

RTM Special Meeting  
July 26, 2022

**The Call**

1. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Fire Chief, to approve an appropriation of \$195,000.00 to the Capital and Non-Recurring Account to purchase and outfit two (2) new hybrid or all-electric full-size SUV's to replace the 2007 and 2009 Ford Expeditions.
2. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Fire Chief, to approve an appropriation of \$1,885,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the purchase of two (2) Type 1 Fire Engines to replace both 2001 Sutphen Engines that have reached their end of life.
3. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Fire Chief, to approve an appropriation of \$145,700.00 from the Capital and Non-recurring Fund to replace the Source Capture and Diesel Extraction Systems at each Firehouse.

**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. A notice about procedures for this electronic meeting: Pursuant to Substitute House Bill 5269 as amended by House Amendment "A", there is not a physical location for this meeting. This meeting is being held electronically and live streamed on [westportct.gov](http://westportct.gov) and shown on Optimum Government Access Channel 79 and Frontier Channel 6020. Meeting materials are available at [westportct.gov](http://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](mailto:RTMmailinglist@westportct.gov), which goes to all RTM members. These emails will not be read aloud during the meeting.

Tonight's invocation will be delivered by our Jimmy Izzo.

Invocation, Jimmy Izzo, district 3:

Good evening everyone. To my fellow RTM members and guests and everyone out there in TV land, thank you for the privilege and honor to give an invocation for tonight's meeting. It's pretty interesting to look at the screen and do an invocation but I'll give it my best shot. As we all know and are witnessing in our world today that our democracy seems to be very fragile and not exactly about compromise. It is more about winning and losing. It seems to forget that *we the people* is what it's all about. It's about our constitution. It's about who we are. It's for the good of the people that we get together. Our RTM is a great idea and a great body that exemplifies what is meant by *we the*

*people*. We are 36 member that do things without prejudice. We come together as one, go over town situations, town problems, town budgets. Yes, we get together. Yes, we sometimes have very long meetings. We are the only group that does that. The reason we have long meetings is because we are a democracy. Every opinion and every matter counts. Every question is important whether we find the question to be tedious, it sometimes leads into something more important. As we witnessed with this current RTM, we had a situation at one point where we were all talking about the ARPA money. That led to more planning on our part, asking questions about what we were going to do with upcoming budgets, upcoming situations where our Finance Committee Chair Seth Braunstein took from Jack Klinge's questions about planning and ARPA. We got together to discuss the future, how we have to tackle things going forward. The great thing is we had that discussion. Many people don't have the discussion. We do. We are non-partisan for a reason. We are non-partisan because our interest is the people of Westport. I've found in my 12 years that some of the great work that we get done that helps this town move forward. Cathy Talmadge and Liz Milwe came to us years ago with the idea of Wakeman Town Farm. It was this body that made it happen. Mathew Mandel came forward with the moving of the Gunn House. It was his effort with us that made that happen. We are the body that moves and shakes the community and never forget the importance of the roles we play. I just want to say in closing that I am proud of everything that we do and understand that we are truly about the people of Westport. Let's keep our focus. Let's keep our civil discourse and let's always keep debating with passion and compassion.

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you Mr. Izzo. Very well said. When we have visiting invocation speakers, I advise them that they are welcome to stay. They might have something better to do this evening. You do not have something better to do this evening. We look forward to your staying with us all evening. Thank you.

We now have our zoom-era Mandell Montage Pledge of Allegiance. Thanks to Matt Mandell for creating this video.

The minutes of the May budget meetings have been submitted by our Secretary, Jackie Fuchs. During her sick leave, she is continuing to work on the minutes from our June and July 5 meetings. Jackie is at home, always happy to hear from us, and is working on those minutes which will be available in the near future. As they are available please let us know if there are corrections. If you later find any corrections, please inform Jackie Fuchs, Jeff Dunkerton, or me.

### **Announcements:**

I will lead off the announcements by recognizing that we lost a former RTM Member this month. Lois Schine passed away on July 7. Lois served as the longtime head of the Westport Chamber of Commerce and was on the RTM from 1997 - 2015 and then again from 2018 to 2019. Many of us served with Lois who was a wise collaborative colleague. We will all miss her. I'd like to ask a moment of silence for Ms. Schine.

I would also thank you all for being available for this special meeting in the middle of the summer. Chief Kronick will tell us of the need for tonight's meeting, and to ensure that there was a quorum I called for a zoom meeting. We will resume our in-person meetings going forward when we meet again in September. So, thanks for being here.

I am told that Town Hall has received a number of phishing, spam emails on the town email server. Please be on the lookout for suspicious emails on that account and let the Town Clerk's office know of any suspicious emails.

### **RTM Announcements**

Jack Klinge, district 7:

The Long Range Planning Committee was supposed to meet in person in room 201 tomorrow night but since I have been dancing around COVID tests since yesterday morning, I now have two positives and two negatives, the last one being a negative this morning from a clinic, we have changed that meeting to a zoom. If you need the numbers, contact me or Jeff Dunkerton. The meeting has been posted as a zoom meeting. The agenda continues to be the same. We are going to review the 2017 Town Plan, the Five Year Capital Forecast and ARPA funding and try to figure out how to combine those projects and prioritize them. I just found out this week, I went to the P&Z and got the report on the progress review of the 2017 Town Plan. I guess, not surprisingly, there hasn't been any formal review of that plan. So we are going to be looking at the 2017 Town Plan with all the items by category and find out how we're doing and keep a score card and balance it against the Five Year Capital Forecast and the ARPA funds. Also, we'll be spending time on Golden Shadows in light of the fact that we have an upcoming ARPA project to upgrade Baron's South. In my opinion, we really can't do that until we decide how we're handling Golden Shadows. I'll see you all at 7 o'clock on zoom tomorrow evening.

Matthew Mandell, district 1:

Jimmy, thank you so much for your invocation and the shout out for Kemper Gunn House. It's still there and a shining example of historic preservation. Lois Schine, interesting enough, Lois and I sort of have a parallel course in some respects. She was the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce for 16 years. I haven't gotten there yet. She was an RTM member for 20 years. I haven't gotten there yet but my goal is to get there because Lois was a great example of what an RTM member was. Interesting enough, in the idea that we're nonpartisan, when I first met Lois and she started telling me about the RTM, when I was just a wee fry on the RTM, I thought she was a Republican. It took me 12 years to find out she was a Democrat. That was so great about the RTM because we don't know, unless you're really looking, to see who's Republican or Democrat because the most important thing is that we see that Westport comes first. Lois did that all of her time here as the RTM and the Chamber of Commerce but, again, her most shining achievement was Winslow Park. She was the one who spearheaded saving that open space and making it our Central Park for Westport. Imagine if it was a mall. It was going to be a Bloomingdale's. But it's not a Bloomingdale's. It is a great park. We have dogs that run around on it. Dog Festivals happen on it. It is her shining example of what she did for Westport and she will always

be remembered for it. Thanks for the moment of silence for Lois. She was a really great member of the RTM.

Yesterday, Selectwoman Tooker and I helped cut the ribbon for the Old Mill Grocery. That is another example of people working together to save something of value for our community. Those of us in District 1 love it. Those of us in the rest of the town can come down to the beach and partake of it. It saved a historic house. It saved a historic business and Ian Warburg and Jim Hood should be thanked and also a member of our own, Chris Tait, was behind all that as well. So, thank you Chris as a member of the RTM for making that happen. Thank you Jen for coming out for the ribbon cutting and anyone who wants a great bacon, egg and cheese, that's the place to go.

Mr. Izzo: Get the double. The double is phenomenal.

Mr. Mandell:

Last thing, a real announcement, the Slice of Saugatuck is coming on September 10. We are putting it all together. It is the tenth year of the celebration of everything Saugatuck. It took 12 years to get to the tenth one but you'll hear all about it when we have our September meeting. Tell everybody. The bouncy houses will be there. COVID is still there but we feel we can have the bouncy houses. Seven bands will be playing all at the same time and all of the restaurants will be serving some kind of tasty food so come on out to a Slice of Saugatuck. See you then.

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you Mr. Mandell and thank you for those additional comments about Ms. Schine. She really deserves those comments and we really appreciate them.

Seth Braunstein, district 6:

I'd like to echo the admiration for Lois. My time here, she has been a shining example of someone who has given so much to the community. Having a chance to hear Matt recount some of high points and a chance to read her obituary really just brought home what a remarkable member of this community she was for such a long time. I'd also like to extend my very best wishes to Jackie Fuchs and Cathy Talmadge this evening.

I just wanted to spend a couple of minutes relaying an overview of a meeting the Finance Committee had back on July 13. This isn't a formal agenda item. At some point in the medium term, these will become agenda items. I just felt it would be helpful to give everyone a high level summary of what we learned and what was accomplished at this recent meeting. The RTM Finance Committee was able to get together with various members of the Board of Finance, members of the Board of Education and Gary Conrad on behalf of the town leadership as well. The point of the meeting was to just begin a dialog on some of the larger projects that are going to be planned and how the projects will impact the town's finances. All parties involved in the process want to make sure we are starting as early as possible to understand the full scale and scope of the anticipated expenditures and be in a position where the implications for the town's finances and debt levels are well understood by all the different constituents. The goal is

to make sure that there is a holistic understanding of all the contemplated projects and how each individual priority will fit into the bigger picture, all while making sure the town's fiduciary responsibility is exercised. So, what did we learn? I would absolutely to encourage you to look at the presentation that Sherry Gordon and the Board of Finance shared with us which I'll forward to everybody a bit later this evening so you can see it. I'd also encourage you to listen to the actual audio recording of the meeting. It's probably about 2 ½ hours in total but the conversation we had with the Board of Education and the Board of Finance began around the 47 minute mark. The first 47 minutes were spent on the agenda items you are going to hear this evening. So, what we learned is that Westport has actually updated the process around which the town and the Board of Education are going to address the capital planning process by moving this from the spring to the fall so it's now going to occur in October beginning this fall. Frankly, this is an effort to update or solidify both the town's and the Board of Ed's capital forecast for the next five years. There is also an intent to review the capital forecast more frequently and a desire to have taxpayers be as well informed about anticipated spending as possible and to provide them with a voice as to how the capital forecast is going to be structured. We were presented an overview of the town's current debt level and heard some historical context for the upcoming expenditures versus previous periods of similarly high spending by the town. This included an estimate of anticipated debt levels that would need to be incurred should these large capital projects be initiated, how that would impact debt per capita in the town and the roles that the Board of Finance and RTM would actually play in conjunction with the town's Finance Department moving forward. So, our conversation included a fairly detailed discussion of some of the underlying assumptions that are being used to make these debt projections; how inflation and higher than anticipated interest rates are going to impact actual project costs going forward. Clearly, debt financing is becoming more costly versus what we faced in the last five to 10 years. Then, what is the correct debt level for the town? And how does that fit within the context of rating agency requirements and what an acceptable tax burden would be in the future. I would say a very healthy conversation that made reference to the debt level of other towns sort of on a relative basis, also relative to our own past debt levels and how the pro forma debt per capital would be increasing in all likelihood as we move forward through this list of agenda and priority items. The first step here is that the First Selectman is going to empanel a special building committee as laid out in the Town Charter to help determine the way forward on the Long Lots building renovation versus new build decision. The Board of Education expects that after all their consultations with their own consulting firm, Colliers, and with the formed building committee that the funding request for the chosen path forward for Long Lots will be presented to the RTM roughly in April of 2023. Wrapping all of this up, I characterize our meeting on July 13 as a great first step in what is certain to be an important ongoing discussion that we're all going to be participating in along with the town leadership moving forward. No decision was made. It was just an open and frank discussion. But the time was well spent laying out some of the initial expectations and timings for the next step in this process. I thought you all might have liked to get a sense for what we did. Again, I will share the presentation and I encourage everyone to listen to the audio of that meeting.

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you Mr. Braunstein. To echo those comments, we talked about the unusual nature of a report during the announcements but this was an important enough meeting as a first step to what is going to be a big step for the RTM to undertake our part of the process which is ultimately approving the funds but I think between now and next April, it is important for all of us to be very aware of these big expenditures going on, to pay attention and make sure our constituents are paying attention. So, thank you for the heads up. It was a great introductory meeting and there will be many, many more.

And now to our second member who has tested positive this week for COVID, Jessica Bram.

Jessica Bram, district 6:

Yes, COVID positive but not having too bad a time of it. I have to join my colleagues in taking note of the loss of Lois Schine. I can't imagine Westport without Lois Schine. She has been so much a part of our community and given in so many ways. She was gracious and self-effacing, never calling attention to herself. She gave me my first job in Westport and I also probably know a lot more about Lois Schine than a lot of you because she wrote her memoirs in my creative writing workshop so I know a lot of the those stories. One of the favorites was that she graduated number one in her class in Pratt Engineering School and when she was at a job interview they said 'We would really love to hire you but we don't hire women.' It was a real Lois story. I will miss her very much. We have lost so many people this past year who were so much a part of our town and I really miss them and Lois is right up there in the vanguard.

Mr. Wieser: Thank you Ms. Bram. It has been a bad year for former RTM members.

Wendy Batteau, district 8:

I also wanted to tip my hat publically to Lois. She was in my district. She was, in any ways, a mentor to me. We worked together on district issues and, more importantly, not more importantly but likewise, open space issues in particular. It was incredible what she managed to do with the park but she also created the Leonard Schine Park Arboretum and was an unrelenting force for saving open space. She also had it in her mind and portfolio to have the town purchase certain properties or to use properties that had been donated and create open space on them, create pocket parks of some sort and I hope we can commit ourselves to doing something like that also. I hope we won't let the importance of open space go with her loss. She was just a wonderful person, having served 16 years with her. We got to know each other quite well. Some of the things that Jessica said were just so typical of her life. Secondly, I want to thank Seth for the report. I went to that meeting and I would hope that in addition to the great report that Seth just gave that we could have the Board of Finance meet with the whole RTM to elaborate on some of the things that they said. One of the points that struck me was currently the town's debt is \$100 million, roughly a little bit more. That's about \$6,000 per capita. Within the next five or 10 years, they expect that number to triple to over \$300 million. That's going to cause us to make some interesting choices.

Mr. Wieser:

Ms. Batteau, I'd rather we not get too deep into that right now. I think we've gotten everybody's awareness and if we could keep those details to a subsequent meeting.

Ms. Batteau:

I'll keep it to a subsequent meeting but I'm not talking about an egg sandwich so let me just say one more thing. The thing that I wanted to say was I hope that rather than having us presented with a ticket in April if the committees could get together with some of the town people who are having these projects so that we could study them beforehand to echo what you said, Jeff.

Mr. Wieser: Very much agreed. Thank you.

Ms. Milwe:

Wakeman Town Farm big event of the year is September 10. We're changing it up this year. It won't be a sit down dinner. There will be lots of food vendors and then we're going to gather in the tent. There will be a great band and we'll all dance. I hope you all come and if you don't want to come as a guest, volunteer. I wanted to say something about Lois Schine. When I first joined the RTM, my mom looked at the list of everyone on the RTM, she played tennis with Lois and she said, 'Get to know Lois. She's a business woman, she's an engineer, she's brilliant.' So, I took her advice. She's always been my mentor and she became a very close friend of mine. I'm really going to miss her.

Louis Mall, district 2:

I just wanted to join the chorus in singing the praise of Lois Schine. She was an amazing woman that was first in class in so many ways. I just wanted to say that I will miss Lois and the wisdom she bestowed upon us all. Rest in peace Lois.

Mr. Wieser:

I hope her family will see this or see a recording of this. We will miss her.

We have the one upcoming committee meeting tomorrow. We won't be having an August meeting. We will be having a September meeting so we will have some committee meetings in August. Keep an eye out for those.

Our next regularly scheduled RTM meeting will be in person in Town Hall on Tuesday, September 6 at 7:30 so we look forward to seeing you then. We are without Jackie Fuchs who is at home, hopefully feeling better and Jeff Dunkerton couldn't be here so we are going to mix things up a little bit. Deputy Moderator Lauren Karpf is going to take the roll and I will be checking her so we'll still have a duplicate. I am going to read the calls and she is going to continue to read the resolutions.

**There were 29 members present. Absent: Tait, Keenan, Meiers Schatz, Hammond, Gold, Talmadge, Cohn.**

Mr. Wieser:

If you arrive, please let us know and if you leave, please let us know so that we can keep track of the votes.

**The Moderator read item #1 of the call - To approve an appropriation of \$195,000.00 to the Capital and Non-Recurring Account to purchase and outfit two (2) new hybrid or all-electric full-size SUV's to replace the 2007 and 2009 Ford Expeditions.**

### **Presentation**

Chief Michael Kronick, Westport Fire Department:

I apologize for pulling you all out of your summer schedules with family and friends. The second request tonight is the more important one but starting with the first, what I'm looking to do, as you can see, this is part of our normal fleet replacement to replace two older vehicles to maintain our existing fleet. The goal is to try to get to a more green platform, whether it's an all-electric or hybrid vehicle. That is our goal. I'll show two slides related to this. The 2009 and 2012 vehicles are the ones being removed. The 2007 was actually disposed of a few years ago. Its replacement is expected to be here sometime later this year. The plan is to purchase an all-electric or hybrid vehicle. At the moment, the only full sized electric vehicle that is filling our needs is the Ford F150 Lightning but I am being told by the dealers even if we ordered it today, they would expect us to pay full price today and expect delivery of it sometime late 2025 which is not really useful to us at this moment. The amount we are requesting is enough to purchase and outfit two vehicles paying retail price because there is no State contracting and there are no deals to be had with electric vehicles. If we do place the order now, we are expecting 2024 vehicles. What I have here is a spreadsheet with the costing of the units. We cannot get the F150 Lightning or the hybrid product on any State contract. The State will not be bidding the contract until the end of the year 2023 so that's why it reflects such a higher price than the other options on the list. What we are really down to now is the difference between product selection and availability. The manufacturers are just starting to roll out full sized platform electric vehicles. The problem is they are incredibly popular and they are not offering any deals and there is no incentive for them, the dealers or manufacturers to get them to government for a lower price. That's kind of where we're at. I guess the best thing to do now is to field questions related to that.

### **Committees report**

Finance and Public Protection Committees, Don O'Day, district 3:

Chief Kronick pretty much summed everything up. On July 13, the RTM Finance Committee along with the RTM Public Protection Committee met. We received a report from Chief Kronick. The request of \$195,000 is an up to number. So, if vehicles other than the F150 Lightning are selected, it will be somewhat less than the \$195,000. Also, if we are successful in purchasing the F150 Lightning vehicle, there will be another



charging station included in that in addition to the outfitting. A couple of questions came up. One was a question about the charging station. One came up about the ability to sell the older vehicles. They were deemed as not worth very much so they were just going to salvage them. Don O'Day move; Nancy Kail seconded for the Finance Committee. For Public Protection, it was Karen Kramer motion and Dick Lowenstein seconded. For RTM Finance, it was unanimous, 5-0, and for Public Protection it was also unanimous, 9-0.

**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 Board of Finance and a request by the Fire Chief, the sum of \$195,000.00 from the Capital and Non-Recurring Account to purchase and outfit two (2) new hybrid or all-electric full-size SUV's to replace the 2007 and 2009 Ford Expeditions is hereby appropriated.

Mr. Wieser:

I think it is appropriate to ask by unanimous consent that we change the resolution to read 2009 and 2012 Ford Expeditions. I am assuming we have no problem with that. [There are no objections.]

**Members of the RTM**

Mr. Mandell:

It's a sad state of affairs when a town wants to do something environmentally friendly and things are just behind the curve. That's what I want to say on that part. Gary, you're on this call. Just for edification, this appropriation and the rest of the appropriations here are not in the budget but where is this money coming from to pay for them? Since we heard what Seth was talking about, all the expenditures coming forth, if you could just educate us, where is the money to pay for all these Fire Department issues coming from?

Gary Conrad, Finance Director:

This money is coming from the capital nonrecurring account. There is approximately \$9 million in that account. We would not put a bond on this. It is not significant enough to do so. And, of course, the life of the asset doesn't meet the requirements for a bond.

Mr. Mandell:

Gary, do we replenish the money in that account each year? A certain amount goes into it?

Mr. Conrad: Yes. It's about \$2 million.

Mr. Mandell:

I just wanted to make sure people understood where this money was coming from, money that has been allocated over the years for this kind of project. We do have a lot of things coming forward which is what Seth is talking about but I'm in favor of this as I

will be with the rest of the appropriations for the Fire Department. But we do need to be cognizant of our spending. We have been pretty good at spending and things are coming down in the future that are really going to make things tight even for a town such as Westport. As Seth said, we should all be listening to the Board of Finance, understanding where we're going in the future and picking and choosing what we're going to spend on as we move forward.

Karen Kramer, district 5:

We have a ton of expenses coming down. But the one place we absolutely don't want to skimp is a fire truck. I've been there with other members of the RTM. We need fire trucks and God forbid we need them and don't have them. This one, I'm 100 percent behind.

**By show of hands, the revised resolution is approved unanimously 29-0.**

**The Moderator read item #2 of the call - To approve an appropriation of \$1,885,000.00 along with bond and note authorization to the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the purchase of two (2) Type 1 Fire Engines to replace both 2001 Sutphen Engines that have reached their end of life.**

## **Presentation**

Chief Kronick:

This is the item that has a little bit a sense of urgency. We were planning to replace one of our engines this year as part of a capital replacement project and the second one would be purchased in the following fiscal year. What we had done over the last decade was any time we were buying engines, we would buy them in back to back years. We would bid it and receive a bid that included a price for the second unit the following year. That worked very well for us. As we know, supply chain issues have become a big issue and the fire truck market is being hit very hard. The price escalation has gotten to the point where I felt the need to bring it sooner rather than later and we need to do a purchase. Right now, most manufacturers are giving contracts with pricing only good for 15 days. You can see why that is incredibly difficult to move through government to make those purchases. Their costs have gone up astronomically. We just had a 10 percent increase on July 1 and we have been told to expect a four to five percent increase on the first of every month going forward. It is just a unique time in the industry and it has a lot to do with the sourcing of materials because the materials used to build these fire trucks is from all around the world and they are brought here to manufacture. This screen explains what we're looking to do. We are looking to replace two 2001 Sutphen fire engines. Currently they run as our space or reserve engines. We maintain a fleet of six of them and the two oldest are always kept as reserve units. One of them has 133,000 miles. The other has 122,000 miles. But it is not so much the miles as the hours on it. A little over 12,000 hours on both of these units equals about a half million miles over the road. What that is telling me is it's not that they are no longer serviceable for current use but, at some point in the near future, I'm going to have to put a significant amount of money into these vehicles to keep them running. It's not a safety

issue. It's more of a motor issue. Diesel motors after about a half million miles need to be pulled and replaced. It's just the reality of the situation and looking at a \$50,000 expense per unit to do that, it's a little pricey and it doesn't have that much value. One of them is also going to need a pump rebuild and one of them we are going to be scavenging parts to keep one of our new engines up and running. The reality is right now they are only 21 years old. The manufacturer is giving us build times of between 400 and 600 days. So, as much as we are talking about replacing a 21 year old vehicle, the reality is we are replacing a 22 to 23 year old vehicle realistically. And when I look forward, what do the vehicles look like at that time? They may not be serviceable and it wouldn't be worth it to put that kind of money into a vehicle. This is a picture of the two vehicles. They still get used. The reason we still maintain them is that they get pressed into service quite a bit. When one of the other fire pumpers is out of service for maintenance or mechanical breakdowns, that's when these vehicles are placed in service. Also, when we send units to other fire departments to help, which is part of our mutual aid agreements, we press these vehicles to service to fill in for that vehicle which is out of town. Also, during large storm events, whether it is Hurricane Sandy or Tropical Storm Isaias, we bring in additional staff and we need a vehicle to put them on and these are the vehicles we use. Somebody had asked, adjusted for inflation what is the cost of these engines in 2022 dollars? You can see I've got a list of the engines. The oldest were replaced with the 2018 and 2020 purchases. You can see in 2022 dollars what they cost us adjusting for inflation. As much as I said I want to replace them, what does the fleet look like in two years? On top of that, waiting a year to purchase either one of these units will cost about \$350,000 more. That's a really expensive cost increase and there's not much we can do about it. Also, somebody had asked what we get for the old vehicles. We did some research. In 2018 and 2020, we surplused the two vehicles we had and you can see that they only go for about \$2,500 to \$3,000. That's about \$400 less than selling them for salvage if I just drove them into a junk yard. There's not a lot of value in a 20 year old fire truck. Why now? We had originally forecast the cost a couple of years ago to be \$700,000 and \$750,000. We are trending on the high side to be about \$942,000 per unit. So, it's \$200,000 more than we had planned for. As I explained before, Marion Body Works who is the vendor we prefer to use is basically experiencing a four percent increase every month. One of the things that is making this worse is there has been a lot of industry consolidation. The number of manufacturers has dwindled down to about six major manufacturers. We are actually using a less than major manufacturer, somebody who buys a chassis from another company and does the up fitting for us and we're still hoping to be able to get that build time less than 400 days but, realistically, it's going to be between 400 and 600 days. One question I had fielded was should we be looking at other types of vehicles? As much as we should, our facilities right now do not allow us to look at too many other options. The reality is whatever long-term plans we develop, these two vehicles would fit into it and we don't have other opportunities to change how we operate in the future. That's kind of a short story there.

### **Committees report**

Finance and Public Protection Committees, Mr. Braunstein:

From the July 13 meeting, Chief Kronick did a very good job with all the details. I'll do my best not to repeat it although I will emphasize the eye opening level of inflation here that is creating the urgency. We were told \$30,000 to \$35,000 a month with the manufacturer telling us another four percent on a monthly basis. The other thing we talked about was the dimensions on these trucks. They are roughly the same, perhaps an inch or two shorter and significantly lighter so there will be no issues fitting these into all the town's fire houses. Some of the other things that were explored during our conversation included discussion of why we're not phasing it in. Most of you will get the obvious answer. Phasing it in will run the risk of an additional \$360,000 if we were to wait to do one a year. The other thing that came up was in line with what Mart asked prior to the last item. How is this paid for within the town's budget? Gary Conrad confirmed that historically these are typically bonded due to the size of the purchase and the effective life. It allows us to spread the expense over the life of the capital equipment. The question was raised if the old trucks are safe. Chief Kronick pointed out that the issue here isn't really safety, it's reliability. When you think about diesel engines, they tend to have issues on days following heavy usage so they are prone to becoming out of service. So, those were some of the additional items that were covered. For Finance, a motion was made by Noah Hammond, seconded by Nancy Kail. It passed by a unanimous 5-0 vote. For Public Works, the motion was made by Karen Kramer and seconded by Dick Lowenstein. Also, a unanimous vote 9-0.

**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 Board of Finance and a request by the Fire Chief, the sum of \$1,885,000.00 along with bond and note authorization from the Municipal Improvement Fund Account for the purchase of two (2) Type 1 Fire Engines to replace both 2001 Sutphen Engines that have reached their end of life is hereby appropriated.

**Members of the RTM – no comments**

**By show of hands, the motion passes 29-0.**

**The Moderator read item #3 of the call - To approve an appropriation of \$145,700.00 from the Capital and Non-recurring Fund to replace the Source Capture and Diesel Extraction Systems at each Firehouse.**

### **Presentation**

Deputy Chief Nick Marsan, Westport Fire Department:

One of the most significant risks to firefighters today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century outside of actually fighting fires is the hazardous vehicle exhaust emissions within the firehouse itself. Many of the chemicals that are found in diesel exhaust are known carcinogens and are recognized as such as life threatening to humans as recognized by OSHA and the World Health Organization. There has been significant evidence to show that

exposure to diesel exhaust is associated with increased risk of cancer, especially lung cancer. The Westport Fire Department has recognized this risk for many years and more than 20 years ago, long before our fellow Fire Departments in the area, recognized this risk and we were one of the first in the area to have a Source Capture and Diesel exhaust system as well as policies and procedures that educate our members and enforce the systems. For us to continue to put our employees' health as our primary concern, however, we are requesting the funds to replace the current system as it has reached its end of useful life. In the past 10 years, we have had over 65 work orders submitted to replace or repair parts for our current diesel extraction system. The frequency of being in service has increase exponentially these past few years. Our current system is pushing about 25 years. There are no longer any factory trained certified technicians to do any repairs and there is no longer any support available since the manufacturer is no longer in business. Replacement parts are no longer manufactured. We are required to purchase original parts from third party dealers at highly elevated costs. So, the new system that we have identified will be able to remove almost all exhaust emissions particles that aren't visible to the naked eye. The new system will prevent the spread of emissions throughout the firehouse including the living areas where our firefighters stay on their 24 hour shifts. The new system will be fully automated and will substantially lower our overall energy consumption because of such. I'm open to any questions you have on the issue.

### **Committees report**

Finance and Public Protection Committees, Mr. Izzo:

Chief Marsan, thank you for your presentation. We met as part of the meeting on July 13 with Finance and Public Protection. Mr. Marsan reiterated most of what I'm going to say. Mostly, this is a safety issue. It makes sense for us to not only protect our firefighters but protect the environment. The beautiful thing about this system is we are actually going to put into another part of the firehouse, the back bay, that doesn't have it right now. So, this will include and make every part of our firehouses up to speed on safety of the diesel exhaust. The committees voted unanimously to approve. For Public Protection, Andrew Colabella made the motion to vote, seconded by Candace Banks. The vote was unanimous. For Finance, the motion was made by Don O'Day, seconded by Stephen Shackelford. Unanimous vote there. So, all parties recommended approval of this appropriation.

### **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 Fire Chief, the sum of \$145,700.00 from the Capital and Non-recurring Fund to replace the Source Capture and Diesel Extraction Systems at each Firehouse is hereby appropriated.

### **Members of the RTM**

Lori Church, district 9:

Thank you for the presentation. I just wondered, maybe this question could be for Jimmy, at the committee level was there any options that you talked about if there were other options, other systems? Just a quick summary.

Mr. Izzo:

What we talked about was that very few manufacturers do these things so there really wasn't much to go out there and put to bid. This company specializes in this, diesel and firehouses and things of this nature. We're coming down to supply chains and as you heard from Mr. Marsan, these guys kept putting band aids on the system. We did get 24 or 26 years so if you amortize this money, you're probably going to get 25 years out of this one as well. There really was no other option so it was brought up, I believe.

Ms. Batteau:

The hazards of diesel exhaust have been known for a while. The extreme hazards are becoming more and more apparent. We have to take care of our first responders. They did talk about the possibility of other systems and there really weren't any.

Mr. Mandell:

Deputy Chief, could you just explain a little bit to educate us on what the system is that is more than just a hose that is stuck in the back of a tailpipe so that the diesel fumes don't go everywhere. Just explain what we're buying here.

Deputy Chief Marsan:

It is what is called a track system. Any of you who have visited our firehouses, you will see the hoses hanging down from the ceiling. They are on a track that leads to a large vent in the ceiling with filters. The system senses a pressure drop when we start the engines and it automatically turns on and all the exhaust that comes out of the vehicle goes through the hose and up through the filters and out away from the living areas; not only our living areas but everything we touch on a daily basis. It works on a pressure drop. It has a very small tube to be sure to provide enough pressure to make sure it goes up and out of the building. It also works on a radio control so when we pull back toward the firehouse to back in after coming back from an emergency call, the system will kick on automatically. We have policies and procedures in place that connect that to the system as the vehicle is coming into the building. There is a magnetic system that gets connected to the exhaust pipe and the hose is attached to that so it remains attached the entire time the vehicle is in the apparatus floor. We pull out for an emergency, it is already running. It is already distracting the diesel at the source and it breaks away with a little bit of pressure as the vehicle moves away. It slides harmlessly back waiting for us to come back. It's a very simple system. It's on a track. These are all kind of interchangeable parts. Say, we had to move to a new location, we could actually take the system down and bring it with us and put it back up. So, we would still get the best bang for the dollar for our purchase. Does that answer your question sir?

Mr. Mandell: Absolutely. I'm in favor of this purchase.

Nancy Kail, district 8:

I just want to say with all of these appropriations, everybody at the committee level was very appreciative of the Fire Department coming to the RTM at a special meeting to take advantage of purchases while being cognizant of the fact we are in this super inflationary environment and interest rates are going up and a lot of capital expenditures. So, even though it's in the middle of the summer and it's a special meeting where we're all talking about this, we're all really appreciative that you were being proactive about this and looking for cost savings and looking ahead. I wanted to say that publically at the full RTM meeting so thank you for that.

Mr. Wieser: Thank you everyone for being available tonight as well.

Harris Falk, district 2:

I was also going to add to Nancy's comment. The reason that you haven't heard me doing my 'Have you looked for an electric engine?' is because they already had but yet here I am doing it. This is how the town to ask for things having done an immense amount of research. Thank you.

Mr. Braunstein:

I failed to actually mention this in the earlier item but I did want to assure Harris that that topic came up in our meeting on both the SUV's and on the engines. We were told there were one or two EB engines in the City of Los Angeles that apparently have been quite problematic. So, it's just too early to even consider pursuing that. The Fire Department did the homework and pursued the inquiry. I knew that would come up and I apologize for not reporting it earlier.

Mr. Falk: I knew it had come up.

Kristin Schneeman, district 9:

I just wanted to comment that I can't think of anything I'd rather spend money on in the Fire Department than making sure the folks in the Fire Department are safe both in the Firehouses but also out in the field. I think this has been a good education for many of us about the job hazards of the Fire Department. We think of the obvious things like running into burning buildings but there are other health and safety issues that they have to deal with. I think we want to make sure that you all are safe. I imagine there are other issues out in the field, the kind of substances that you guys work with; the kind of things you find in the places that you go into that might be burning or not burning but I hope everybody would be as supportive of other measures if they came forward trying to protect the safety of the workforce so thank you very much for bringing this to us.

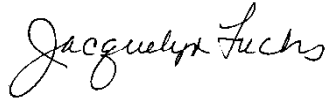
**By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously, 29-0.**

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you. With that we will adjourn the meeting. Good night. Stay safe and stay healthy and recover well from your COVID, those of you who have experienced it. Have a very happy summer and I look forward to seeing you all in person on September 6.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeffrey M. Dunkerton  
Town Clerk

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

by Jacquelyn Fuchs



**ATTENDANCE: July 26, 2022**

DIST.	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	NOTIFIED MODERATOR	LATE/ LEFT EARLY
1	Matthew Mandell	X			
	Liz Milwe	X			
	Kristin M. Purcell	X			
	Chris Tait		X	X	
2	Harris Falk	X			
	Jay Keenan		X	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	X	
	Jeff Wieser	X			
5	Peter Gold		X	X	
	Karen Kramer	X			
	Richard Lowenstein	X			
	Claudia Shaum	X			
6	Candace Banks	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			
	Rachel Cohn		X	X	
	Lisa Newman	X			
	Stephen Shackelford	X			
9	Lori Church	X			
	Nancy Kail	X			
	Sal Liccione	X			
	Kristin Schneeman	X			
<b>Total</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>7</b>		