and improvements to facilities under the new Park's Superintendent as well as some new equipment to facilitate improved agronomic plans.
- An increase in Information Technology of 8.6 percent as the town continues to make investments in upgrading cybersecurity and increasing digitization of more town functions.
- A reduction of (75 percent) in OPEB contributions which is driven by favorable investment returns and lower health costs due to the pandemic and favorable trends.
- Our Pension expense also declined 15.4 percent is due to favorable investment returns and reduced pension costs as a result of the negotiation of pension benefits in 2017.
- We saw an increase in "Other Benefits" of 4.7 percent which relates to higher insurance costs covering Liability, Property and Healthcare.
- Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, we had a lengthy discussion about Public Protection budgets that benefitted from some temporary headcount reductions resulting from retirements and there was also a reallocation of emergency services expenses to support the new joint dispatch center which provides realized net savings as well as improved response times and overall better service. The new dispatch is estimated to generate savings of approximately \$86,000 in year one.

We also heard a common theme repeated across many town departments as our discussions frequently referenced the many and varied ways in which inflation is beginning to play an increasing role in driving higher expenses. We are seeing cost of goods are rising whether it be fuel related, services related, materials related and even

labor related. Moving beyond the operating items associated with the Town's budget, we also reviewed the "Other Organizations" budgets which cover the Health District, the Library, Earthplace and the Westport Transit District. In total, the "Other Organizations" budgets added another \$6,355,807 to the requested budget. On a year over year basis, this represents a 3.72 percent increase from the 2022 approved budget for these items. This included the Health District, \$557,756 which was a decrease of 5.6 percent; Library, \$5,379,207 or an increase of 5.7 percent; Earthplace, \$105,000 or flat year over year, and the Westport Transit District, \$210,200 which represents a decrease of 38.5 percent but we are certainly going to talk more about that as we go through the evening. This last item, the Transit District budget continues to be a topic that generates significant discussion and debate. Our committee heard a presentation by Westport Transit District (WTD) Director Peter Gold which provided updated details on the new Wheels2U program, overall finances for all of the services provided by the WTD which concluded with a request for restoration of the \$133,000 that the Board of Finance previously cut from the Westport Transit District budget on March 29th. We engaged in a lengthy discussion. A lot of that focused on the repeated nature of this particular restoration request and the need to move beyond this annual exercise of looking to restore. There was a lot of discussion about the need to come up with an integrated transportation plan. Finally, we did vote on this restoration request and we unanimously voted to recommend restoration response here this evening. I would also want to note that in our discussions that First Selectwoman Tooker informed our committee that she also recommended restoration of the Westport Transit District funds and also viewed a review of the Westport Transit District services to be a critical part of the steps her administration has been taking to assess traffic and transportation issues more broadly. Should restoration be approved, the Westport Transit District budget would be \$343,200, basically flat, which would be a slight increase of 0.35 percent increase year over year. As to overall budget recommendations from the Finance Committee, we 20voted unanimously, 7 - 0, to recommend the full 2022 - 23 Town budget of \$77,725,657 to the RTM. Present that evening were myself, Cathy Talmadge, Christine Meiers Schatz, Don O'Day, Jessica Bram, Rachel Cohn and Stephen Shackelford voting on all items. We also voted to recommend to the full RTM approval of the "Other Organizations" budget of \$6,252,163. As mentioned above, the Committee also unanimously recommended a restoration of the Transit District's budget, with a restoration request in the amount of \$133,000.

We also reviewed the three benefits-assessed budgets which do not form a part of the General Fund Town Budget. Each of these were approved by the committee along a 7 – 0 vote with the exception of the Wakeman Town Farm fund which was approved 6 – 0 with Cathy Talmadge recusing herself.

1. The Sewer Fund of \$4,917,758, down 3.5 percent from 2021-2022;
2. The Railroad Parking Fund of \$1,829,957, down 3.1 percent; and
3. The Wakeman Town Farm Fund of \$475,185, up 21.4 percent.

To be clear, none of these last three separate accounts, funded by their respective users, affects the Town's tax situation or the mill rate as will be set by the Board of Finance in mid-May.

Bringing these altogether, we can get to the tax implications. Once the final Town of Westport and Board of Education budgets are adopted by the RTM at our meetings this week, the Board of Finance will then be able to set the mill rate for the 2022-23 fiscal year. At present, the final amounts are still to be determined pending the one restoration request that will be considered this evening related to the Transit District's budget. To recap, the mill rate will use the following inputs; Selectwoman's Budget of (1) \$77,725,657 (2) Other Organizations expenses of \$6,252,163 (which may increase by \$133,000 pending the restoration request by Transit); (3) Board of Education Debt Service of \$8,425,398 and (4) an overall Board of Education requested budget of \$129,500,574 plus Board of Education-related budgets for (a) Program Expenses (\$199,174); and (b) Aid to Private/Parochial Schools (\$529,622) for a total Town of Westport budget of (3) \$222.6 million. To put that in some context, These amounts represent changes to last year's final budgets of;

- (1) Town Budget: +0.8 percent
- (2) "Other Organizations": +2.0 percent with the Library funding seeing the greatest increase of 5.7 percent (subject to restoration of Transit funding)
- (3) Education Operating Budget: +3.1 percent
- (4) Total General Fund Budget: +1.8 percent.

There are certain adjustments before the amount needed to be raised by taxes can be determined. There are non-budgeted expenditures consisting of pending labor and litigation settlements which will be somewhat offset by turn backs from the current fiscal year.

The total amount to be raised in taxes is reduced by non-tax revenue items, including:

- Prior tax collections;
- Revenues from the Parks & Recreation Department;
- Licenses & Permits;
- State Grants; and
- Education Programs.

When the Board of Finance sets the mill rate they determine any contribution from the General Fund balance. When possible, the Board of Finance uses this balance to reduce taxes while keeping the fund in a previously set range of 9-11 percent of total budgeted annual expenses. This range is an important feature in the Town's discussions with the ratings agencies. We need to balance a level of available "rainy day funds" with an undertaking by the Town to keep tax rates as low as possible so that current taxpayers are not disproportionately funding future obligations. The Board of Finance will determine in late May the contributions, if any, from the General Fund. In setting the mill rate this year, the Board of Finance will consider the many uncertainties arising from the State's well-known fiscal woes, and the residual impacts that remain as a result of the pandemic (some favorable in terms of how interest in our town has grown as people have sought to exit New York City, and some negative as certain expenses have increased, or other specific program revenues have fallen).

Projected taxes 2022-2023: The Board of Finance will set the mill rate with the factors that are known in mid-May. I just want to highlight that the current mill rate of 16.86 has been in effect since 2017. It has remained at this level for six fiscal years, and we will all wait to see if this consistency can be maintained again this year.

Just a couple of things that the committee focused on in our meeting and we should be considerate of as we move ahead: As I mentioned before, we are dealing with inflation. It appears that it will be here for at least the foreseeable future. Hand in hand with that somewhat is that the town's borrowing costs are rising. You can see that in the bonding costs in our most recent offering versus previous years. There is definitely an increase here. With the higher borrowing costs, we recognize that we may incur significant capital costs in the future. It highlights that we need to move forward deliberately and thoughtfully. As we've learned, a consistently conservative approach to capital expenditures should allow the town to handle the inevitable unanticipated expenses that are certain to emerge. We must remain vigilant to ensure that we are able to finance our excellent schools at a pace which over the last many years has far outpaced inflation; be responsible stewards of the town's infrastructure assets (which, as we all know, are beginning to show their age); recognize the challenged condition of the finances of the State of CT; and maintain a vibrant Town that continues to attract residents looking for the best place to live in the world. I am sure we are up to the task. To close, the RTM Finance Committee appreciates the assistance it has received in this budget cycle from Jen Tooker, Gary Conrad, Thomas Scarice, Elio Longo, Sheri Gordon, the Board of Education, the Board of Finance, and all our Town's Department Heads.

That is it for the Finance Committee. Thank you.

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you Mr. Braunstein for the Finance Committee report. In a gross breach of protocol, I had the Committee Report go before the presentation of the Chair of the Board of Finance in her inaugural time as Chair of the Board of Finance. I am so sorry. Will you please now give your report and thank you for that lead in.

Presentation

Sheri Gordon, Chair, Board of Finance:

This will be a little bit repetitive because Seth did include some of the points so I will try to go through this expeditiously. Looking at our neighbors, Westport has compared favorably in recent years with regard to the mill rate. Darien and Greenwich are the two communities with lower mill rates but most of our other neighboring communities are higher. It's one of the things that continues to make Westport attractive. Looking at our non-tax revenue projections, there is about \$22 million in non-tax revenue that comes in. A large part of that is licenses and permits, also prior tax levies. General fund interest is almost negligible because interest rates have been so low. Parks and Recreation is a large part of the revenues; State revenues, although those have been shrinking over the years and various service charges and miscellaneous revenues. Looking at the historical non-tax revenue by department, it is actually instructive because you can see, for example, the great work done by our Finance Department in 2019 and 2020. They saved a ton of money for the town by doing a lot of creative refinancing. That's why the revenues were so high. Parks and Rec. continues to be the largest contributor and that is probably only going to continue to grow. Looking at the total budget, education is obviously the lion's share. It's about 63 percent of our budget followed by public safety

and pension, OPEB, insurance, followed by Public Works, Parks and Recreation, general government, debt service, the library, Westport Transit and Earthplace. Looking at the total budget, it is actually incredibly low. Part of that has to do with the fact that negotiations continue with three of our biggest unions, the police, fire and Public Works. Those increases for FY '21 and FY '22 will need to be added into the budget. That's why it seems low in terms of the increase. Looking at the town budget again, this breaks down exactly what the percentages are. This is looking at the dollar figures so you can see the total budget, the increase or decrease from FY '22 and the most notable thing on the page is obviously pension, OPEB, insurance and miscellaneous. As Seth was telling everyone, we owe a great debt of gratitude to the Boards of Finance who came before us who did a fantastic job moving our pension plans which grow exponentially to defined contribution plans which are much more manageable as a liability for the town going forward. For that reason, almost every year we have been seeing a decrease in our pension, OPEB, insurance and miscellaneous. I will note, as many of you are aware, the first three months of this year, first quarter was pretty dreadful and the stock market seems to be getting even worse so there is likely to be a bit of a reversal on this over time especially if we go into a recession. Overall, we've ridden the wave very well. Carl Leaman did a fantastic job for many years Chairing the Pension Committee and we owe a debt of gratitude to him, as well. I would also be remiss if I didn't complement the talents of our fantastic Finance Department and Gary Conrad because they are on top of all of these issues and have made a fantastic difference in the financial well-being of our town. Looking at Public Safety, you can see the numbers increase/decrease is not so great other than the Emergency Management budget and that has to do with the opening of the Emergency Response Dispatch Center in Fairfield. You've all heard from the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief what a difference this is going to make, how it cuts response times and should be able to help save lives. It's really something that is immeasurable. Everybody is really excited about this and it just goes to show that regionalization is not always a bad word and good things can come out of communities working together. For anyone who hasn't had a chance to see the Dispatch Center, here is a picture of it. It is pretty state of the art. It is really incredible for the people who get to work there and for the First Responders out in the field for getting valuable data that much quicker. Looking at the pension and OPEB once again, you'll see that the decrease is pretty substantial. The pension decrease is \$1.4 million; OPEB decrease is \$909,000; a total change of \$1.5 million. One of the things that we're changing with regard to OPEB, this is more of a business issue but it is important that the RTM know what's going on. The funded ratio for OPEB is very good. In the past, however, we had kept OPEB just as a fund as a reserve but now we are switching over to pay as you go the same as we do for the pension funds which is why the OPEB contribution looks bigger but it is just because it is shifting rather than paying from the general government expenditures, we're paying out of the OPEB fund. Our actuaries are very much in favor of this. It will be a cleaner way of doing this going forward. Again, looking at the asset value, this is a very positive chart. It goes to July 1, 2021 but it shows the incredible path that the OPEB took because we really started at zero in 2012. In the course of 10 years, we have created an incredibly valuable cushion to insure our retirees that the town is standing behind its obligations to them. Pension contributions, same thing. We're very well-funded. We're not at 100 percent and given the dips in the market, it will

be going down perhaps to 80 percent but still a very healthy fund. Here, again, is a chart showing the remarkable growth of the pensions. Looking at the other budget requests, the Health District request actually went down because this is the first year that the Health District has become the Aspetuck Health District. It had traditionally been only Westport and Weston. This is the first year that Easton is joining in. The Library increase is larger than the average percentage increase but that has to do with the fact that last year their request was really flat so this is making up for the fact that last year they had the money from the Government that made the difference. Earthplace is not asking for a single dollar more and the Westport Transit District asked for a similar budget. The Board of Finance decided that, perhaps go into it later when we talk about restoration, but it's not that the Board of Finance doesn't believe in transit. To the contrary, the Board of Finance believes that in some ways, Westport is a transit desert. We are trying to create an environment that is receptive and open to people from all income levels. But, when we have a transit system that is really only focused on people who are going to work in Manhattan, that is not servicing all the levels of people in Westport. In fact, the people who need transit the most are those people who are riding the Route 1 buses and walking to their jobs because they have no way to get transit. They are walking on streets without sidewalks creating a safety hazard. This is what the Board of Finance is saying. If we are going to be having a Transit District, we should be sending transit to people who need it. People can't get anywhere except for walking. The numbers don't show any significant increase. Eighty-seven percent of the time, riders are riding by themselves. It comes out to \$95/ride for both ways. The argument is that is not Westport's contribution. Westport is only a third of that. But, it still doesn't make sense and it's not environmental. When you have a 16 person bus that is only driving one person, that is the opposite of a green transportation alternative. For these reasons, the Board of Finance made the decision to cut the Wheels2U budget, not necessarily permanently but telling the Transit Director that unless there was a significant increase in ridership showing that the cost could come down significantly and there were multiple riders on a bus at a time, that the money would not be restored, come December. But if there are significant increases, making this a green alternative, then that would be something that we would consider. Looking at total debt, this is a really important point that I want to impress on the RTM, as you heard, Long Lots is a school that needs to be significantly renovated or replaced; Coleytown Elementary may also be joining it on the list; our four fire stations are in various states of disrepair and there is going to be a need to focus significant capital on them as well. Beyond Long Lots and Coleytown Elementary, the schools have \$95 million over the next five years that they would like to spend on different aspects of Staples, Bedford, Coley Middle and other schools. So, we are looking at a really significant increase to our debt levels in Westport. As a result, the taxes in Westport are going to go up. Brian Stern has been working with our Finance Department and it looks like investment that is being called for over the next five to 10 years, our taxes are going to go up as much as 10 to 15 percent. Everyone needs to be eyes wide opened about this. It's not really a choice. We have to come up with school buildings that are safe and appropriate for kids. The need to be warm when they need to be warm and cool when they need to be cool and keep the water out and provide a safe environment for them to go to school in. We need to have appropriate work places for our Fire Fighters and other public safety officers. So,

investments are going to need to be made. There's not a choice. It's important that the RTM keep this in mind. It's easy to get a little confused when the operating budget numbers are not going up significantly but we have to keep the capital budget in mind. There is a ying and a yang to the capital budget. People might think it is bonded and will be paid for over 20 years but the truth is when the debt levels go up, as this chart shows, instead of five percent of the operating budget going to debt, it goes to 10 or 15 percent of the operating budget. The question is are you going to crowd out other operating budget items or are you simply going to increase the amount you are spending in taxes? One thing Westport has done a really good job of is keeping the number of full-time positions in government at a pretty steady rate. Governmental Services has been steady, Parks and Recreation has only grown slightly, although it is a fantastic addition having a Park Superintendent, Police and Fire have also remained relatively constant. Public Works is growing slightly but it is necessary when you consider how much work we're going to be doing over the next five to 10 years. Even though a lot of that is contracted out, Public Works has to work closely with the contractors to get these big projects done. In conclusion, the objectives that we all share, Board of Finance and the RTM is looking to keep the mill rate as stable as possible, making sure that we are able to fund our long-term liabilities, continuing to seek growth in our grand list. This year we did have good news that the grand list did grow, operational cost efficiencies, always finding ways to do things better, at lower cost to the taxpayer, looking to raise revenues to offset costs. Parks and Rec. is putting in a program to figure out how much things cost, how much money it costs to run tennis every year, and make sure that the user fees meet the costs of running the program. Same with golf and same with the marina and all of their other programs. So, I think that will be a good way to make sure we are pricing things appropriately. Lastly, we want to maintain our Aaa rating through Moody's. It's very important that our debt remain favorable. We do not want to see our ratings slip.

I actually have to jump off to go to another Board meeting but Jim Foster is here. He will be available to answer questions. I can stay for a few minutes.

Mr. Wieser:

That's great. Thank you for the presentation and thank you to Jim for being with us.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

(Bairaktaris left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.)

Ms. Karpf read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Klinge.

RESOLVED: That the First Selectman's Budget items recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting be adopted, and the sum of \$77,725,657 for the First Selectman's Budget is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures and such sum shall be added to the amount appropriated for the Other Agencies and Organizations Budget and the Board of Education Budget.

Mr. Wieser:

Before we review the budget by category, are there any RTM members who would like to address the budget as a whole? Seeing none, we are working from the expense summary and I will read each category of the budget one by one. If there are any comments, questions or motions on the category that is read, please raise your hand. If not, we'll move on to the next one. This is the Finance Department expense summary that was in your budget books and packet forwarded to you.

General Government	\$ 7,066,260
Public Safety	\$ 23,842,187

Sal Liccione, district 9:

I just wanted to thank Deputy Chief Arciola for doing his finest on the Public Safety and Railroad Parking budget. This is will be his last budget before he retires in February so I just wanted to thank him for his service to our town. So, thank you Sam and thank you Foti and thank you Dave and thank you Ryan.

Public Works	\$ 12,242,607
Health	\$ 557,756
Human Services	\$ 1,462,324
Library	\$ 5,379,207
Parks and Recreation	\$ 7,247,353
Pension, OPEB, Insurance, Social Security	
Unemployment Compensation, Earthplace	
Misc., transportation services, salary adjustments	
Employee productivity	\$ 19,689,059
Debt service	\$ 2,368,165

Mr. Conrad reviewed the budget requests:

The Board of Finance recommendation for the First Selectman's budget is \$77,725,957. The Health District is \$557,756. The Library is \$5,379,207. Earthplace is \$105,000. Westport Transit is \$210,200.

Mr. Wieser:

The budget for the ones we've just gone over, we have to go over those separately. We vote on them at the end.

Mr. Wieser read the second part of Item 1 - That the Other Agencies and Organizations Budget items recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting be adopted, and the sum of \$6,252,163 for the Other Agencies and Organizations Budget is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures and such sum shall be added to the amount appropriated for the First Selectman's Budget and the Board of Education Budgets.

Then we talk about the Health District, the Library, Earthplace and the Transit District.

If there are any comments on each agency as we go through them, we'll seek public comment and RTM comment on each agency as we go through them.

We deal first with Health District. The amount is \$ 557,756.

Dick Lowenstein, district 5:

I have a question, Jeff. To Mark Cooper, what is the percent allocation between Weston, Westport and Easton for your operating budget?

Mark Cooper, Treasurer, Aspetuck Health District:

In terms of work load, Westport does about 60 percent of the work effort and the other two towns are significantly less. In terms of the operating budget, I don't have the percentage on the top of my head. Westport is probably 50 or 60 percent and the other towns are split between the balance.

Mr. Lowenstein: How is it allocated? By population?

Mr. Cooper:

State statute is by population but we are also taking into consideration the amount of effort that goes into each town. Again, when you look at Westport, you've got the restaurants, the hair salons, all the facilities that you have to inspect. The smaller towns do not have the workload.

Mr. Lowenstein: I see. Thank you very much Bob.

Mr. Wieser:

I did mention the Library earlier: The amount is \$ 5,379,207.

Earthplace is \$105,000.

Westport Transit District: The amount is \$ 210,200

Nancy Kail, district 9:

Given that Westport Transit District's two services, the Wheels2U shuttle that services all our citizens including seniors and disabled, disadvantaged and underserved and under-represented and the specific services that address the needs of seniors and those with disabilities, it is a key part of the First Selectman's plans for integrated transit, traffic, safety, I think that timing is everything, it would be very imprudent to hobble the Wheels2U service by halving this budget for the coming fiscal year. I believe all the goals are the same, to provide robust transit service to everybody and we want to improve what's already being provided. Our goals are the same. I don't think it does it good to basically say to a volunteer Director that they have six months to solve our integrated transit and traffic issues. I want to make a motion

To restore the \$133,000 that was cut from the FY'23 Transit District budget to fully fund for the year Wheels2U.

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you Ms. Kail and Mr. Lowenstein. Mr. Gold is going to make a short presentation in response to this motion. That will count for a committee report from the Transit Committee. I will then ask for public comment but before doing that, I would like to point out that we have received numerous emails regarding this restoration and a few that were questioning it. I thank all the public for the numerous emails. They were sent to all RTM members and each RTM member has reviewed those letters of support. If you have sent an email, we appreciate your making your feelings known and there is not a need to repeat those comments. We have received them and appreciate them and they have been very, very useful for us.

Committee report

Transit Committee, Peter Gold, Westport Transit District Director:

Let me go over the budget real quickly and then I'll talk about why we need to restore the funds. The budget background: We came up with this budget in the middle of the pandemic. It was hard to base it on anything realistic because nobody had experience with pandemics and nobody knew what was going to happen. Also, Wheels2U had only been in effect since October 15. It was a brand new operating model when we did the budget in February 2021. So, between the lack of any sustained experience with Wheels2U to base a projection off of and the difficulty of predicting when and how and to what extent commuting will return, we had to take a lot of guesswork in this whole thing. We did the best we could. We assumed 21,000 rides on the shuttle, Wheels2U, which is slightly more than half of the pre-pandemic level. It is the same assumption we made for the 2022 budget. We made the same assumptions for the elderly and disabled services. To be clear, we do have, as Nancy mentioned, three services. We provide the Wheels2U which takes people from their doors pretty much anywhere in town with the exception of Saugatuck Shores. We are going to Saugatuck Shores starting July 1 to or from the train station. At this point, you cannot get Wheels2U anywhere but to or from the train station. You can go from the train station anywhere but you can't go anywhere but to the train station. We also provide services for the elderly and people with disabilities within town. On a day's notice, we pick them up at their door and take them anywhere in town. For people with disabilities, with a day's notice, we will pick them up anywhere in town and take them as far as Greenwich. We won't take you to Fairfield or Bridgeport but we will take you to Greenwich. We budgeted based on 21,000 rides with a fare of \$2.00 for the shuttle and \$3.50 for the elderly and people with disabilities. If we take them across the town boundary, with State funding we assume it will not change. The Connecticut assistance is \$621,000. If I read Shari's slide correctly, when she showed State aide, I think it was \$1.6 million. So, we are providing a third of the State funds that come to town. Anyway, we get a significant amount of money from the State for Wheels2U. They pay almost 66 percent of the cost. We get a little bit of money from the elderly and disabled services. If we don't get this money for these services, it's not coming back to our pockets. The State will give it to somebody else. There is high demand in other places and they will certainly snatch up the funding. The Wheels2U budget by source is \$595,000 from the State, \$42,000 from fares and \$266,000 is what we're asking for from the town. It is an infinitesimal portion of the town budget. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't be careful with the spending but it is a small amount of money, relatively speaking. It is .0059 percent. The total budget by source, again, \$595,000 for

Wheels2U from the State, \$266,000 from the town, \$42,000 from fares, \$25,700 from the State for the elderly and disabled services, \$77,000 from the town, and about \$7,000 from fares. The whole thing, you can see, is flat from last year. It is a \$1,200 increase over last year which is virtually nothing. Why are we here? We are here because the Board of Finance, for whatever reasons they saw fit decided to cut the operating but for Wheels2U by half. Instead of \$266,000, they cut \$133,000 with the thought that if we somehow solved transit, whatever that means, I think it means different things to different people, we could come back and request the remaining funds. Unfortunately, we would have to solve transit by November because we would have to give our operator, Norwalk Transit, at least 30 days notice and it's now May and it would be hard to solve it in the time available. It doesn't mean we're not going to try to work on it but it's not going to happen. So, if we don't get this funding, Wheels2U is going to end Dec. 31. Why are we here? The service is desired and appreciated by Westporters. We got over 200 letters in support and only two letters from people opposing the funding – a pretty good ratio. The letters that we got from people, a lot of them were from new families who have moved to town and only have one car and didn't want to or couldn't afford to buy a second car. There were some letters from people with disabilities, letters from people who reverse commute into town who rely on it to get to their jobs. It's a very diverse group of people who use it. It's a service that's needed. That's not to say that other services aren't needed as well and given money and buses, we'd be happy to provide them. Back in 2016 and 2018, we did two town-wide surveys. We got over 1,700 responses in 2018 with overwhelming support for the services. The Town Plan for Conservation and Development says it's needed, not only for those who use it but for those who like to know it's there. We got a letter from someone whose garage door didn't work and they had to take the shuttle to get to work; someone whose car broke down and they had to take it. It's good to know if something happens you can get to the train. Even people who don't use it benefit from it. It reduces traffic. It reduces pollution. Shari referred to the fact that 87 percent of the time there is only one person aboard. Depending on the hour and depending on the day the service is used by more than one person. Twenty-five percent of the time, we have more than one person onboard. It could be two, it could be three, it could be six so it is not quite a clear statistic. We are trying to get better data on that. It is used by a great many people and even people who don't use it like it because it reduces pollution and traffic. I am continually amazed that no matter how many times we put this information out, people do not know it. We provide service from 5:45 a.m. and 10 o'clock in the morning and between four and 9:30 in the evening. We can take you from anywhere in town except Saugatuck Shores to the train station. You book the ride on the app and the average time from when you book the ride to when the ride comes is 10 minutes. When I used it, it was four minutes. The fare is \$2 and you pay with the app. It's very convenient. There is a map of the area we cover. As I said, we will go down to Saugatuck Shores. We will never ever cover all of Westport. I used to live in a house on Woodberry Lane. The only way to get to it was to leave Westport, drive five miles through Wilton and then hit my house. Not every house but we cover almost all of Westport. On the app, you enter your pick up and drop off location. It's like an Uber. You can track the bus location. You can pick the one you want. Book us in six minutes. Book us in 10 minutes. It's very convenient to use. I strongly encourage anybody who has not used it to at least try it. I

think you'll find if you try it, you'll like. User benefits of the service: We used to have a service with seven fixed routes. The buses ran around and around and around the fixed routes looking for riders. It only covered a very small portion of the town because you had to be near those fixed routes. Now we cover the entire town. You don't have to be near a fixed route. We come to your residence. It increases ridership potential and actual riders. You don't have to walk from your house to the fixed route. We pick you up at your house and drop you off at the platform. We cover more trains than we used to. And we take reverse commuters from the train station to their jobs. Matt Mandell and Jack Klinge's doctors use it to get from the train station to their offices every day as do other people who you've seen in the emails that we've gotten. It increases efficiency and it's greener. We don't run around and around and around looking for riders. We just go when we're called for. We have buses that are occasionally idling and we take corrective action to stop it. We have a formal written policy for the drivers to adhere to.

Town benefits: It's a step towards a green transportation system. If we lose this, we're not getting it back. This is a stepping stone. It needs to be built upon not eliminated. Building it takes time and energy and we're making progress. We went from a fixed route service to Wheels2U. The next step is to expand Wheels2U to do more things and we can do that. It helps promote diversity and inclusion. We're getting a lot of new affordable housing in town. These people are not going to have two cars and they need some way to get around. We got a lot of letters from new people moving into town who do not have two cars or prefer a public transportation alternative. Uber and Lift are unreliable and considerably more expensive. People who commute on the train and want to go to their jobs, we had several letters from people who did this, they can take it for \$2 instead of \$18 or \$20 for a taxi or an Uber. So, we're helping the disadvantaged as well. It's something that makes Westport unique. People brag about it to their friends.

Financial benefits: We can change the number of buses three times a year so if ridership decreases, we can cut the number of buses. If ridership increases, we can increase the buses. We use less gas. We travel less miles because we don't drive around the fixed route.

Ongoing initiatives: We are going to Saugatuck Shores. We are having discussions with Norwalk Transit District about possibly merging the Transit District with their Transit District. That has pluses and minuses. There is pending State legislation which may affect it but we are looking into it. Norwalk Transit is performing a comprehensive operations study this fall. It will include Westport and we will have input into the study itself. It will give us valuable information as to how to reform the service and make positive changes. We've gotten two grants totaling \$80,000 which will allow me to take people who are writing this up now, finalize it... take people from the senior housing complex on Bridge Street, up Imperial Avenue to the Senior Center, Imperial Avenue parking lot downtown, up to Canal Street, the affordable housing project up there, down Compo Road, Whitney Glen which is another senior housing project, to Trader Joe's and back down to the train station, so we give these people services during the day to go where they need to go and, incidentally, since it's an open door service, anybody who is in the Imperial Avenue parking lot can take it to downtown so we will be able to serve the employees who work downtown, freeing up parking for shoppers, much appreciated by the downtown merchants. We got a letter from them as well. And instead of taking people to Greenwich, if they want to go to their doctor's in Fairfield, we'll be able to do that as well. Equally importantly, Norwalk Transit has been

told by the State that they are third in line for full electric bus service which means that we will be third in line for full electric bus service as well. It's going to take time. You don't throw out a perfectly good bus until the end of its useful life but we will get them sooner than other towns. We will be starting to get even more green as we go forward. We've talked to the PTA Co-President about looking into restoring the after school service. She has to get back to me. Starting Memorial Day, the State is going to be running a bus at no cost to us down the Post Road to the Sherwood Island Connector to Sherwood Island State Park so the people who live in Sasco Creek, Hidden Brook, Lansdowne, Regent's Park, the Senior Living Center at 1177 can all be able to go to Sherwood Island State Park for free on the bus on weekends in the summer. We worked with the State on that, a good thing. We can use it to leverage other needs in the town given time and resources. The ultimate goal of the Westport Transit District is to integrate our services into the town's overall strategy for traffic, parking, bicycles and pedestrians to help meet the town's transportation goals and needs. We don't want to be a stand-alone. We are part of a solution and the town and Jen Tooker has said that she will be looking into helping us look into a broader solution for the town. It's going to take time to do that but it will happen. Our ridership data: We had 14,104 rides through April 30 this fiscal year. We served 764 individuals on Wheels2U through April 30 this year. You can see from the chart, December/January which was Omicron, we got slammed. Also, November/December, Christmas holidays. We came back in February and in March we did really well. April was school vacation. We were averaging about 100 rides/day except during school vacation when we averaged about 50 rides/day. We lost about 250 rides during school vacation. It would have been about 2,000 rides in April. We're doing well. Certainly, if you guys have any way to promote it, please do so or let me know and I'll do so. Tell your friends and your mailing lists about the service. The cost/ride to the town of Westport for Wheels2U is \$14.17. So, it is \$28.34 round trip to Westport. The rest is covered by fares and State money which, again, if they don't give it to us, they'll give it to somebody else. Town to town services, for the elderly and disabled in town, we serve very few people but I don't mind serving them. I think it's good that we serve them. The costs are fairly high but we're looking into ways to make that less expensive, as well. Recurring concerns: green issues, we talked about this a little bit. Conversion to Wheels2U from the fixed route system is greener. Buses don't drive around, less miles, less fuel; we're getting electric buses. If we end this service, we're certainly not going to get electric buses. We need to coordinate all actions to meet the town goal of Net Zero by 2050. If we want to reach Net Zero, we can't be a car culture town. It's bad for climate. It's bad for a lot of reasons. So, we need to give people an alternative to cars. This is a start for doing that. One of the things we need to look at as part of a solution is parking revenues and fees. I'm not going to go into that. We covered that in the Transit Committee meeting. We agreed that our fees are at the low end of the scale. Whether or not we choose to raise them is above my pay grade. I know what I would do. Subsidies for "Hedge Fund Millionaires": We only serve the wrong people. It looks bad that we don't have people on the Post Road to take Wheels2U. The people on the Post Road mostly get off where they are working. There are very few businesses that are an extreme distance from the Post Road. There are some but not a lot. We hope to be able to add stops at the Post Road on Wheels2U over time. Again, we are limited by three things: One is the funding. It costs money to do

this. More importantly than the funding is the fact that we are limited in the number of buses that are available to us at this point in time. During the day, after 10 o'clock, the buses that we have are used for para-transit services. It will take some time to find the additional buses and train the additional drivers that we would need. We hope to have some limited service from the Post Road to other places in town before 10 o'clock using the existing buses maybe in July. We want to look at that closely because we don't want to degrade the service that we have for people who may or may not use it. One of the things we would like to get is some data on the need for the service. It's hard to get it. Solving transit, we've been here before. We hope not to be here next year. I've met with Jen Tooker to discuss transit needs. She's said at the RTM Transit Committee meeting that this is a priority of hers and she will work on it this year. I'm sure she will speak tonight so I'm not going to belabor that. Hopefully, we are going to make a start to review the ultimate goal of solving this problem and integrating Wheels2U into a broader transit picture in town and making it serve the needs that we identify as useful. That was it Jeff. As far as a transit desert, we are no more of a transit desert than Darien, Ridgefield, New Canaan, Wilton, Weston, none of which have any transit services except that you can get a bus up route 7 in Wilton. We all have more transit services than any of them. They all have the Coastal Link which we have nothing to do with. We take the elderly and disabled and take the disabled to other towns. Other people don't do that. That's my presentation.

Mr. Wieser:

We will now have public comments. I know that Ms. Tooker is here instead of at the celebration of her daughter's 14th birthday so thank you for foregoing Nicole's birthday and please send our apologies to Nicole. Ms. Tooker, the floor is yours.

Members of the Westport electorate

First Selectwoman, Jen Tooker:

Thank you Jeff. I will definitely send on your birthday wishes to Nicole when I see her tomorrow morning.

Good evening everyone. I do think it is appropriate to speak up at this point. My name has been thrown around a little bit in the best possible way when discussing transit and this transit budget. I do want to formally and personally confirm that I am in support of full restoration of the Transit District budget for the reasons that have been mentioned tonight. We are in the middle of hosting two and a half months of traffic and neighborhood safety meetings. I think last Thursday was number six of nine meetings. We are getting a lot of feedback from the public about traffic issues in their neighborhoods and pedestrian safety and cycling safety issues. As I look to the future to think about solutions to some of those problems, I think it is important to make sure that our Transit District is a potential solution. It's really that simple, that we need to do that work. I agree with Peter, I think to talk about public transportation in a silo at this time of year is not the way to move this conversation forward. I want to move this conversation forward as part of the overall traffic and safety discussion that we're having in town and I'd like the year to do that. I did this last week in front of the Finance Committee and I will do it tonight in front of the full RTM. I have committed that we will get the right

stakeholders around the table over the next year to have the proper discussion as to whether or not public transportation as currently defined in Westport will be part of the solution going forward or if it needs to look different.

Members of the RTM

Karen Kramer, district 5:

Every year, we come back and restore this money. I'm a realtor. I move people here. People come from the city, sometimes with one car because they figure they will be commuting. They do depend on this. They ask about this. I only wish it would go more places than the train station. It's needed and if we lose it, we won't get it back. Peter puts an inordinate amount of time on this. Thank you, Peter. For every reason, this shouldn't come up every year. Let's please restore the money. Let people have it. If people need it, it is a Godsend.

Mr. Lowenstein:

Before Ms. Tooker spoke, I was going to say the most important thing you heard tonight was from Seth Braunstein's report to the RTM in which he quoted what Ms. Tooker said so Jen, I'm very pleased you said it in your own words. But I want to refer back to the report of the Board of Finance. The Chair of the Board of Finance said that the focus was on taking people to the train station. As Mr. Gold said, there are a lot of people coming from the train station to places within Westport and those are people we want to serve as well. The other thing that was not mentioned is when the Board of Finance voted to cut the budget by \$133,000, they added this condition:

We will restore the budget in six months if you can show there are efforts underway to so some kind of "regionalization".

We don't have that per se but what Ms. Tooker has proposed is more than an adequate effort to for the RTM to completely restore the cut that was made by the Board of Finance. I think Peter Gold with Ms. Tooker's help, they are achieving the goals set by the Board of Finance and I think the time to do something is right now.

Wendy Batteau, district 8:

When we passed the resolution for the Net Zero program, it's not often recalled that the culmination of that resolution said that from now on decisions that we make will not be based entirely on finances but will also have to take into equal account environmental and social results. In this case, I think the Transit District, the transit service is going to step up to meet that requirement. One of the things that has been very impressive to me has been the conversations that have been going on with the First Selectman's office about traffic. Previously in town, when we had traffic conversations, they mainly centered around downtown and somewhat the Post Road and maybe the highways. In the outer boroughs, like district 8 where I live, we have Coleytown Road which is a commuter route from Fairfield and Westport, goes to exit 42, but it also goes to the schools. We have the two schools at the top of North Avenue. We have Temple Israel. We have St. Paul's on Easton Road, we have the Methodist Church on Weston Road. If you go down North Avenue, we have the other two schools. It's just a nightmare during commuting time. The traffic is impossible in terms of getting around and it's impossible in terms of the fumes that come out of the cars that are standing while waiting their turn to get where they are

going. I think the Transit District can only help that. Just having those buses to be able to take people from our district to the train stations is a big deal and since we're going to be seeing electric buses sooner rather than later, I think it's important that we keep those. Finally, we've just had a couple of thousand people move into town and given the fact that there are new COVID predictions for a variant this summer, we have no idea what will be happening with the new population and their commuting patterns and their driving patterns. We're also opening up new developments through town and we'll be seeing a lot more affordable housing which means there will be people who won't be having cars. I think it's just cutting it too close. We have a potential solution that could exist at the intersection of social benefit to those people, of environmental benefit to eventually creating less exhaust and less problem for the trees to filter and that kind of thing and we'll eventually, perhaps, break even. It certainly is a benefit to people who can't afford to have cars. So, I think it's premature to cancel this program now. It reminds me of the time when the Town Farm was just getting started. It was pretty much self-funded and the town didn't want to fund it. Now, it's one of the most popular...

Mr. Wieser: Let's keep the comments to the Transit District.

Ms. Batteau:

I have the feeling that this could be another marquis attribute of the town. I therefore request that everybody vote to restore.

Ms. Milwe:

Saugatuck Shores has never had the shuttle. We are going to be getting the shuttle starting in July. In order to do so, we had to see that there was some interest. So, the neighborhood associations that I know of were contacted and there was a lot of interest, particularly from the young families in town. They had moved to Saugatuck Shores and looked into the shuttle and found out you couldn't get the shuttle on Saugatuck Shores. I think we should restore the Transit budget and I'm really excited the shuttle is coming. I think everybody on the RTM should make a pledge to try the shuttle once. If you don't want to take the train to New York, you could go have a drink at one of the restaurants. Maybe have two and take the shuttle back. I think in order for us to have a better environment, we all have to change our habits. We have to think about using the shuttle. I support everything the First Selectman said tonight and I think we should restore it.

Lisa Newman, district 8:

There have been some good reasons mentioned tonight to restore but, for me, the reason I will be voting to restore and I urge my colleagues to do the same is the outpouring of emails that we received. It easily topped 100 emails. The constituents want the restoration of the budget. I have been in contact with many of my neighbors. They are asking for restoration of this budget so it is in my best interest to represent their best interests. I will be voting for this restoration and I urge everybody to vote for it. Beyond our opinions, our community is asking for this. We are charged with representing what they're asking for. The second point I wanted to make is I have been through a few budget cycles on the RTM and this is the same song and dance we go through every year. I don't quite understand it. I do hear that there are some valid reasons for reconsidering what public

transportation might look like in Westport. Those reasons are not wrong necessarily but we don't need to strike down what we have before we have the next possible plan. I would us to think about that. Every time we debate getting rid of the Wheels2U shuttle, we don't have a plan in place. What would we do? We don't have next steps. What I'm asking, if anything, what I'm asking everybody tonight is to restore this budget and if there are thoughts about revising or replacing the program, let's get something in place first before we throw out the only thing we do have. A logical progression if we are going to revise this program is to get a plan to do so before we get rid of it. I urge everyone to restore this budget. Let's stop doing this song and dance every year. Let's consider it but not during budget season. Let's get a new plan if that's what we're destined to do. We don't throw this plan out before we have a backup especially with all the commuters that rely on this program. What I plan to do is to restore full restoration to this budget.

Jimmy Izzo, district 3:

I'm going to vote to restore with a lot of reservations. Ten years ago, Avi Kanner was Chair of the Board of Finance. We started this song and dance, dog and pony show. Friday night, I was at Romanacci's, sitting in my car and I saw three of these vehicles come by. One rider got on one of the three vehicles. All three were idling. This has to stop, We have to get a concrete plan. One hundred letters is not a lot in a town of 27,000 people. Everybody who is a rah rah person and a shareholder for this needs to help Peter Gold out. He is an RTM member who is running a transportation district for us. Other people in this community need to step forward and make it work. Next time, I'm not voting for it. I want to see data, data, data.

Louis Mall, district 2:

I have a question based on some of the letters that we got. Riders have indicated that they were willing to pay more fare because it was such a great service. The \$2 fare, when was the last time the fare was increased?

Mr. Gold:

I don't have the exact date but it was increased when Marty Fox was Transit Director. Part of the problem with increasing the fares is that there are two problems. One of the problems is that daily parking at the train station is \$5/day. Round trip on the bus is currently \$4/day. If we increase the fares beyond what it takes to park at the station, people will just drive to the station and not take the bus. Another part of the problem is that we use Norwalk Transit to operate our system and while we could have a different fare than Norwalk has for their buses, doing so creates a lot of logistical problems operationally. If we raised the fare a dollar, with 21,000 rides, yes, we would raise some money. I think we'd probably get more riders if we cut the fare to zero. If the goal is to increase ridership and decrease traffic, I think we'd get bigger bang per buck by changing the fares to zero rather than increasing the fares.

Mr. Mall:

Have you ever tried a one month moratorium on fares to prove your thesis?

Mr. Gold:

We tried to do a free fare week between Christmas and New Year's which was not the best time to do it because of Omicron, because of Christmas vacation. We need to look into it further. It's not a bad idea.

Mr. Mall:

As Jimmy pointed out, this has been going on for at least the time that I have been on the RTM. What the Board of Finance has been telling us is that it's not working. Then, we turn around and restore it. Here's what my problem is: As an RTM, we appoint the Director. What we ended up doing last month was we appointed one of our own members of the RTM as Director of Transit. We are voting tonight to restore the Transit budget. As far as I'm concerned, we have gotten ourselves, as the RTM, in the transit business. We own Westport Transit and I don't think it's our job and our responsibility to be running transit. What I would really like to see is Westport Transit integrated into Norwalk Transit and we get out of the transit business. So, as I did last year, I am going to vote against restoration and agree with the Board of Finance that this isn't working and we have to do something different.

Mr. Gold: Can I respond to Lou's comments?

Mr. Wieser: No.

Mr. Braunstein:

First off, before I go any further, I just say to Peter, thank you for the role that you have so ably and earnestly fulfilled in your time as the volunteer head of the Westport Transit District. I think we all need to take a moment to realize Peter has spent untold hours during his tenure agonizing over the provision of these services to our population. So, Peter, thank you. The second thing I'd like to do is to defer to Peter. He seemed to have a comment he wanted to make in response to Lou. So, I would like to yield some of my time to Peter. I hope there would be time to make a comment after your rebuttal but please go ahead.

Mr. Gold:

I just have two quick things. Yes, the Board of Finance tells the RTM that the Transit System isn't working but every year, the RTM tells the Board of Finance that it is working and they restore the funds overwhelmingly. So, whose opinion governs? As far as integrating with Norwalk and taking us out of the transit business, we would still have to appoint Transit Directors to serve on the Board of the combined Transit District. We would still have the same debate over what services we wanted and what funding we would provide because Norwalk is not going to do anything that we don't tell them to do and that we don't pay for. So, yes, there are some benefits to merging with Norwalk. There are some things that aren't going to change if we merge with Norwalk. And there are some things that are not so good if we merge with Norwalk, all of which we are looking into. But, right now, we have a very close relationship with them. I talk to them at least weekly, in budgeting season, almost daily.

Mr. Wieser:

So, Mr. Gold and Mr. Braunstein and Mr. Mall, I don't want to cut off Mr. Gold. Our issue on the agenda is whether to restore \$133,000. It's not really to discuss how the Transit District should be reformatted. That is certainly an item for the Transit Committee and we all should be at every Transit Committee meeting but I don't think it's appropriate tonight to get into a debate on how it should be reconstituted. Tonight, we've had for the first time ever, we've had a First Selectwoman appear to say that there is going to be discussion about that and those things should be discussed. Tonight, our discussion is about restoring the budget. We've heard Mr. Mall say he is not going to. That's fine. That's perfectly appropriate but I don't think we should be getting into how it can be reformatted. So, if we could stick what is on the agenda of restoring the budget.

Mr. Braunstein:

I appreciate that Jeff. You've pretty much summarized what I was going to say at the end. So, I'll just say I will be voting for restoration. I've done this multiple times and each time, it was complete unequivocal support. To attach some qualifications to my support this year, very much in line with what the First Selectwoman is suggesting, she has a very clearly articulated plan to broadly analyze traffic and traffic related issues and specifically address how the WTD fits into that. My support next year heavily depends upon what the First Selectwoman's study and recommendations ultimately determine. So, I will be voting to restore this evening but it is, I don't want to have a Groundhog Day next year. I want to have this discussion move significantly down the road toward a more comprehensive solution.

Don O'Day, district 3:

I am going to support Nancy's motion to restore the funds. Like Seth, I think it's a good thing to wait and see, participate in the new process that between Peter and the Transit District and First Selectwoman Tooker are going to work on. So, I don't think that we're going to have the same situation that we have next year that we have this year. I think we're going to have a better outcome so I'm happy to support the motion to restore.

Ms. Kramer:

I'm just going to say if there are no objections, can we call a vote?

Mr. Wieser:

I see no other hands up so that would be the next thing if there are no objections. We are voting on the resolution to restore \$133,000 to the Transit District budget. It requires 70 percent and there are 32 members. Mr. Bairaktaris is not yet back. Mr. Gold has recused himself so he is not counted as present and voting so that is 31. We need 22 votes.

Mr. Mandell, point of order:

Since Ms. Kail proposed the resolution, she is the first vote in a rollcall vote. **The roll call vote is 30-1 with one recusal. Mall opposed. Gold recused.**

Mr. Wieser:

We have restored \$133,000 to the Other Agencies and Organizations Budget. We do two votes now on the other parts of item #1 of the call. We will now vote on the town budget excluding Other Agencies and Organizations. That amount is \$77,725,657. So, we will vote on that and then we will vote on what we just voted on: Health District, Library, Earthplace, and Westport Transit District.

By show of hands, the town budget of \$77,725,657 passes unanimously 32-0.

The Other Agencies and Organizations budget of \$6,385,163 passes unanimously 32-0. Mr. Mandell recused himself from the Earthplace budget. Mr. Gold Recused himself from the WTD budget.

Mr. Wieser:

We have now reviewed the town budget exclusive of the Board of Education budget which we will tackle tomorrow.

Mr. Conrad:

The total for the town General Fund budget is \$84,110,820.

The secretary read item #2 of the call - To adopt a budget for the Town Railroad Parking Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.

Presentation

Police Chief Foti Koskinas:

It is Sam's last year. He is the Railroad Director. He will be letting us know what that number is and I will pass it over to him and thank him for doing the job that he has done.

Deputy Chief Sam Arciola:

Straight forward, we are presenting a budget for \$1,829,957. It's not anything different than we have presented in the past. We did see some slight increases in the facility improvements, standard maintenance, refuse collection which goes up a little bit every year and program expenses. This year, Public Works had increased the hourly rate for snow removal so we incorporated that in our two snow removal accounts. Other than that, I'm here for questions. There's really nothing to this.

Chief Koskinas:

Not to undercut, since it's not often that we have the whole RTM when we talk about the railroad budget, I do want to make the members of the RTM aware that during the last years during COVID, we've made significant adjustments in how we operate at the train station. We've taken advantage of the times to get all of our capital improvements that we could get into our budget but, more importantly, we've made significant cuts in our spending that relate to our day to day operations down at the train station. Last year, we were able to return to the budget approximately \$400,000, slightly over, and we are targeting to do the same thing this year. The budget this year was prepared the same

way it was the last two years as if we were in regular normal operations. As we start seeing increase in usage, we will make those adjustments accordingly. We do want to let the members know that we have been absolutely fiscally responsible, not spending the same amount on areas like security and traffic, even custodial help or supplies because we certainly don't have the same usage. I just wanted to highlight that. That has been under Sam's supervision down at the train station.

Committee report

Mr. Gold:

Basically, I'll paraphrase it because I don't have it in front of me. The Transit Committee met. Chief Koskinas explained about the wonderful things they've done about railroad parking. They talked about the uses for money and the Railroad Parking Reserve Fund which is going to be used for such things as repaving the lots at Greens Farms, which are in serious need of repair, Correct me if I'm wrong Sam, he mentioned that since 2016, they have increased railroad parking spots available by 20 percent. They continue to sell permits but the number of permits have decreased because of COVID. There is no longer a waiting list. There was a rather lengthy discussion about the Railroad Permit fees and the daily parking fees. There was a fairly strong feeling among a number of members of the committee, not only myself, that the fees were a little below market and could stand to be raised. They were the lowest on the line with the exception of Southport, both daily fees and the annual permit fees. Some reasons given for not raising the fees were that we need to balance the loss of revenues from not selling permits because the fees have gone up with the revenue we have to operate the station. There is obviously a breakpoint somewhere between losing fees from fewer permits but nobody seems to know quite where that is. Also the railroad parking fees paid for by the commuters, they have a right to know what the fees are going for. Right now, they are going for station operations and there is some feeling that it might not be fair for the fees to be used for things other than station operations although we do use them for things like sidewalks and in the past, they have, to a limited extent, been used to fund transit services. That's pretty much a paraphrase of it. The committee voted unanimously in favor of recommending the budget.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Ms. Karpf read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Klinge.

RESOLVED: That the Town Railroad Parking Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting, be adopted and the sum of \$1,829,957 is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures.

Members of the RTM

Mr. Mall:

I just have one question. When was the last time the daily fee was raised? It's been at \$5 for as long as I can remember. Does anyone know?

Chief Koskinas: Sometime between 2013 and 2014, we went from \$4 to \$5.

Mr. Mall:

It's been roughly about eight years since there's been any increase. Has there been any analysis of changing the daily parking rate to incentivize people to take public transit instead of their own car and parking daily?

Chief Koskinas:

We have not researched it directly. We do have extensive communication with our commuters. We are very supportive of the buses and help Peter in any way we can. It's hard to believe that the one dollar is making the difference whether you drive your car to the train station or pay the \$4 for the day. But there has been no analysis with hard data.

Mr. Mandell:

I'd just like to take a moment since Foti said that this is the last time Sam would be doing this. Sam Arciola had done a phenomenal job running Railroad Parking and Sam, I want to thank you for your time and effort and everything you've done.

Ross Burkhardt, district 3:

There was a fair amount of discussion at the Committee about the fact that the Railroad Parking budget is being looked at as part of the overall strategy for looking at public transit. They never resolved that but there was a fair amount of discussion. It is very clear that the Railroad Parking funds can be used for other purposes than just the parking activity.

Ms. Kail:

Ross covered what I was going to say so I won't belabor it. Thank you to everybody from the Police Department for organizing this. I wanted to note that in the past, 4,100 permits were sold but now the waiting list has been exhausted with 3,700 permits being sold. That was part of the discussion as well, daily parking fees and also parking permits could potentially be part of the solution to these greater issues of traffic safety, transit and parking that is included. It was a really good discussion that is for another time, not tonight but, as Peter said, the whole Transit Committee voted unanimously to support this budget.

By show of hands, the budget of \$1,829,957 for Railroad Parking is passed 32-0.

The secretary read item #3 of the call - To adopt a budget for the Town Sewer Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.

Mr. Wieser:

Mr. Ratkiewich, would you like to comment on the benefit assessed nature of this?

Presentation

Pete Ratkiewich, Director, Public Works:

First of all, let me give you an overview on this. The cost of sewer treatment has gone up about 6.5 percent whereas this year, the cost of sewage collection has gone down about 2.2 percent. That reflects increasing costs of energy, increasing costs of trucking materials like sludge out of the plant. On the sewage collection side, the decrease is reflective of a little bit less capital improvements. In both of these funds, sewage treatment and sewage collection, it is funded by user fees. That is what your sewer tax goes to when you are connected to the sewer. Those who are not connected do not pay for that. We use the term benefit assessment when we are building a sewer. Those that benefit from that sewer, who are served by it, pay the assessment which will total out to the cost of constructing the sewer. The actual operating budget is paid for by user fees paid into the Sewer Fund.

Committee report

Jay Keenan, district 2:

We don't have a separate committee report. It is part of the overall Public Works budget report. Pete covered most of it. The only thing additional we had in the report was a couple of costs associated with maintenance of pumps and the ultra violet lamps and stuff like that. Everything else was covered.

Members of the Westport electorate – No comments

Ms. Karpf read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Klinge.

RESOLVED: That the Town Sewer Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting, be adopted and the sum of \$4,917,758 is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures.

Members of the RTM

Arline Gertzoff, district 3:

I'm a little confused. They put sewer lines on my street, Fallow Street. I am not connected. I didn't pay for the service to connect but I get a bill every quarter for a sewer. What am I getting a bill for?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

That is for the cost of constructing the sewer that went by your house.

Ms. Gertzoff: So, I'm paying for construction but I'm not paying for usage, correct?

Mr. Ratkiewich: You are not paying for the usage but you must pay for the construction.

By show of hands, the budget of \$4,917,758 for the Town Sewer Fund is unanimously approved, 32-0-1. Mr. Bairaktaris abstains.

Mr. Wieser:

Mr. Bairaktaris has returned to the meeting. He was out on an EMS call helping Westport, serving the public in other ways. Thank you for being out Jaime and thank you for being back.

The secretary read item #4 of the call - To adopt a budget for the Wakeman Town Farm Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Ms. Karpf read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Klinge.

RESOLVED: That the Wakeman Town Farm Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting, be adopted and the sum of \$475,185 is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures.

Members of the RTM

Mr. Mall:

I just want to say that I feel that the town holds Wakeman Town Farms to a tighter standard and their feet to the fire. It's one of the finest offerings that we have in this town along with the Senior Center in my own personal opinion. We are budgeting \$105,000 for Earthplace that isn't really part of the town. Wakeman Town Farm is a town service and a town product. I just think that we need to make sure that Wakeman has whatever they need because it is such a great offering for the town.

Ms. Talmadge and Ms. Milwe recused themselves.

By show of hands, the budget of \$475,185 for the Wakeman Town Farm is approved unanimously 31-0.

The secretary read item # 5 of the call – To require that property taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, shall be due and payable in four quarterly installments, and to designate the dates of the first days of July, October, January, and April as the dates upon which such installments shall be due and payable, and that all taxes in an amount of \$100 or less shall be due and payable in a single installment on the first day of July.

Members of the Westport electorate – No comments

Ms. Karpf read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Klinge.

RESOLVED: That property taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 shall be due and payable in four quarterly installments and the dates upon which such quarterly installments are to be due and payable shall be the first days of July, October, January and April, subject to any applicable tax relief deferral programs; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That all taxes in an amount of \$100.00 or less shall be due and payable in a single installment on the first day of July, subject to any applicable tax relief deferral programs.

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously, 33-0.

The secretary read item #6 of the call - To require that the motor vehicle tax shall be due and payable in a single installment.

Members of the Westport electorate – No comments

Ms. Karpf read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Klinge.

RESOLVED: That the motor vehicle tax shall be due and payable in a single installment, subject to any applicable tax relief deferral programs.

Members of the RTM

Jack Klinge, district 7: Isn't there a date that goes with that, July 1?

Mr. Conrad: You vote on this annually so it is for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Wieser:

It doesn't say it is due and payable on the first of July. It's due on a single day that the town sets at some point?

Mr. Klinge:

I would be very careful about that. I'm really sure it's July 1 for automobiles. But I'll be quiet after this.

Mr. Wieser:

If it is up to us to say July 1, maybe we can have a cleanup resolution in June. But this was taken from previous years so I don't think we state July 1. It might be a detail that we should review. Mr. Conrad, if you could talk to Mr. Bloom or Ms. Flug about that.

Mr. Conrad: I'll take care of it.

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously 33-0.

Mr. Wieser:

We are now moving on to a couple of appropriations. We're doing quite well. It is 10:18. For those people who are still here, I want to give our thanks to the First Selectman, all of the Department Heads, all of the people on the Board of Finance, Mr. Conrad, all of the committees who have worked so hard because you really have done a very thorough job and presented things clearly in such a way that I think it made things possible for this body to go through these budgetary items and come to conclusions in very, very sound

fashion. Thank you for all those who helped us get to this point and we're ready to move on to a few more items.

The secretary read item #7 of the call - To approve an appropriation in the amount of \$400,000.00 from Westport's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for planning, design, and permitting of the redevelopment of Parker Harding Plaza, Jesup Green, and the Imperial Lot.

Presentation

Mr. Ratkiewich:

This is the appropriation request for the long awaited rethinking of Parker Harding Plaza, Jesup Green and the Imperial Lot, basically, the core parking lots of downtown, two of which have asphalt next to the river. One of the stated goals of this project is to reclaim the river and rethink these parking lots that are right up against the frontage and make that space more green, more inviting for people who use the downtown and just basically to redevelop the whole area, especially Parker Harding. The project itself, we'll do a schematic design of all three parking lots, Parker Harding Plaza, Jesup Green and the Imperial Lot. We felt that it was pretty important for continuity, not that the three lots have to be the same but that the same designer come up with concept plan, a schematic plan for these three lots that has some consistency across the board. Obviously, they are geographically in different locations and they each have different needs. The funds also include for that same consultant to take the Parker Harding schematic and fully develop that into a permitted set of plans that we can set up for bids with the intent of getting Parker Harding done next. Right now, you are aware that we are reconstructing the Baldwin Lot. Parker Harding would be the next one to go and then, hopefully, during the construction of Parker Harding, we would do a similar effort at Jesup Green to put together permitting plans. When Parker Harding is done, we'd go right over to Jesup Green and then on to Imperial Avenue. We put out an RFP on this months ago, had four very well prepared consultants that responded to the RFP. We chose Langan Engineering out of the four for a number of reasons. Their price was not the cheapest. If you look at the relationships and the amount of work that they have done around this area, they seemed to be the ones who had the most bandwidth in the downtown area. When you look at the properties that they have worked on in the last 15 years, Parker Harding and Jesup Green are the only ones they haven't touched. Their price for this work was \$350,000. I put a 15 percent contingency on this because it is a fairly large project and there may be some unknowns that we have not anticipated. That came to \$402,000 and we rounded it down to \$400,000. We are seeking money from ARPA funds for this and that has been in our ARPA plan from the very beginning. It falls under the category of economic development and a number of other categories in the ARPA fund requirements. With that, I'll be happy to take any questions.

Committees report

Finance and Public Works Committees, Mr. Keenan:

Pete Ratkiewich, Public Works Director, requested an appropriation of \$400,000.00 from the ARPA funds for preparation of schematic plans for Parker Harding Plaza, Jesup Green and the Imperial Lot as well as Construction Documents for Parker

Harding Plaza. The summary of the project is it will look at ways to create green space along the river in all three locations and better utilize the areas for public use in lieu of parking. The process is estimated to start in June of this year and will include input from public meetings, stakeholder meetings and review of previously developed Town/Downtown plans. The construction of Parker Harding is currently scheduled in the five year capital forecast for 2024. Public Works issued an RFP for the work and four firms responded, after the interview process Langan Engineering was selected. Langan Engineering has provided services for several Town projects in the past, most recently at the Coleytown Middle School renovation. Those in attendance (with one abstention) from both committee voted unanimously to recommend approval to the full RTM.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Ms. Karpf read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Klinge.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Public Works Director, the sum in the amount of \$400,000.00 from Westport's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for planning, design, and permitting of the redevelopment of Parker Harding Plaza, Jesup Green, and the Imperial Lot is hereby appropriated.

Members of the RTM

Jessica Bram, district 6:

I have a question for the administration. Under the list that was circulated today, which was the detail of the American Rescue Plan Act which, as I read it is

Emergency funding responding to acute pandemic response needs filling revenue shortfalls among these governments and support communities and populations hardest hit by the COVID19 crisis.

I do not see anything, nor have I seen anything in the ARPA guideline that is for economic development which I do not believe it includes. So, I would like to know how this is being justified as being an appropriate expenditure for ARPA funds.

Mr. Conrad:

I can answer that Jessica. Under the Treasury Rulings, they have expanded into multiple areas. This is for economic vitality. What falls into that is resiliency projects listed in the downtown area of arts and transportation. They do include infrastructure improvements. They have expanded it into sidewalks and paving. There are towns that have gotten approval for redoing the town pool. So, it's not just for emergency funding. It also includes income replacement which pretty much a large umbrella which covers all projects that we have out there. The other side to it is because we are less than \$10 million, we have elected to go with reporting which basically gives you a little more rights of how you can spend the money. We have been in contact with both CCM, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, they have some ARPA specialists up there. We've talked to them about which projects do fall under it. They have actually reviewed our project of the Burying Hill Beach Jetty and they said that was totally appropriate.

That was a bigger concern. This does comply with our piece of economic vitality of our downtown area, expanding the parking, especially along the waterfront.

Ms. Bram:

Thank you. I'd like to see whatever documentation that says this is for economic vitality because I have not seen anything.

Mr. Conrad:

It's on our website. There is the whole presentation that was posted by Lynn either yesterday or today. It has the whole update with the expenditures and the selection process of all projects that are out there. I think it was updated yesterday.

Ms. Bram:

My understanding and my strong opinion is that American Rescue Plan Act funds are to respond to needs of the community as a result of the pandemic. We do have those needs in this town even though we are a very privileged town. There are people who have lost jobs, restaurants that were forced to close and people who have lost their homes that are not being addressed and I think are much more appropriate for ARPA funds to be used for. I do not believe that fixing up the downtown shopping area of a privileged community should fall under ARPA funding. So, I cannot support it in good conscience. I will abstain from the vote.

Ms. Batteau:

I understand that this is technically compliant. I read all the language. I tend to agree with Jessica. But, in fact, the question I wanted to ask has to do with some information we got at our most recent Planning and Zoning Committee meeting. We were told that a number of the developments that had been granted permits were not going to be proceeding possibly in the next few years because of the economy, because of material shortages, because of worker shortages, because of inflation, because of recession, etc. So, I'm wondering whether or not we are being somewhat ambitious now in making a plan to do all this potential construction, not the architectural plan but whether we shouldn't be anticipating that we're not going to be doing the building in the very near future and maybe we want to spend the money on something else right now. Pete, do you have an idea? You said, I guess Jay said that Parker Harding was scheduled for 2024. But I'm wondering if you are looking at this kind of delay going on into the future.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

No one has a crystal ball, Wendy. By getting started now with concept plans for all three lots and then putting together construction plans doesn't mean we have to go to bid. We'll know a lot more about the bidding environment and the construction environment by the end of the year. This project will not be built this year and we have room in the capital forecast. We could defer it if conditions do not warrant going out to bid or bids come in way too high. We can always hold off. We may also find that we have an opportunity. Things swing wildly in this type of construction environment.

Ms. Batteau:

I know that you said that Parker Harding was '24. When do you anticipate the other two?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

They are also in the capital plan but Parker Harding first, then Jesup, and then Imperial, Imperial being the newest of all three in the forecast. I won't say new but it's a different concept than what was presented in the capital forecast.

Ms. Batteau: So, you are looking at 2026 or thereabouts?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

At the earliest, 2026 for all three and that is assuming that everything goes right, that permitting doesn't get delayed. Whenever you are doing something by the water, you have permitting issues and that's not really controlled by our local land use agencies. It will be involving DEP and probably Army Corps. But we think it's a wide enough window. We should be getting this done now. It meshes in with the dredging of the river as well. So, it's all sort of happening at the same time. Even just having the schematic plans makes us far more ready than we are right now. We will have something on paper that is the plan that has been vetted. When you think about the whole economic vitality thing, when you make the downtown more inviting, this is going to support those businesses that were hurting during COVID, that lost a lot of money during COVID. The intent of the rejuvenation of the downtown area is to help out the businesses that suffered during that time period.

Ms. Batteau:

I can't speak for Jessica but I imagine she is thinking about homeless people and people who are in food lines rather than businesses that took a hit. Anyway, thanks Pete. I get it.

Lori Church, district 9:

This \$400,000, how long would that piece take? You said maybe starting in June.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

I can't start it until I can award the contract. I can't award the contract until the appropriation has been made. So, I'm not going to start before June. It will take them probably the remainder of the summer season to come up with the schematic designs, their public outreach. They've got an extensive program of public outreach that they've got to do for stakeholder comments. I would guess that they will be doing a parallel investigation of what permitting would be required. I would say we'd be hard pressed to get this ready for construction in March of next year. I don't normally start a project this big in July or August because you just don't have time to finish it. It's not good timing going into the holiday season. The best time to start it would be in March because that gives you the construction season.

Ms. Church:

Just to clarify, I wasn't speaking about the construction piece but this piece that we are voting on tonight which is the \$400,000 for the schematic drawings and the permitting, right? Six months?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Permitting and construction drawings for Parker Harding. The schematics, I'd say in six months, we'll be way into that. But that's not all of the \$400,000. After that, there's the permitting and final construction drawings for Parker Harding. That is a significant portion of that \$400,000.

Ms. Church:

And a significant amount of time. [Yes.] I just wanted to understand because even with your answer, I feel like we're spending this one time only money, these ARPA funds over the course of six or eight months and we can't even start the project until, you said the capital forecast is '24, maybe even later. We could be using this money for other things.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

If the project is ready to go in 2023, I will request to advance it. The capital forecast is a working document. We move things around on that forecast every year.

Ms. Church: You said it would probably be 2024 or possibly later.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

That is probably correct but if we have the opportunity to get other things out of the way in the meantime, such as the schematic designs for all three lots, that's very important to have so we know where we're going.

Ms. Church:

My feeling is that we don't need to spend this money now on this project and I feel strongly that these ARPA funds could be used for other things and should be used for other things. Thank you, Pete, for your answers. That was helpful.

Harris Falk, district 2:

Pete, would they also be able to consider adding on to Baldwin lot with this if they decided that Parker Harding should just be a park? So, they add on another level to the Baldwin lot and maybe a roof on top of that, put a garden up there or something, would they be able to consider Baldwin lot? I realize we're working on Baldwin lot right now.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

That is not part of the scope of this effort at all. But I will tell you what I said when we were funding the Baldwin lot, nothing we're doing at the Baldwin lot precludes us from building a second level there if that's what the community wants. That's not part of this project and I wouldn't be able to shift gears and say 'Let's forget about Jesup Green and go back to Baldwin.'

Mr. Falk:

If they decided that Parker Harding would be better with no cars on it at all, a nice green space and they needed somewhere to put cars and Baldwin lot is right there.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Again, it's not part of the scope of this effort at all. This is strictly for Parker Harding and for Jesup. They could certainly suggest that but I don't believe I would take these funds and design that. I would have to come back and ask for additional funds for something like that because that's not what this money is being appropriated for.

Ms. Gertzoff:

What kind of a timeframe would it be to reconstitute Parker Harding or whatever is decided upon? And I do think we need to keep Parker Harding or at least part of it for parking. I've been here a very long time. I could tell you great stories about the old storefronts in the back and all kinds of wild stuff but I do think from my observation over this long tenure in Westport, most people when they go to shop in Westport, they want to park as close as possible. You can see that when people are pulling out and the space is taken right away. So, how long would Parker Harding be out of commission and what kind of contingency plans are there for parking saying this project goes ahead? I'm all for reconstituting Parker Harding, at least most of it for places to park that are convenient for shoppers. What are the contingency plans? Where are people going to park?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

That's a great question Arlene. And that's really part of the way the cap forecast is set up. We're going from the north side of the Post Road to the south side of the Post Road. There's no way you can reconstruct the parking lot without shutting it down. I will use the Baldwin as an example. There will be opportunities once we've got the underground utility work done and we have the lot paved, if it's just the first course of pavement, we can work with special events, like the Arts Festival or something similar and use that for parking temporarily. That's your contingency plan. Ideally, each one of these projects will take less than a full construction season. I think you can see with Baldwin, they've made great progress the first week. We're working our way around in a circular fashion, Baldwin first. When Baldwin is done, then we'll be able to park there while Parker Harding is going and then we go to the south side of the Post Road, start doing Jesup. So we only do one lot at a time. We don't want to do all the lots at the same time. You are probably going to lose one parking lot for every effort that we make for half to two-thirds of the construction season.

Ms. Gertzoff: How long is the construction season?

Mr. Ratkiewich: Generally speaking, it's the beginning of April to the end of November.

Ms. Gertzoff:

Because there are still older people in town, you might consider having a little shuttle if necessary.

Mr. Ratkiewich: I think we might be able to enlist Peter Gold on that one.

Ms. Gertzoff:

You get Baldwin finished and then you start Parker Harding. I see a lot of people who would be struggling to get from the Baldwin lot to Main Street. Just a thought. Maybe there could be a little shuttle. Thank you for making that clearer. I appreciate it.

James Bairaktaris, district 4:

It sounds like this is going to be similar to when we did the feasibility for the housing over on Post Road East by the State Department of Public Works. I think all the money that we are going to be appropriating is probably going to answer a lot of these questions. It sounds like the plans will be coming if we appropriate the funding tonight and we'll probably have some better answers in the future. We can all agree that those lots need a lot of attention. Parker Harding is not one of the easiest places to manage and because it is riverfront it is nice to see that we will be taking care of them. We will have some good answers because that's what we're appropriating. So, thanks, Pete for explaining it.

By roll call vote, the motion passes 30-3. Opposed: Mall, Church, Bram

The secretary read item #8 of the call – To approve an appropriation in the amount of \$232,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the design and permitting of the replacement of the Hillandale Road Bridge over Muddy Brook.

Presentation

Mr. Ratkiewich:

This project is for replacement of a bridge that collapsed in the first flash floods that we experienced in 2018. Back in September, we had about half of one wall that was undermined by heavy flow in those storms. A couple of months later, it succumbed to basically old age. It is a stone abutment bridge that does not have very deep footings. I'm told by our bridge engineers that it probably has wooden timbers underneath the stone piers but there is nothing there that protects the structure from getting undermined during periods of high flow, especially pressure flow when water starts to go over the top of the bridge, there's a lot more water getting forced under the bridge at high pressure. That causes scour and causes the bridge to be deteriorated. Basically, there is no way of effectively repairing this. We did a temporary repair back in early 2019 consisting of putting additional concrete walls on the inside of the bridge. What that did was to make the bridge opening even smaller and now we're seeing scour happening again. Within three to four years, I would expect the bridge to become unstable again. So, now is the time to get our replacement design done, get our permitting done. We anticipate that if we get started in June, we could potentially have a project for 2023. It may go a little bit further. We did go out for RFP for this. We had about 10 firms that responded. We ended up using Tighe & Bond a company that we have used extensively in Westport. They have been working for us on all sorts of engineering projects. They

are the company that did the force main that went under the Saugatuck River, a very complicated design. They are also working for us on our LOTCIP Projects – LOcal Transportation Capital Improvement Projects. They are the engineer of record for Riverside Avenue, our new Main Street sidewalk. Over the years, they've done quite a bit. Their proposal, we felt was the best out of all of them. We short listed down to about six and then we chose this firm after the interview. Their proposal was \$202,000. Again, I put a 15 percent contingency because of some uncertainties in that waterway and what we're going to be faced with for permitting. The contingency was \$30,000 bringing the total to \$232,200 rounded down to \$232,000. That's the story on this one. It is basically a bridge replacement. What they are going to try to do is open up the culvert a little bit considering everything downstream as well. One of the problems is the upstream property on the northeast corner gets flooded on a regular basis. The next culvert downstream has already been opened in the '80s as part of one of our stream improvement projects. There have been a couple of attempts to replace this bridge in the past 20 years. We're finally at the point where we can obtain the easements that we will need to do the bridge work. My next option is to close the bridge entirely if it starts to collapse again. We're in a tough spot on this one.

Committees report

Finance and Public Works, Mr. Keenan:

This is from the same meeting as the last agenda item. Pete Ratkiewich, Public Works Director, requested an appropriation of \$232,000.00 with bond and note authorization for design and permitting services related to the replacement of the Hillandale Road Bridge over Muddy Brook. He covered most of the stuff that I have in the report. The only thing I would like to point out is part of the process will be to file a State/Local bridge application which will potentially allow for 50 percent reimbursement. Those in attendance from both committees voted unanimously to recommend approval to the full RTM.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Ms. Karpf read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Klinge.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Director of Public Works, the sum in the amount of \$232,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the design and permitting of the replacement of the Hillandale Road Bridge over Muddy Brook is hereby appropriated.

Members of the RTM

Ms. Kramer:

I don't see how we can do this fast enough. Being from Greens Farms, going up and down Hillandale, that is so dangerous. I implore everybody to vote for this and Pete gets it started yesterday. That is unsafe. Please vote for it.

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously 33-0.

The secretary read item #9 of the call -To approve a Special Appropriation in the amount of \$852,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for asphalt paving projects at Bedford Middle School and Staples High School.

Presentation

Mr. Ratkiewich:

This project bears a little bit more explanation that what is in the resolution. Last year, the Board of Finance asked Public Works to try to take over the paving projects for the Board of Education and see how it worked out. So, we coordinated with Mr. Hunyadi, Director of Facilities at the Board of Education, did a fairly extensive analysis of all of the pavement at all of the schools last year and came up with a plan. Several plans have been made there. The Board of Education has their own plan. We've also hired Street Scans to go through and scan the pavement. The best evaluation is when you get out there and actually walk the pavement to see if the predictions are true. Last year, we appropriated \$1.6 million for two years worth of work to try to catch up their program because a lot of these schools have not been paved for 15 to 20 years. We did do two years worth of work and we got really good bids last year so out of that \$1.6 million, I only had to spend \$1.18 million, I think. There is an unexpended balance in last year's appropriation of \$507,507. What I'm asking here is really to fund a project at the total estimate cost in the amount of \$1,359,507, the balance of which when you subtract the unexpended funds is \$852,000. I am hoping that I get really good bids again this year but I'm not absolutely sure that it is going to be the case because of the uncertainties in the world today. But I am confident that that will pave the remainder of the parking lots at Bedford and the pool lot at Staples and what we would call the northern entrance road from Bedford to Staples. Of course, the extent of the paving project will be dependent on the bids. Those are out to bid right now. That's the request. The \$852,000 is to fill out the account to do these Board of Education projects. We intend to keep on going each year and, for the most part, all the schools done in about a 10 year period which will put us back on track for a 20 year cycle for all the parking lots. If you look at what's been done in those parking lots in the last 20 years, aside from a new school, we haven't done much paving. I hope I didn't confuse anybody but I'd be happy to take any questions.

Committees report

Finance and Public Works Committees, Mr. Keenan:

Again, Pete covered pretty much everything. He reviewed and explained the rationale and benefits for Public Works taking over paving of the school parking lots which started last year. We are technically appropriating \$852,000 tonight but combined with last year's remaining funds, it's a total project cost of \$1,359,507. Both committees voted unanimously to recommend approval to the full RTM.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Ms. Karpf read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Klinge.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by Director of Public Works, the sum in the amount of \$852,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for asphalt paving projects at Bedford Middle School and Staples High School is hereby appropriated.

Members of the RTM

Chris Tait, district 1: Pete, is this out of your budget or the schools?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

This is not out of either. This is an appropriation to the Municipal Improvement Fund.

Mr. Tait: Thanks. I just wanted to make sure the schools didn't put it on your budget.

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously, 33-0.

Mr. Wieser:

Items #10 and #11 are Board of Education things which we will tack on tomorrow but Donna Douglas has been very patient tonight and is still with us from the Historic District Commission. It is only 11:10 and I believe this will be a very short item so we will jump ahead to item #12.

Mr. Falk:

I think we have to vote to move it up. I move **to suspend the rules and move #12 to be the next item to be dealt with.** It was seconded.

Mr. Wieser:

I think the way the agenda item was worded, we don't have to but I'll go with it just to be safe. We have a motion and a second.

By show of hands, the motion was approved unanimously.

The secretary read item #12 of the call - To approve an appropriation in the amount of \$30,000.00 to the Historic District Fees & Services Account for the purpose of accepting funding in the amount of \$30,000.00 from the State Historic Preservation Office. The funds will be used to hire an Architectural Historian to update Inventory Forms.

Presentation

Donna Douglas, Historic District Commissions Office:

The HDC was awarded a \$30,000 non-matching grant from the State Historic Preservation Office. It is the Supplemental Certified Local Government Grant. Westport is one of the few towns in the State of Connecticut that is Certified Local Government which qualifies us for this, basically, free money from the State. We are going to be hiring a Preservation Specialist who specializes in historical architecture to update about 165 of

our historic resources inventory forms. There are about 1,500 properties in town that are on Westport's historic resources inventory and a lot of the forms are incomplete. They are missing some data. We put out an RFP. We got six or seven, three of which were on their list of recommended people so we have one waiting in the wings once we get this money appropriated to start. It will be about a six to eight month project. Once we hand that back up to State, the town gets reimbursed from the State Historic Preservation Office.

Mr. Wieser:

I don't think we have a committee report on this because it's really a pass through.

Ms. Douglas:

I think Seth is trying to talk. There was a subcommittee meeting but they didn't have a quorum.

Mr. Wieser (repeating what Seth is saying):

We had a (Finance Committee) meeting but there were only three people so there was no vote but they were enthusiastic about the grant and about the activity the Historic District Commission was undertaking. There is the committee report.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Ms. Karpf read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Klinge.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Westport Historic District Commission, the sum in the amount of \$30,000 to the Historic District Fees & Services Account for the purpose of accepting funding in the amount of \$30,000 from the State Historic Preservation Office is hereby appropriated. The funds will be used to hire an Architectural Historian to update Inventory forms.

Members of the RTM – no comments

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously 32-0. (Ms. Newman left the meeting.)

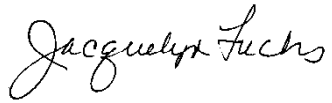
Mr. Wieser:

Thank you again Ms. Douglas for your patience in sticking with us. And thank you everyone for a marathon session where we got as many items done as I remember ever getting done, especially with the budget and all the stuff we've accomplished tonight which, no doubt, means we won't have to meet on Wednesday. We will meet on education budget tomorrow. So, well done to all. Thank you to all and we'll see you in about 20 hours. And thanks to any non-RTMers who have hung in there.

The meeting adjourned at 11:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffrey M. Dunkerton

Town Clerk

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacquelyn Fuchs".

by Jacquelyn Fuchs

ATTENDANCE: April 5, 2022

DIST.	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	NOTIFIED MODERATOR	LATE/ LEFT EARLY
1	Matthew Mandell	X			
	Liz Milwe	X			
	Kristin M. Purcell	X			
	Chris Tait	X			
2	Harris Falk	X			
	Jay Keenan	X			
	Louis M. Mall	X			
	Christine Meiers Schatz		X	X	
3	Ross Burkhardt	X			
	Arline Gertzoff	X			
	Jimmy Izzo	X			
	Don O'Day	X			
4	James Bairaktaris	X			
	Andrew J. Colabella	X			
	Noah Hammond	X			
	Jeff Wieser	X			
5	Peter Gold	X			
	Karen Kramer	X			
	Richard Lowenstein	X			
	Claudia Shaum	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			
	Rachel Cohn		X	X	
	Lisa Newman	X			Left 11:10 pm
	Stephen Shackelford	X			
9	Lori Church	X			
	Nancy Kail	X			
	Sal Liccione	X			
	Kristin Schneeman		X	X	
Total		33	3		

Roll Call Vote Restoration of Transit District Funds

DIST.	NAME	Absent	In Favor	Opposed	Abstain
1	Matthew Mandell		X		
	Liz Milwe		X		
	Kristin M. Purcell		X		
	Chris Tait		X		
2	Harris Falk		X		
	Jay Keenan		X		
	Louis M. Mall			X	
	Christine Meiers Schatz	X			
3	Ross Burkhardt		X		
	Arline Gertzoff		X		
	Jimmy Izzo		X		
	Don O'Day		X		
4	James Bairaktaris	X			
	Andrew J. Colabella		X		
	Noah Hammond		X		
	Jeff Wieser		X		
5	Peter Gold				Recused
	Karen Kramer		X		
	Richard Lowenstein		X		
	Claudia Shaum		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		
	Rachel Cohn	X			
	Lisa Newman		X		
	Stephen Shackelford		X		
9	Lori Church		X		
	Nancy Kail		X		
	Sal Liccione		X		
	Kristin Schneeman	X			
Total			30	1	

Roll Call Vote #7 ARPA funding for Parking Lots

DIST.	NAME	Absent	In Favor	Opposed	Abstain
1	Matthew Mandell		X		
	Liz Milwe		X		
	Kristin M. Purcell		X		
	Chris Tait		X		
2	Harris Falk		X		
	Jay Keenan		X		
	Louis M. Mall			X	
	Christine Meiers Schatz	X			
3	Ross Burkhardt		X		
	Arline Gertzoff		X		
	Jimmy Izzo		X		
	Don O'Day		X		
4	James Bairaktaris		X		
	Andrew J. Colabella		X		
	Noah Hammond		X		
	Jeff Wieser		X		
5	Peter Gold				
	Karen Kramer		X		
	Richard Lowenstein		X		
	Claudia Shaum		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		
	Rachel Cohn	X			
	Lisa Newman		X		
	Stephen Shackelford		X		
9	Lori Church			X	
	Nancy Kail		X		
	Sal Liccione		X		
	Kristin Schneeman	X			
Total			30	3	