

**RTM Meeting
July 5, 2022**

The call

1. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the request of the Personnel Director, to ratify and approve a collective bargaining agreement between the Town of Westport and Westport Police Union, Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 045 for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025.
2. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Director of Public Works, to approve an appropriation of \$160,000.00 to the Capital and Non-Recurring Account to purchase a John Deere 410L Backhoe & Loader to replace the 2005 John Deere 410G Backhoe that requires extensive repairs.
3. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Director of Public Works, to approve an appropriation of \$270,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the replacement of the 50,000lb Truck Lift in the mechanics bay in the equipment garage.
4. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Director of Public Works, to approve an appropriation of \$285,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the replacement of the Weigh Scale located at the Westport Transfer Station.
5. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Director of Public Works, to approve an appropriation of \$251,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the Restoration of the Front Façade Portico Columns, Pilasters and Pediment of Town Hall.

The meeting

Moderator Jeff Wieser:

The crowd is abuzz to be here in person; however, I have to begin the meeting. Good evening everybody. This meeting of Westport's Representative Town Meeting is now called to order. My name is Jeff Wieser and I am the RTM Moderator. We welcome those who are joining us tonight in the Town Hall auditorium for the first time in a little over two years, as well as those watching us streaming live on westportct.gov, and those watching on Optimum Government Access Channel 79 or Frontier Channel 99. On my right is tonight is RTM Acting Secretary Jeff Dunkerton, our Town Clerk. We send a shout out again to our Secretary Jackie Fuchs who might be watching us on westportct.gov but she is recovering and doing the best and we wish her back soon, not that we don't love having Jeff Dunkerton here.

A reminder on public comments for those who are here to comment on our agenda items, comments will be limited to three minutes. You can send an email during the meeting to RTMmailinglist@westportct.gov, which goes to all RTM members. These emails will not be read here but you can communicate with your RTM reps that way. That goes to all RTM members. I'll say it several times tonight but it's great to be back in

person and see that we can actually do this. We hope it continues to be the case and that COVID continues to be under control but it's great to be here.

Tonight's invocation will be delivered by Jessica Noyes McIntee, our new Poet Laureate as of July 1. Welcome Jessie.

Invocation, Jessica Noyes McIntee:

Hi everyone. Thanks for inviting me to join you tonight. Welcome back to Town Hall. It's an exciting night to be here. I have a poem from a contemporary poet named Ada Limon. She's fantastic if you don't know her work. My 15 year old said to warn you it starts off a little bleak. Then it gets uplifting. It's called "Dead Stars".

Out here, there's a bowing even the trees are doing.

Winter's icy hand at the back of all of us.

Black bark, slick yellow leaves, a kind of stillness that feels so mute it's almost in another year.

I am a hearth of spiders these days: a nest of trying.

We point out the stars that make Orion as we take out the trash, the rolling containers a song of suburban thunder.

It's almost romantic as we adjust the waxy blue recycling bin until you say, *Man, we should really learn some new constellations.*

And it's true. We keep forgetting about Antlia, Centaurus, Draco, Lacerta, Hydra, Lyra, Lynx.

But mostly we're forgetting we're dead stars too, my mouth is full of dust and I wish to reclaim the rising—

to lean in the spotlight of streetlight with you, toward what's larger within us, toward how we were born.

Look, we are not unspectacular things.

We've come this far, survived this much. What would happen if we decided to survive more? To love harder? What if we stood up with our synapses and flesh and said, *No. No*, to the rising tides.

Stood for the many mute mouths of the sea, of the land?

What would happen if we used our bodies to bargain for the safety of others, for earth,

if we declared a clean night, if we stopped being terrified, if we launched our demands into the sky, made ourselves so big people could point to us with the arrows they make in their minds, rolling their trash bins out, after all of this is over?

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you. I might ask if we could have a copy of that to send around so we could read it. For the last two years, we have had a video Pledge of Allegiance. Tonight we ask our invocation speaker to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the May 4 meeting have been circulated. The others are being worked on by Jackie Fuchs. If you have any questions or comments or corrections on those

May minutes or the April minutes which went out a bit ago, let Jeff or me or Jackie Fuchs know.

Announcements:

Congratulations to our July Birthday celebrants. This month we recognize Chris Tait, Rachel Cohn, Wendy Batteau, Kristin Mott Purcell, our First Selectwoman, Jen Tooker, who is as usual with us tonight, and I will wish myself a Happy Birthday this month, as well. I hope we all have happy celebrations.

I will lead off the announcements by recognizing that we lost a former RTM Member in April. George Franciscovich, a longtime Westport resident who served on the RTM from 2001 – 2003. I didn't know George well but he cheerfully let me cut through his backyard on Compo Hill on July 4th celebrations. He was a great guy. I'd like to ask a moment of silence for Mr. Franciscovich.

RTM Announcements

Peter Gold, district 5:

I must say it's a pleasure to be meeting again in person. It's much more convivial than zoom. I'm here to announce that the Westport Transit District has extended its service area for Wheels2U all the way down Saugatuck to Saugatuck Shores and Saugatuck Island as well as Westway and Parcell on the other side of town. It's a great way to get to and from the train station even if you just want to go for dinner by the trains. There are a lot of good restaurants. Also, if you're clever, you can take it anywhere in town. You just have to change buses at the train station. So, you book a ride to the train station and then you book a ride to wherever you want to go. If anyone wants information, there are cards up there with information on how to access the app and get information about Wheels2U. Feel free to take as many as you want. As background for you, in June, we had 2,116 rides, served 388 unique individuals. In the fiscal year that just ended, we had 18,144 rides and we served 913 unique individuals just on Wheels2U. This doesn't count the additional people we served with the elderly, disabled transit in town or town to town. Let people know about the service. It's a great service. I hope you all try it at least once. You should have the experience.

Mr. Wieser:

We are so used to zoom where I've been able to call on people and they respond right away and it does move things along. If during the course of our proceedings, I'm going to try to call on people as they raise their hands, one, two, three. If you are second or third, it might move things along if you move down to the front row and just be ready to be on deck. We'll see how that works.

Liz Milwe, district 1:

I want to invite everyone to Family Fun Day at Wakeman Town Farm, July 9, this coming Saturday from 11 to 3. You can feed the animals, plant sunflower seeds, listen to the School of Rock Band and we're going to have our signature Farm Olympics. We're going to have great wood fire pizza. You can feed the animals. You can also come and have some smoothies, iced coffee and lemonade and our farm stand is open. You can take a tour of the farm. All the plantings this year were done by the Staples Seniors Intern Program. They did a great job and there's lots of great produce to buy. A

big shout out to Cathy Talmadge who can't be here tonight. We're saving a seat for her. We love you Cathy.

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you Ms. Milwe. And I think it's an appropriate time to mention, since I think this is our first meeting since our get together at Liz' house, that she throws a hell of a party so if she says the Wakeman Town Farm party is going to be good, it's going to be good. So, thank you for that get together. That was a wonderful chance for all of us to see each other. Are there any upcoming committee meetings? We might or might not have an August meeting. We'll be in touch on that. No committee meetings.

Finally, I would like to commend those members and Town Clerk who wrote reports this month and got them in time for the packet. This is the first time I remember a meeting where all the reports got in on time. We had one packet. It went to everybody. It included everything we needed for this meeting. I find that so helpful so I encourage anyone writing a report to get it to Jeff Dunkerton's office, Tatiana Plachi, the Thursday before the meeting so we'll have one document to look at. It's really, really useful. Thank you to all who did that.

There were 28 present. Mr. Mandell, Ms. Meiers Schatz, Ms. Gertzoff, Mr. Colabella, Ms. Talmadge, Ms. Batteau, Mr. Shackelford and Ms. Banks notified the Moderator that they would be absent.

The secretary read item #1 of the call - To ratify and approve a collective bargaining agreement between the Town of Westport and Westport Police Union, Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 045 for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025.

Presentation

Attorney Chris Hodgson from Berchem Moses:

I just wanted to point out that our negotiating team consisted of both Chiefs, Ralph Chetcuti, Gary Conrad, Louis Mall and Sheri Gordon. We negotiated with the Fraternal Order of Police for the first time who had won a union election which explains why the contract would go back to July 1, 2021. We are a year out. During that time, they had their election and then we negotiated and it went very smoothly. We ended up with a four year contract. The Chiefs felt it was very fair and in the best interest of the Police Department, given all they ask the police officers to do. They have an excellent relationship with local officers and I think that helped a lot. The four year contract resulted in a general wage increase of 2.75 percent for the first two years and 2.85 percent for the second two years. I've negotiated contracts for fire and police in New Canaan, Wilton and Weston and it's the same range, under three percent. Given inflation, I think it's a fair result to lock something in like that for four years. In addition, we were able to increase the premium share contribution for the HSA up from 14 percent to 15 percent, 15 ½ and 16 percent over the last three years. We also were finally able to get the PPO plan out of the contract. There were only one or two people in in and the union finally agreed that they could go out so that was significant. We increased some of their stipends; for example, uniforms, up \$400, we replaced a

formula that was very confusing for unused vacation time to simply say that officers could be paid for up to five accrued unused vacation days per year. We thought that was fair. In addition, we increased the awards in assessment areas. We have the Master Officer Program which is available for everyone. We increased areas if they meet benchmarks for sick leave and attendance, in other words no sick time, they would get \$2,000 up from \$1,600 and the same with police policy and training. I think it went up from \$400 to \$600. Those are the highlights. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Committees report

Employee Compensation, Finance and Public Protection Committees, Louis Mall, district 2:

Thank you Mr. Moderator. Before I start, I'd like to extend good well wishes to Ms. Fuchs and ask that she hurry back and get well soon.

The RTM Employee Compensation, Finance, Public Protection Committees held a meeting via Zoom on Thursday, June 22, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to take such action as the meeting may determine, to recommend to the full RTM approval of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Westport and the Westport Police Union, Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 045 for the period July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2025. Attorney Hodgson pointed out who the negotiating team was. The Westport Police Union, Lodge 045 represented 55 police officers, sergeants and lower. As Attorney Hodgson said, this was the first time that they represented the union in negotiations with the town. Attorney Hodgson walked the committees through changes to the contract including work rules and procedures for promotions, probations and financial settlements. This is a four-year agreement.

Effective Date Share	Wages	HSA Premium Cost
July 1, 2021	2.75%(retro)	14.0%(current)
July 1, 2022	2.75%	15.0%
July 1, 2023	2.85%	15.5%
July 1, 2024	2.85%	16.0%

Director of Finance Gary Conrad explained that costs are estimated to increase over the four-year period by \$1.3 million or 16.21 percent, or approximately \$336,000 annually. This includes wages, paid time off and other benefits, net of insurance cost sharing and excluding pension costs. Committee members questions focused on hiring and retention, physical requirements and standards, and other Town union settlements. The action taken: A motion was made and seconded by Nancy Kail and Don O'Day for both Employee Compensation and Finance, and by Sal Liccione and Candace Banks for Public Protection, to recommend to the full RTM approval of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Westport and the Westport Police Union, Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 045 for the period July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2025. Employee Compensation voted 8-0-0; Finance voted 5-0-0; Public Protection voted 9-0-0 to recommend to the RTM to approve the agreement. The Employee Compensation and Public Protection Committees dismissed at 8:15 while Finance continue with other business. Respectfully submitted, Louis Mall, Employee Compensation Chair. Before I

close, I would like to thank the Police Union Local 045 for bargaining in good faith to reach this agreement with the town. Thank you.

Members of the Westport electorate - No comments

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

RESOLVED: That upon the request of the Personnel Director, a collective bargaining agreement between the Town of Westport and Westport Police Union, Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 045 for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025 is hereby ratified and approved.

Members of the RTM – No comments

By show of hands, the resolution passes unanimously.

The secretary read item #2 of the call - To approve an appropriation of \$160,000.00 to the Capital and Non-Recurring Account to purchase a John Deere 410L Backhoe & Loader to replace the 2005 John Deere 410G Backhoe that requires extensive repairs.

Presentation

Pete Ratkiewich, Director of Public Works:

As was stated, we are requesting an appropriation of \$160,000 for replacement of a 17 year old backhoe. This piece of equipment is a lighter duty backhoe. It's got a smaller footprint than some of our larger equipment but it's used to support operations in highway every day. Because the equipment is 17 years old, it is showing signs of wear and fatigue and at this age, the hydraulic system and the electrical system are as old as the machine and should be refurbished but the cost of refurbishment will likely cost up to 50 percent of the machine cost. We can have dry, rotted wires connections terminals to the electrical system and the hydraulic line has had pump and hose issues. So, we anticipate numerous other repairs to this 17 year old piece of equipment. So, rather than invest large amounts of money in this and still end up with a 17 year old machine, it is recommended to replace it and put the current equipment up for surplus. The loader was scheduled for replacement on the five year capital forecast FY 2023 at a value of \$140,000. The current price for its replacement, which is a John Deere 410L under a Sourcewell contract. We will have to fit accessories which will cost another \$17,000 approximately so our request is rounded up to \$160,000.

Committees report

Finance and Public Works, Jay Keenan, district 2:

Public Works & Finance met on June 22, 2022 which could possibly be our last zoom meeting ever, hopefully. Pete covered most of it but the appropriation is \$160,000.00 from the Capital and Non-Recurring Fund. It is in the five year capital forecast. The two committees voted unanimously 7-0 and 5-0 to recommend to the 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 of \$160,000.00 from the Capital and Non-Recurring Account to purchase a John Deere 410L Backhoe & Loader to replace the 2005 John Deere 410G Backhoe that requires extensive repairs is hereby appropriated.

Members of the RTM

Kristin Schneeman, district 9:

A quick question and I know I should know the answer to this by now but the reason it is coming from Capital and Non-recurring is because of the cost, that there is a dollar figure cut off as opposed to bonding it like the other two pieces of equipment we're voting on?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

To answer your question, I believe it's a small enough appropriation that it's easier to take it out of capital and non-recurring and really, the useful life is about 15 years so bonding it for 20 doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

Harris Falk, district 2:

Have you looked into seeing if there are any hybrid or electric ones that will do the job?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

In this case we have not. We are pretty much aware that they are not making those yet. They will eventually and, at that time, we will look into it.

Mr. Falk: Are we stuck on John Deere's or could we use anything?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

There are a number of manufacturers of backhoes but this is the one that the highway superintendent and equipment mechanic recommended.

By show of hands, the resolution passes unanimously 28-0

The secretary read item #3 of the call - To approve an appropriation of \$270,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the replacement of the 50,000lb Truck Lift in the mechanics bay in the equipment garage.

Presentation

Mr. Ratkiewich:

This piece of equipment is used also every day to manage and repair our extensive fleet of plow trucks as well as our aerial lift truck and a number of other pieces of equipment. Last time it was replaced was in 2003 so it is now 19 years old. It is a hydraulic lift and hydraulics do fail after many years. By the time we order this and install it, it will be 20 years old with the current supply chain. It is used to maintain our freight liner dump trucks that are used for snow storms, debris cleanup and everyday operations. The lift

was scheduled or replacement on the five year capital forecast in FY 2023 at a value of \$250,000. The purchase price for the replacement alone is \$214,000 and change as of the end of April. The price is only for the installation of the new unit. We still have to remove the old unit and take it out of the garage. That will be done using in-house labor and contractors where necessary. Basically, what that involves is digging into the concrete floor, removing and replacing hydraulic lines, ledge removal and remediating and removal of any contaminated material found in the old lift pit. There is potential for cost escalation on this equipment as well as the cost of contract services and disposal costs depending on what we find in the lift pit. We anticipate the need for another \$56,000 bringing the total to \$270,000 in round numbers. Again, this is a 19 year old piece of equipment used every day and by the time we actually get it out, it will be 20 years old.

Committees report

Finance and Public Works Committees, Mr. Keenan:

Pete really didn't leave much here for me. The second of four items in the same meeting, a request for \$270,000. I'm not sure Pete mentioned this is with bond and note authorization. The Public Works Committee voted 7-0 to recommend approval to the full RTM and the Finance Committee voted 5-0 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 of \$270,000.00 along with bond and note authorization from the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the replacement of the 50,000lb Truck Lift in the mechanics bay in the equipment garage is hereby appropriated.

Members of the RTM – no comments

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously, 28-0.

The secretary read item #4 of the call – To approve an appropriation of \$285,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the replacement of the Weigh Scale located at the Westport Transfer Station.

Presentation

Mr. Ratkiewich:

This weigh scale is used every day for anything coming in and out of the Transfer Station which you would think would only be garbage and recycling but we also bring in sand and salt for winter operations or construction materials when they are delivered or anything else that we need to get a weight on in order to measure it for payment or for any purposes. The weigh scale was originally installed when the Transfer Station and Public Works Garage were built back in the '70's so it's over 50 years old now. We have done a lot of maintenance on this but at this point it's getting to be a structural issue and

we would have to spend some pretty big bucks just to repair the structural portion of the scale and it would still be a 50 year old scale. This one here was on the capital forecast for a couple of years out. We determined that this was much more urgent than what we did have on 2023 which was a compactor, our compactor number two which was up in the actual transfer station building. When we replaced the first compactor back in 2018, we saved parts from that compactor just in case compactor number two goes down or has problems with the hydraulic units. So, right now, compactor number two is working just fine and we're using it mostly for recycling and we have parts to replace it so we can push that back out a couple of years. What we did was we swapped the scale for the compactor. The scale really needs to get done. We can't operate without a scale, not very effectively at the Transfer Station. However, in the capital forecast, the value of the project was \$500,000 and that reflects a much larger project to reconfigure the Transfer Station. One of our desires was to check residency coming in and do a lot more efficient movement around the Transfer Station. Periodically, we have someone on late duty checking residence and we have found that there are folks that come from Fairfield, Weston, Wilton because it's just more convenient for them if they are closer to our borders. One of our desires, down the road, is to improve the flow in the Transfer Station and the control in the Transfer Station. So, this is part of that project to reconfigure. One of the nice things about this scale is that we can either mount it on the surface of the ground on temporary footings or we can mount it in the pit and we can move it around. So, if we purchase this now, we can put it aside the existing scale pit and use it while we're removing the old scale and then take a crane and move the new scale into the scale pit once it's prepared to accept the new scale. When we have reconfigured the Transfer Station, we can move it again if the location of the scale is different. So, it's a fairly versatile piece of equipment. The cost of the scale purchased is about \$247,500. We have put in a 15 percent contingency on that of \$37,125 totaling at \$284,625 and we rounded that up to \$285,000. Again, we are going to be doing a lot of work in-house with sub-contractors so that we can manage costs as best we can.

Committee reports

Seth Braunstein, district 6:

Before I get started, I would like to echo what Lou said wishing a quick and speedy recovery to our Secretary Jackie Fuchs and also hope to see the bright smiling face of the backbone of district 6, Cathy Talmadge, at some point soon too.

Pete, very thorough job. Very hard for me to add much. I guess I would just reinforce the thought that there was a thoughtful approach here in terms of providing versatility and the ability to make adjustments in the future. Clearly, this was brought forward in the forecast because of its age, a piece of equipment about as old as I am should absolutely be replaced. I guess I'll just get to the vote. For Finance motion was made by Don O'Day and seconded by Jessica Bram - passed by unanimous vote 5 - 0. For Public Works motion was made by Andrew Colabella and seconded by Dick Lowenstein - passed by unanimous vote 7 - 0.

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 of the Board of Finance and a request by the Director of Public Works, the sum of \$285,000.00 along with bond and note authorization from the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the replacement of the Weigh Scale located at the Westport Transfer Station is hereby appropriated.

Members of the RTM

Chris Tait, district 1:

As we're spending a lot of this money through Public Works, for my constituents, I just want to let them know that this is bided out, we get multiple bids, with the waystation and the trucks and all that.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

There is, in fact, one manufacturer that makes this type of scale so we are sort of stuck with that manufacturer. That's the situation we're in right now. I will also add that we have to order this and it probably won't come in for a year so the timing is going to be dependent on when the equipment arrives.

Mr. Tait:

I appreciate that. I just want to reiterate you go out of your way to get multiple bids on a project. On any bid that goes out, we work to get the best price.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

On most of these, you'll see that we're using competitive group buying things, so Sourcewell is where put in bids and they are published and are available for everybody. This one isn't on it because of the proprietary nature so it's sort of like a State bid where numerous vendors put up prices and then we can select from the numerous vendors.

Mr. Tait: Thanks Pete. I appreciate that. I will definitely vote for it.

Mr. Falk:

We're doing a bunch of the work in-house and I know that will save us money but are we saving money but losing work by using in-house people that could be doing stuff that only they can do in the town? I also don't know how much we're saving.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

The type of in-house work that we would be doing would be demolition of the concrete that is in there supporting the existing scale, maybe cutting up steel beams and that sort of stuff and then taking that up to the Transfer Station and putting it in the metal bin. It's not going to be the whole crew so we'll have one or two folks and a foreman when that part of the project comes along. If they are so busy with work that we can't get it done with our own forces, what we'll do is have one of our foremen oversee a subcontractor that would do the same thing. We're going to have to have a combination of in-house and subcontracted work as well as the main contractor to put the scale in. Some of the subcontractors will be a crane to lift the scale from the truck into the pit but our guys may be directing that. When we clear out the pit, we may have to have crane excavator, that type of thing. We can use our own equipment if we just need a quick lift instead of

hiring someone to come in. So, where it makes sense, where we can do that work without interfering with our other operations, we'll do that.

Mr. Falk:

Great. Thanks. Everybody likes to see you saving money but sometimes saving money isn't saving money but it looks like it's fine.

Dick Lowenstein, district 5:

You mentioned reconfiguration of the Transit Station over time and that this scale will help that process. Will your reconfiguration plans include perhaps a recycling center such as Darien has? We had a situation where somebody claimed that good bicycles were being thrown out at the Transit Station and he was not able to take them. I think it meets the needs of the population to have a recycling station at the Transit Station. I'm not asking for a commitment but I would like to add it to the consideration list.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

The short answer to that question is no, we don't have room. The reason we don't have room is because our Transit Station has a footprint of half to a third the size of most Transfer Stations that have something like that. The other thing that happens with that is there becomes a traffic problem. As anyone who has gone to the Transfer Station knows, there is a lot of cross traffic, truck traffic and vehicle traffic. I don't even have room right now if I take someone who is not a resident and reject them from the line, we have to actually let them go through the Transfer Station because there is not enough room for a return lane to get them out of the Transfer Station before they dump. We have been asked this question for the last 10 to 15 years because as recycling came into play, a lot of Transfer Stations do have a little shack where they put stuff they think is good in there and other people come and take it out. Our answer has always been that there are 'free cycling' agencies in town that are readily available so if someone wants to give away that good bike and they think it's worth something, it's very easy to find someone to free cycle it online on Yahoo groups or any number of places. But, until our footprint expands a great deal more at the Transfer Station, we simply can't do that. If I had my druthers and could expand the Transfer Station as much as I need, I would probably bring the yard waste site into the station first so that we don't have two different places where people are going to discharge their waste. Unfortunately, the way the Transfer Station is laid out, it is all one parcel with the highway garage. And it's all paved. And it's all in a residential area. Half of the site is actually on State land, the right of way for Sherwood Island Connector. The only way for me to expand that is to go north into the State right of way and encroach on the wetlands that are just north of the property surrounding the property. The last time we tried to do anything at the Transfer Station, we had to stay pretty much in the coverage we had because we already over coverage on that parcel with impervious surfaces. So, it's a difficult proposition to expand anything in there. Right now, we brought a couple of other facilities in and we shoehorned them in. We've got a fabric or cloth discharge location; we've got food waste now and we just started a glass only program to try to reduce the weight going to the Bridgeport Burn Center because glass doesn't burn very well and either does food. So, if we can take those out of the stream, that will reduce our tonnage which reduces our cost. At this point, I can barely fit those in. I don't know where I would fit anything else without causing a major traffic jam.

Mr. Lowenstein:

I don't find that answer satisfactory, personally. I believe there is a lot of space there is a consultant was brought in to examine the site to find a place. We already know there is recycling going on. For example, I was there a few weeks ago and a man had two violins. My big fear was he was going to throw them into the dump. He said no, he would leave them on the ground and someone would take them and someone did take them. So, there is a lot of informal recycling going on right now and I urge the town to find a way that it can be done. There is a need and it can be met if it is done properly.

Mr. Falk:

Would it be possible on the town website for the Transfer Station to put a link to some of the free cycles? Is the policy that you can't take anything from there?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

We run into a lot of problems up there with scavengers when people can take things out. For instance, the metal pile, which we actually get paid for. The rule is you can't take anything out of the Transfer Station and they've taken metal into their vehicles to turn it into a metal recycler and they get the money instead of us. That's the type of thing that goes on and we really can't tolerate that.

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously, 28-0.

The secretary read item #5 of the call – To approve an appropriation of \$251,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the Restoration of the Front Façade Portico Columns, Pilasters and Pediment of Town Hall.

Presentation

Mr. Ratkiewich:

When I took this job back in 2018, this project had been on the capital forecast probably five years already if not a little longer. Essentially, the columns that are holding up the front of the building out here are really in pretty good shape if you read the report that was in the package. The problem is there are elements of them that are starting to rot away. Primarily at the base of the columns, there is some decorative trim and that's falling into disrepair. Take a look at it on your way out. There are cracks in it, voids in it. We inspected the column by inserting a camera in one of the drain holes in the base of the column and looked up. We had a historical architect do it. One of the interesting things about this is that the Town Hall is on the State Register of historic places. As such, when we first tried to do this back in 2018, we figured we were going to go out and buy new columns and replace the columns and be done with it. When we learned it was on the State Historic Register, we decided instead to bring in an historical architect from Architectural Preservation Studio which is a qualified historical architect conservator to take a look at it and tell us how we could preserve these best and do the whole front entrance to Town Hall at once. So, we came up with the plan in this package. At the same time, we had been talking with SHPO, State Historic Preservation

Office about how to go about this. They indicated that we could get a grant for the historical architect to pay for the design. So, we did. We got a \$20,000 grant for that. I think the total bill was around \$30,000. That was what we called Phase I. Phase II is the actual construction. We are in the process of applying for a Historic Restoration Fund Grant. It is a matching grant that reimburses up to 50 percent of the costs or \$200,000 through the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. We hadn't applied for that when I put this on the Board of Finance agenda but we were scheduled to apply for it and we knew there would be an August 3 Historic Preservation Council meeting where they would consider our grant request. But, as we got further and further into the information on the grant, we discovered that it doesn't come with no strings attached. The strings are very important because in future years here in Town Hall, we have plans to do a lot of improvements. One of the main things and one of the earliest things we need to address is ADA compliance in this building, even in this auditorium. If you look around, there is not dedicated place for a wheelchair, the sound system doesn't connect to people who are hearing impaired and no one can get up to the stage unless they can walk up to the stage. We're sort of out of compliance. If we didn't touch the building, we wouldn't have to do anything. Once we touch the building and doing ADA, we have to bring everything up to ADA compliance, Back to the Historic Preservation Grant, when we sign up for this and we get what would in effect would be \$125,000 towards this project, we are then locked in for 20 years and we can't do anything to the building anywhere or the property anywhere unless we go through the State Historic Preservation Office. So, in effect, we are going to give ourselves another piece of bureaucracy that we have to go through for the next 20 years even if I want to change a parking space in the back or if I want to put a new dugout in the ball field or if we want to change the handicap ramp out front to an upgraded handicap-capable structure. So, there are a lot of things we want to do at Town Hall and in retrospect, we think that actually applying for that grant is going to sort of hogtie us and not allow us to do what we want to do in the future in Town Hall. We can do the restoration in accordance with the restoration plan and we won't violate any of the State Historic Register of the property. But, we're thinking the actual grant is a little too rigid for us. We asked them flat out, what can we do once we get the grant and they said 'Nothing unless you come back and talk to us every time.' The request is for \$251,000 and there is a breakdown of those costs. The architect's estimate was \$228,100, we put a contingency on of \$22,810 for a total of \$250,910 rounded up to \$251,000. There is a breakdown of the architect's estimates in your package as well as his analysis of the front columns. Again, we're in pretty good shape. The manufacturer who made the columns is still in business so we're able to get the parts. While we're doing the work on the front, we'll be removing the lead paint from the columns as well as the pilasters. Those are the ornate things that go up the side of the building. The column capitals are very ornate and intricate. They will have to be very carefully stripped and then repainted. So, there are a lot of things that go into this even though we are not actually replacing the columns. So, I guess I talked enough here. I'll take any questions.

Committees report

Public Works and Finance Committees, Mr. Braunstein:

This is all from the same June 22nd get together of Public Works and Finance and Employee Compensation actually led the evening off. That was item #1. I would stress just a couple of things. A previous study was already funded to analyze the state of

those columns and there was a very clear conclusion that the work needed to be done. Quite frankly, walking in this evening, I encourage you on the way out if there still is enough light, take a look. There is significant disrepair evident to someone who is not an expert, like myself. These are architectural features at the base of the columns that are really not structural but where there is probably the greatest need. Director Ratkiewich mentioned that there had been some sand blasting that had created some of the damage, going back a number of years. These items, as mentioned, have been on the capital forecast for over five years and have been delayed. So, while not urgent in terms of current structural integrity, the longer the maintenance and upkeep is delayed, the greater the ultimate expense for restoration and potential for a hazard to arise. The other two points I wanted to mention here. Director Ratkiewich mentioned the pursuit of the grant. We heard a very interesting, unequivocal statement from Director of Finance Conrad who felt that allowing the State to have any say on any part of this property and, quite frankly, the SHPA restrictions would be very, very tight in terms of what we could do so Director Conrad thought giving them the right to have a say would be a hindrance going forward and it would probably make more sense to abandon the grant process. The other thing I wanted to make sure to mention here, some of the committee members questioned the priority of the facade repairs versus other Town Hall needs, specifically better public entry via the main rear parking lot and ADA compliance into and within Town Hall, which I think is a legitimate concern to be raised. There was plenty of discussion about it not being mutually exclusive. As we know and I'm sure we can hear from First Selectwoman Tooker, a \$1 million ARPA fund request, already been identified by Ms. Tooker to address the ADA issues. I came away from that evening feeling that it is not necessarily one or the other. This is a project that has been in need for quite some time. It has been in the forecast and has been extensively delayed but I suspect you'll hear further discussion on that further on this evening. A vote was taken. For Finance, a motion was made by Jessica Bram and seconded by Don O'Day - passed by unanimous vote 5 - 0. For Public Works a motion was made by Andrew Colabella and seconded by Chris Tait - passed by a vote 5 – 2 with Dick Lowenstein and Lori Church dissenting.

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 of \$251,000.00 along with bond and note authorization from the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the Restoration of the Front Façade Portico Columns, Pilasters and Pediment of Town Hall is hereby appropriated.

Members of the RTM

Mr. Lowenstein:

You all have the diagram I sent you in the mail today. I will try to address the relevance to the motion before you. The motion today is on a very specific matter, the columns in front of Town Hall. As the report from Mr. Braunstein said, it's not a question of not doing it but priorities in doing it. From my point of view, it is not a question of if but when. One of the things about the front of Town Hall is that this became the Town Hall in the late 70's, early 80's. It was a problem when they moved in. It's been kicked down the

road many times; in fact, one Public Works Director used sand blasting on the columns to try and do something about it. It didn't work. So the problem goes back longer than five years. If we decide to do these columns, we are in a situation where the main entrance of Town Hall for visitors, those of us who don't have a little badge around our neck or our waist, will have to go around the front of the building. So, my first question for Mr. Ratkiewich is how are you going to manage construction with the fact that people are coming into the building at the same time you are doing a lot of construction work?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

What we do in a case like that is we put into the specification that the contractor would have to do one column at a time and always leave a fully accessible front door to go in there. They tent off an area and they work inside the tent. That's the only way you can strip the stuff safely because there is the potential for lead paint in it. So you have to encapsulate it in order to do it and you're not going to encapsulate the entire portico because we do need to get things in and out of Town Hall.

Mr. Lowenstein:

This is an opportunity, really, more than anything else. I moved here in 1983 and from 1983 to 2020, I always came in the building from the rear. That is the principal entrance to the building. There are only five parking spaces in the front of the building. There are 115 in the back. Most visitors come in through the back. I think this is an opportunity to do two things: One, to make sure that this project is started at a point when we've changed the entrance for visitors from the front to the back so that we can get things done in a more efficient way. Let me ask you this Pete, how long can you delay this project if this is approved tonight?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

I can delay for another 10 years but things will continue to deteriorate.

Mr. Lowenstein:

Since the Administration is represented tonight, I'd like to know if they'd like to comment on the fact that \$1 million of ARPA funding could not only be used to flip the entrances back to where they originally were, to improve the ADA access into the building and within the building, and also make the disability parking better on this side of the building. When you come around the corner, there is an obstructed sign saying "Pedestrian Crossing", no sidewalk for people who parked in the back to move to the front to get their cars in. There are a lot of things associated with these columns that have nothing to do with the columns. But it is an opportunity. My feeling is I would like to get some kind of commitment that these other problems would be moved to the front of the burner rather than the back of the burner while the columns, which have been on the back burner for over 20 years can remain there for a little longer while we fix these other problems. It's difficult. That map I showed you is an example of how people have to park in the back, walk to the front, come in and then exit from the back. I really feel it's unfair to the citizens of town and those who want to get badges and I think the column work being proposed can be delayed until we get these other things done. I'm not in favor of voting for this unless I find some way of pushing it out so that the other priority items get done first.

Ms. Schneeman:

I'm supportive of getting this work done. I do think we want to make a good impression with the primary entrance to this building. But I am just wondering about the prioritization. Can you summarize if there are specific plans for improvements, efforts that are on the capital forecast, help us understand what other priorities might be coming forward in the relatively near future in terms of upgrades to Town Hall.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Back in 2017 or 2016, there was a project started by the then Administration to rethink Town Hall in its entirety. There was a proposal for a handicapped entrance in the back of the building but, unfortunately, it takes everyone from the back parking lot to the basement and then they go into the building through an elevator. It's not really a great way of telling our handicapped population how we treat them. You have to go into the basement. Everybody else can come in the front door. I still have a roll of plans on that. There's a number of other things on that but, in general, it was put together in two parts. Phase one of that plan, which, by the way, costs \$6 million in today's dollars, would be to address all of the ADA work within Town Hall first and then go to a space utilization project where we could reconfigure room 201 where we meet for Board of Finance; we would reconfigure the community theater downstairs which, by the way, would be necessary anyway with any space utilization change. In order to change this space, we need to move everybody over here. So, that is basically the two general buckets. There was an ADA project first and then a space utilization next. We took a look at those plans again. That was 2017. It's a different world now. Maybe we could address the ADA problems first as much as we can. So, part of the envisionment is to take that ramp which is non-conforming to today's standards for ADA and either replace it with a longer ramp which architecturally we can fit into the building without doing a lot of damage or things that would be offensive or take the ramp out altogether and install a lift there to come from the parking lot level up to the doorway. The life idea would be part of the \$1 million ARPA project that we have on the books in the potential ARPA projects. In addition, we would take the parking lot that is on the wrong side of the road and put it where the ramp is so, if you are handicapped, you can get out of the car, and we would make it a little bit more level. Right now it is about six percent sideways so that you can pull around the corner, park right there and without crossing the road get into the lift and get into the building. That's one ADA feature. It utilizes the space over there without a lot of building reconfiguration which saves a lot of money that was represented by the installation of a new stairwell on the back side of the building. That's where the handicap ramp would be going through my office and Gary's office. I'd give up my office if it worked well but it didn't work very well. The other things that were included were ADA requirements that have come up over the past couple of years: A non-gender bathroom which we don't have in Town Hall. We are supposed to have at least one. The plan showed it going in 201. We're going to try to find a better place for it. There is always the concept of taking the Community Theater, which is right underneath us, and utilizing that as a conference area because we pretty much lose 201 because of the reconfiguration plans. There are a lot of other details. I think a lot of the work would happen here in the auditorium. We are supposed to have two or three or four spaces for wheelchairs including one up front here. If we are having an RTM meeting dedicated to RTM members up front, someday, you may have someone in a wheelchair and we'd need a spot up front. We're not allowed to put everybody in the back. According to the

rules, we are supposed to integrate those spaces. We are supposed to have a way of getting up to the stage whether that be through a staircase or be in the front. A lot of little things like that add up and there is going to be some structural work on that. The problem is we have so many projects this spring, we haven't gotten to that. That's a fairly good-sized project. We have to rethink it again. But, the pillars and the portico have already been thought out very, very well. That is something we can get started on and there isn't really a big problem with maintaining access through that entrance while we're doing the work. That's basically when we get to it, we will get that down on paper and we're hoping to bring that down. I think our ARPA request is about \$1 million. So, we are hoping to bring that cost from what is now looking like \$6 million and bring it down to the \$1 million range and reduce the scope of the project. Does that answer your question?

Ms. Schneeman:

Yes. Thank you. I was going to ask you about the \$1 million ARA request, if there was a specific request in mind. You kind of answered that question. It doesn't sound like this is an either or situation. That if we were not to approve the money for the columns that money would be available to do some of this other work. It's more a question of those ADA upgrades kind of converging on being ready for prime time, ready for us to consider. I think you've heard a lot of support from a lot of folks on the RTM to try to get that work done and I've always appreciated it. I have to say the sensitivity and the focus that you have on ADA compliance issues, just an encouragement to move forward with those because one of the things you've pointed out is that those requirements can change over time so the longer we wait, the tougher those requirements could be. Another small question, you said that the SHPO grant would come with a lot of requirements. The fact that the building is on the Historic Register, I assume that any requirements that come with that would be considered by the architects in planning this project but I'm wondering what restrictions come with just the fact that it is on the Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Ratkiewich:

The building itself is on the Register so the architectural features are considered historic. Mainly the front, as you look up from Myrtle Avenue is unique. Not that many buildings that are left look like this. The back side of this auditorium is sort of unimpressive but let's say we were to change these windows in the auditorium. We would probably have to go through SHPO and ask them but if I want to reconfigure the parking lot out back and want to put three more spaces in or I want to change a handicap space over here on the side, I can't do that. I have to go to SHPO. So, anything that we do if we take that grant locks this property down to something that we have to go to SHPO for, every time we do anything; whereas, most of the other SHPO requirements are on the architectural features on the building envelope not so much the fields in the back or the parking spaces or the site, itself or the inside of the building.

Jimmy Izzo, district 3:

We should really stick to the agenda. It's about the columns. The ADA requirements, we'll have a separate meeting on that. I don't think we should take the RTM meeting and make it a *Let's Make A Deal* and change things around. The committees have worked hard on these appropriations. Pete has worked hard. Let's stick to the columns.

If you're not in favor of it, don't vote for it. Let's stick to that tonight please. So, I am voting for it. They need to be done. Let's get on with it.

Mr. Gold:

In trying to decide whether I am in favor of the columns, I have a question for you, Pete. You mentioned all these other ADA issues and all these other things. What's the timing of that? You said what they are but are we going to do them this year? Next year? Next decade?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

On the ARPA funds, the \$8.4 million came in two tranches. The first was \$4.2 million and the second was \$4.2 million. Because the plans aren't done for Town Hall, I believe Town Hall is in the second tranche. The second tranche comes in in 2024. I'm sorry. We receive the second tranche this year. We have to spend it by 2024 or 2025. So that's where that falls. So, the money will be received this year. Any time after that that we can get on this, that would be the schedule.

Mr. Gold:

Since we can get on this since we have the money, can we get on this before we get to the columns or no?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

Again, I have a plan for the columns, I have a spec. I have a fully developed project on the columns. I don't have that on Town Hall. I have a different project on Town Hall that costs \$6 million.

Mr. Wieser:

I don't want to cut this conversation because what happens to Town Hall is really important to all of us but it is a point that the agenda item here is the columns and it's not either/or and we are not allowed to vote on conditional things that we will approve if that happens. We are voting on the columns. We don't know for sure what will happen with the ARPA funds. We don't know for sure what will happen with the timing so...

Mr. Gold: I understand but we are talking about spending \$250,000 now.

Rachel Cohn, district 8:

I think what I'm hearing in the room and what many of us are struggling with perhaps a lack of holistic picture about what the tradeoffs are. To spend money on columns or not to spend money on columns depends on what the other items are that we're considering. We can circumscribe the conversation to Town Hall, what are the projects and priorities? We can circumscribe it more largely to town-owned facilities to other topics. I think what some of us are struggling with is the piecemeal nature by which some of these budget requests are coming to us. It's not to suggest that there has not been thoughtful planning. It's that the people in this room who are on the receiving end of budget requests might not have visibility to what that is. For us to make quicker, better decisions on the topic at hand, I think it might be helpful for a more holistic picture of a more broadly circumscribed project to be presented with the dollar request at hand, in this case the columns as part of something with a larger picture and vision. I think that

would help people make decisions and tradeoffs. So, that's what I think this group is hungry for and may be something we can take up in future budget allocations.

Mr. Falk:

This also seems like we're doing fashion before function. We're making the building pretty in the front without actually doing any of the work. Can we do the work in the building and then go for the SHPO grant when we won't care anymore; they can have 20 years because we will have renovated the entire building. It seems like we're going to have a pretty coat of paint and still have a junky building.

Lori Church, district 9:

I voted against this in committee and I came here with an open mind but I do still feel uncertain about approving it because I'm married to a builder and a lot of times if you change plans after you've started it will increase costs or basically screw things up. Hopefully, that wouldn't happen. I'm not saying it would but if we're doing some work in here eventually, I think it's important to have a more holistic, sort of what you were saying, but not financially, but just in terms of the plans themselves. I'm not completely convinced that the plans you are asking for tonight will not be affected when we do more work in the future to be ADA compliant in terms of ramps and so forth. I know right now it's the portico and the columns but since we don't have a specific plan about what we're going to do in the front, I also feel worried that that would be affected. The second part is that I don't feel tonight that it has been completely said that the structural integrity is fine for the moment. I know that there is concern for the future but, as of right now, it's still structurally sound. So, it's aesthetic. So, I just wanted to say I still am reluctant to vote for this tonight.

Mr. Braunstein:

I would like to yield my time to the First Selectwoman who perhaps has some say in her vision for all these issues. We can get at some of the issues Ms. Cohn was looking to explore, a holistic approach to ADA compliance and not just the façade itself.

First Selectwoman Jennifer Tooker:

Thank you Seth, I think... In answer to your strategy questions, when we talk about capital expenditures, our strategy document is our five year capital forecast. That is the town's strategy document on where we think we need to spend money from a capital standpoint going forward. It's a living document. It changes constantly for all sorts of reasons, notwithstanding \$100 million on Long Lots that we're looking at that last year at this time, we had no idea that was on the docket. That is why that document is a living document. It changes. Our priorities change as new things come onto it. How our appropriation process works, by Charter, is that each appropriation comes before the Board of Finance and the RTM, yourselves, on a per appropriation basis. There are other towns that handle appropriations on capital expenditures very differently. They will have a full year in their fiscal year and they'll say, 'These are the eight things we want to spend capital money on.' That is not how the town of Westport's capital appropriations process works. You guys have the opportunity to say yes or no to every single appropriation we put in front of you. We do not put them together. That's not how our Charter works. It's an incredibly important piece of the process that you guys actually get to take a look at each and every single capital expenditure, ask all the questions you

want both at the Board of Finance level, you have that opportunity in your committees and you have that opportunity at the full RTM. That's how our process works here. If we want to talk specifically about this building, it's complicated. Just to be very clear, we have put aside through the capital forecast and through the ARPA dollars, we have put aside \$1 million to upgrade the ADA issues in this building. That sits in the capital forecast in the '2023 year. So, when you ask what our strategy is on this building, we have every intention in this fiscal year to better understand the ADA needs and upgrades and better understand the costs associated with that and the timeline associated with that from a construction standpoint and a rehab standpoint and when we have all of that information we will come to you as we must by Charter to have you scrutinize and look at that spend. What you have before you tonight is not if we do this, we don't do that. Be very, very clear, that is not the case tonight. What you are seeing tonight is something that is 10 years in the making. We know we can tackle the issue at hand from the standpoint of rehabbing what we have out front, our columns, respecting the historical nature of the building. We are ready to go and we are not saying we not come before you with a \$1 million request for ADA appropriations. That is not what we're saying tonight. I do want to be super clear. The blueprint is, it is in the capital forecast for the 2023 fiscal year which is started five days ago. Can I answer any other questions?

Mr. Braunstein:

I don't need any other answers because that answer couldn't have been any clearer. I appreciate you providing that overview. I would go back to the point that this is not mutually exclusive. This has been a well thought out approach. We have already invested money in a study. Again, I encourage you to take a look on the way out of the building. This is work that needs to get done and, while it might not be structural today, the more disrepair occurs, the higher the likelihood that this becomes a structural issue and instead of spending \$250,000, it could become a much bigger issue somewhere down the road. I think the First Selectwoman provided a very clear path towards addressing what are very important issues with respect to ADA. It's clearly on the agenda and clearly will be addressed so I personally am going to be voting in favor of this expenditure this evening.

Jack Klinge, district 7:

I was going to say the First Selectwoman and I have had this discussion over the last few months. What you heard tonight is exactly what I heard in May and June. The Administration, along with its Department Heads, sets the priorities for our capital projects in this town. You can read about them in the five year capital forecast. If you want a copy, drop by Gary's office and pick one up. There is also a list of projects that are prioritized for the ARPA funds, \$8.4 million plus dollars. That updated list is also in the Finance Office. I urge you to go pick it up there or maybe Pete has one at Public Works. I have been down this road for a while seeing what kind of influence this body or a Long Range Planning Committee of this body can have to affect some of these priorities and projects. My understanding is that we can suggest but we do not make the decision on priorities for projects. We evaluate them and then vote on the appropriation. Maybe down the road, we can have another conversation in our committee and talk about other ways to do long range planning in the context of the town's strategy and operating criteria. I look forward to meeting with all of you on my committee sometime

later this month in person but, for now, what you heard from Ms. Tooker is exactly what I have been hearing. That is how the town sets its priorities. That is how their Charter dictates that we discuss, evaluate and appropriate funds for those projects.

Don O'Day, district 3:

I certainly want to thank Jen for a thoughtful answer to Seth's question. Seth had a very good idea to get that said. I think it was said exactly right. During the committee meetings, there was a lot of discussion about this. Nancy Kail summarized it at the end. It was a good discussion but I think the important point that was brought up was this evening by our Moderator: No linkage. The issue can't be whether or not the rear door is closed for security reasons while the library is fully opened. There is a reason for that which we should all embrace and that is safety. I am absolutely voting for this. The report that said the columns are still in pretty good shape, that was from 2020. I got to learn a lot over the last few years about deterioration, things that look okay but they're not. That column, looking at Town Hall on the left, it doesn't have a base. It looks bad. Should we be spending money on something that's just aesthetics? Probably not. But I'm telling you it's not just aesthetics. It looks bad and it's probably not going to hold up very much longer. We should stop trying to add things to contingencies. Let's do it. There are four ways I look at spending money: Is it planned and needed? Is it unplanned and needed? Is it planned and probably not needed? Or is it unplanned and definitely not needed? That last one is a definite no. This is planned and somewhere in between needed and not needed right away. To me, that's a yes. I think it's needed. This is a separate item for columns. Let's not attach anything to it. Let's just go for it.

Lauren Karpf, district 7:

I agree that it's hard looking at things in a vacuum. Unfortunately, that's the nature of the beast here. My biggest frustration in my personal time in the RTM is not taking care of facilities and seeing appropriations turned down, especially on the education side. Don't do the windows because this is going to be done in three years. We might have to redo this or that. And we end up with a Coleytown Middle and a Long Lots. For me, I think it is really important to take care of our facilities. It should be a priority and I'm going to vote for this.

Karen Kramer, district 5:

I definitely think we should do it. Having had my foot in a cast and trying to get in this building which we do have to address ADA compliance but it was very hard. I did get up the stairs and those columns look like they're ready to fall down. It's part of the building and it's part of what really makes it special. This does need to get down. We'll get to the other things and I feel very comfortable with what Jen said and even Mr. Ratkiewich. Let's do this because when I was getting up there with my foot in a cast I had plenty of time to look down and those columns do not look good at all. That is important for the structure and also the beauty. That counts as well. I hope you'll all vote for it.

Nancy Kail, district 9:

I support this project. I supported it in committee and will support it tonight but Don alluded to something I said in committee that I guess bears repeating. I also appreciate Dick's and Lori's no vote and the opportunity to discuss this tonight in the public so that people know that RTM members care about other expenditures in this building and

elsewhere and other priorities that the RTM has for this building. This was our opportunity and I'm also grateful that the First Selectwoman was here to hear what our thoughts are on this building and what we think the priorities are here.

Mr. Lowenstein:

The last bite of the apple...Getting back to the original subject which is the columns, From start to finish, how long will this take in your estimation?

Mr. Ratkiewich:

My guess is, like any other construction project, this will be one construction season. The construction season generally starts at the beginning of April and ends at the end of November.

Mr. Lowenstein:

I ask the question for one reason. That is, if we could do all the columns at one time and only open the rear entrance for people to use that, maybe the project could be done faster and we could save money.

By roll call vote, the motion passes 24-2-2.

Opposed: Lowenstein, Church,

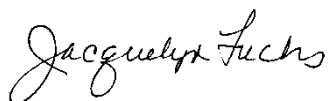
Abstain: Falk, Cohen

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey M. Dunkerton

Town Clerk



by Jacquelyn Fuchs

ATTENDANCE: July 5

DIST.	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	NOTIFIED MODERATOR	LATE/ LEFT EARLY
1	Matthew Mandell		X	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	X	
	Jimmy Izzo	X			
	Don O'Day	X			
4	James Bairaktaris	X			
	Andrew J. Colabella		X	X	
	Noah Hammond	X			
	Jeff Wieser	X			
5	Peter Gold	X			
	Karen Kramer	X			
	Richard Lowenstein	X			
	Claudia Shaum	X			
6	Candace Banks		X	X	
	Jessica Bram	X			
	Seth Braunstein	X			
	Cathy Talmadge		X	X	
7	Brandi Briggs	X			
	Lauren Karpf	X			
	Jack Klinge	X			
	Ellen Lautenberg	X			
8	Wendy Batteau		X	X	
	Rachel Cohn	X			
	Lisa Newman	X			
	Stephen Shackelford		X	X	
9	Lori Church	X			
	Nancy Kail	X			
	Sal Liccione	X			
	Kristin Schneeman	X			
Total		28	8		

Roll Call Vote #5: Town Hall Columns

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			24	2	2