

## **RTM Meeting November 1, 2022**

### **The Call**

1. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Education, to not reject the agreement between the Westport Intermediate Administrators Association and the Board of Education for the period covering July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2026.
2. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Superintendent of Schools, to approve an appropriation of \$831,000.00 for FY22-23 Capital Projects.
3. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the request of 3 RTM members, to adopt an ordinance restricting the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in Westport. (First reading. Full text available in the Town Clerk's Office).

### **The meeting**

Moderator Jeff Wieser:

Good evening. 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, as well as those watching us streaming live on [westportct.gov](http://westportct.gov), and those watching on Optimum Government Access Channel 79 or Frontier Channel 99. On my right back with us two times in three months is the RTM Secretary, Jackie Fuchs. Glad you're back. Welcome.

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 by Lisa Hill, Co-President of Staples Tuition Grants Program. I was so excited to hear that you were coming that I had a senior moment.

Lisa Hill, Co-President of Staples Tuition Grants Program:

Good evening. My name is Lisa Hill and I am Co-President of Staples Tuition Grants. Stories...We all have them. They are told around a campfire, at the dinner table with family, over a cup of coffee with a co-worker, when bumping into a friend or neighbor at Stop & Shop or at the end of the school day when a child runs through the door. Westport is a vibrant town with many stories woven together over days, weeks, months and, in our case, hundreds of years. Staples Tuition Grants is just one small part of our town's ongoing story. It began with a mission to help others but has also evolved into capturing and sharing the stories of people, families and organizations that have lived in or shaped our dynamic town and its residents. Every year, the legacy of many live through name awards given by Staples Tuitions Grants with good works continuing on in their name. The Staples Tuition Grants story began nearly 80 years ago in 1943. It started with a simple \$100 donation from the Staples High School PTA and with a belief that all young adults graduating from Staples High School should have the opportunity to pursue higher education regardless of their financial circumstances. We are a simple

organization with a single purpose and just one program. We raise money from donors in our community and we give it to students in need of financial aid. Through our grants, we help minimize the gap between a student and family's ability to pay for college with the net cost for tuition, fees and room and board for the academic school year. Recently, a survey by the Staples High School Guidance Department revealed that nearly 26 percent of the Class of 2022 applied for and received financial aid. The need continues and still exists in Westport today. Many of STG's recipients are those that you and your family know or interact with on a daily basis. They are your neighbors, lifeguards, camp counselors, baristas at your favorite coffee shop, babysitters, lifeguards staff at local restaurants and retail stores and more. Just like our, our town's passionate RTM, the Staples Tuition Grants' 22 board members are current Westport residents from all different walks of life and experiences, but with a purpose of making our town better. Almost every dollar Staples Tuition Grants raises in a given year goes directly to our recipients, unless the funds have been earmarked for our endowment to be distributed in the years ahead to future students. This past May, 79 years later from that initial \$100 donation, and through the immense kindness of community donors, both large and small, Staples Tuition Grants was able to award \$400,000 in grants to 108 student recipients attending 74 institutions of higher learning. The grants ranged from \$1,000 to \$7,500, with 87 grants coming from named awards reflecting the history and stories of individuals, families and organization in our Westport community, many whom you may have known personally or perhaps heard about through shared stories from others. Together, with our community's generosity, Staples Tuition Grants has the opportunity to shape the lives of these students. In just a couple of months, in 2023, Staples Tuition Grants will celebrate its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We are excited and look forward to the next 80 years of being part of the current and future narrative of the young adults here in Westport. Recently, I read a quote that said: "We are all storytellers. We live in a network of stories. There isn't a stronger connection between people than storytelling." Each of you, coming together and forming our amazing and devoted RTM, are pieces of the strong fabric that weaves and connects the ongoing story of Westport through your dedication, countless hours, hard work, commitment, generosity and love for this amazing Westport community we all call home. With a meaningful understanding of our Town's past, but looking forward to the future, you help shape, mold and strengthen our lively community. Thank you for being part of our town's ever-evolving story and thank you for having Staples Tuitions Grants here this evening to share and celebrate ours.

The members recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Wieser:

The minutes of the October 11 meeting and the September 6 meeting will be available soon. Please let us know if there are corrections. If you later find any corrections, please inform Jackie Fuchs, Jeff Dunkerton, or me.

## **Announcements**

Congratulations to our November Birthday celebrants Jamie Bairaktaris and Lisa Newman. A special birthday greeting today for Tatiana Plachi who does so much in the Town Clerk's office to keep the RTM running.

I will begin the announcements by welcoming back to the RTM, Lyn Hogan, who has been elected by the District 3 representatives. Congratulations, Ms. Hogan, and welcome back to the RTM.

I also welcome to tonight's meeting, Lynn Scully, Our Town Auditor and her Non - Profit and Government Accounting Class from Fairfield University. Six brilliant students who are here, lucky them.

### **RTM Comments**

Andrew Colabella, district 4:

This Saturday, the Westport Police Department in partnership with the Sunrise Rotary will be hosting a food drive. It will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Stop & Shop. This is our annual food drive. It is put together by Anna Rycenga who is Chair of the Conservation Commission who is here tonight. All the proceeds that we take in goes directly to Homes with Hope and the Westport Health and Human Services Food Pantries. I would also like to point out that the Police Athletic League held their first annual gala last week. It was not only successful and completely sold out thanks to Anna Rycenga who put it together along with Officer Craig Bergamo, Emma Rojas, Georgia Rojas, Pam Romano and a couple of other people from the Police Athletic League. There is a rumor, I can't give you the actual number, but I can tell you there is a six figure amount that was raised because of the good people that participated in the event so thank you.

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you Mr. Colabella. That's good news. I will just say, that Stop & Shop food drive is an incredible benefit to those food pantries. It's a great thing.

Louis Mall, district 2:

This really isn't any kind of announcement. It's more or less a follow up of what the RTM has done. I'd like to thank the Parks and Rec. Department for the renovations that were done at Riverside Park. I don't know if any of you have seen it but I will tell you that it is spectacular. We approved an expenditure of \$513,000. Jack Klinge and I have had conversations, so what happened? You should go by Riverside Park. I want to shout out to Steve Edwards who oversaw the project and also to Brian Stern who was a big powerhouse behind it to get it done. But it is really, really worth the time and money that was put into it. Go and sit on the riverbank and watch the rowers go by. We always hear people wanting more open space. We've got it. We've got to take care of it and that's what we've done at Riverside Park. We do need to get the netting down so people can get in there and start using it. Let's get it done. But thank you very much Parks and Rec.

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you Mr. Mall. I was there last week and it really is spectacular.

Assuming the business of our meeting is completed tonight, the next regularly scheduled meeting of the RTM will be on December 6.

There are 27 members present. Absent: Mandell, Milwe, Falk, Hammond, Gold, Talmadge, Batteau, Cohn, Newman.

Mr. Wieser:

If you should need to leave the meeting prior to our conclusion this evening, please let us know by email or text, please.

**The secretary read item #1 of the call - To not reject the agreement between the Westport Intermediate Administrators Association and the Board of Education for the period covering July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2026.**

**Presentation**

Lee Goldstein, Board of Education:

John Bayers will take you through the details of the contract but, before he does, I want to thank the RTM first, for sharing Candace with us. She helped us with the negotiations. It's invaluable. Second, to the three committees who vetted this and did the legwork for the body. Third, I want to thank the full body of the RTM. It really feels like a partnership; like we're working together. Education is complicated and expensive. It takes a village. To echo Lisa, I'm just really happy our village is Westport and thank you.

John Bayers, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and General Administration:

I will give you a high level overview but I know Candace will have an overview as well so I don't want to be too repetitive. This contract before you this evening is a successor contract for the Westport Intermediate Administrators' Association. This includes all the building-level administrators and curriculum coordinators. It doesn't include the central office team. The contract is a three year contract that would go into effect on July 1, 2023. Highlights of the contract in terms of the cost: In each of the three years, those administrators who are at the top step would receive a 2.5 percent general wage increase. The first year, all administrators would receive that increase of 2.5 percent. If they were in the step process, there are four steps, they would go up a step. In years two and three, those that are below the top step would receive a one percent general increase. The total percent would be 8.2 percent over the three years; compounded would be 8143 percent. In terms of money related to that cost, the incremental cost, Seth, I want to make sure I categorize it correctly, the incremental cost over the three years would be \$584,863. That's just for the salaries. I'm going to highlight the insurance and then I'm going to talk about how that incremental cost for the salaries actually gets brought down a little bit based on the insurance piece of this contract. With respect to insurance, you may be aware that last year the Board of Education had agreed with all seven of the bargaining units to move from the State Partnership Plan to

the high deductible health plan with an associated health savings account. That was a great win for the employees and for the Board and for the community, especially given the significant rise in the State Partnership Plan. We would have faced a 10 percent increase this year had we stayed with the State Partnership Plan. We have an employee premium cost share of 19 percent in year one, 19.5 percent in year two, and then 20 percent in year three, so half a percent each year for the employees' portion of the premium. The Board would be contributing 60 percent in year one to HSA. 50 percent in year two and 50 percent in year three. Fifty percent is ultimately where we were before when we had a high deductible prior to the State Partnership Plan. Just in terms of language, we had some clarity issues in terms of how we factor in days for those employees who are not 12 month employees. In addition, we talked about the way the Superintendent can use some discretion when there is inclement weather, particularly snow storms, where administrators may be able to work from home if schools are closed on a particular day. Back quickly to the cost of the contract, I mentioned that the incremental cost for salaries was \$584,863. For the insurance, with the switch from the State Partnership Plan to the high deductible plan, we are looking at a potential cost avoidance over three years of \$50,890. Obviously, that would be based on increases in each of the three years. But those were based on assumptions. Worst case scenario, with Aetna, we would go up 14 percent next year. But that is the high end. We are hopeful that we wouldn't reach that number. It would be eight percent in years two and three based on an estimate from Locked In, our insurance consultant, who also consults with the town. Nonetheless, you'd see a \$50,000 savings from the insurance potentially. The same would be true even with the funding of those HSA accounts. So, overall, if you take those savings from health insurance, combine those with the salary increases, the incremental cost ends at \$507,573. With that, I will turn it back to the Moderator and if there are any questions, I will be happy to answer.

### **Committees reports**

Education, Employee Compensation and Finance Committees, Candace Banks, district 6:

Thank you to Lee for the kind words and thank you to John for making my job right now very, very simple. You heard the headlines from John. We have salary costs for the administrators across all of our school buildings, curriculum coordinators and Director of Technology. That's the universe we're talking about. Over the next three years, we have incremental costs going up about \$585,000. Offsetting that is some savings from health plans. Basically, employees are contributing some more in years two and three to the health care premiums and Board of Education is contributing a bit less to the health savings accounts in years two and three. So, overall, the \$585,000 in salary costs is offset to the tune of approximately \$75,000 or so. So, we are looking at the total cost of this contract above the salary account is \$508,000. Talk about our discussion, as was mentioned earlier, a joint committee meeting of Education, Employee Compensation and Finance, first, Mr. Bayers explained the universe of the group, the WIAA consists of administrators, assistant Principals, curriculum coordinators and Director of Technology. All in, that is about 45 employees. Then Mr. Scarice characterized the discussions as overwhelmingly positive. I'm going to deviate from my report a little bit to talk as a funding body observer to this process, the mutual respect between the Central Office

Administrators and this bargaining group, it was wonderful to see. It was evident that there was a lot of faith and trust in that room and that really streamlined these negotiations. So I have to complement our Central Office team for that. Particularly, when you think about the Central Office Administrators, what they have held together the last two years, two years, gosh, it feels like 10 years some days, the last two years, what this group of people has managed to do in terms of holding our district together, taking care of the kids and their teachers in the building and being responsive to parents. They really did a wonderful job and each of the members of the funding bodies should take a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting to express our gratitude to them because they did stand up brilliantly in this very difficult time. When we are negotiating with these bargaining units, we are always wondering. There are usually peer districts around that are doing the same thing with various groups. We are always wondering how we are coming out. We came in with a simple increase of 8.2 percent over three years compounded, 8.3 percent and as the weeks have gone on, we've learned that other Fairfield County Districts and around the State are coming in between 8.25 and 10.51 so we are pretty much where we can expect to be. Finally, it was discussed in committee, kudos to the Board of Education and kudos to everyone last year for exiting from the State Partnership Plan last year. Had we not done that, this would possibly have been possibly a more difficult negotiation. We wouldn't have been able to realize the cost savings on health benefits that we did. The State Partnership Plan premiums are going way up. The Administration and the Board of Education got a lot of kudos in the committee meeting for having the foresight to get us out of that when we did, last year. On to the vote, for the Education Committee, Jack Klinge made the motion. I seconded it. It passed 8-0 with no abstentions. For Employee Compensation, I made the motion. Jimmy Izzo seconded it. It passed 6-0, no abstentions. Finally, for Finance, Don O'Day made the same motion, Nancy Kail seconded and the motion passed 4-0-0. To be clear, the motion was to not reject the WIAA contract.

Mr. Wieser:

Thank you, Ms. Banks. To make it even clearer, if we were to do nothing, in 45 days, this just passes but tonight is our opportunity to reject this and say we don't like it. But we are not rejecting it, as Ms. Banks points out.

### **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 Education, the agreement between the Westport Intermediate Administrators Association and the Board of Education for the period covering July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2026 is hereby not rejected.

### **Members of the RTM**

Mr. Mall:

I'd just like to thank John and his team for the work that they have done and a special thanks to Candace Banks as the RTM representative/observer. We got two for the price of one. She represented Education and Compensation and it is a sacrifice of time and effort so thank you Candace.

**By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously, 27-0.**

**The secretary read item #2 of the call - To approve an appropriation of \$831,000.00 for FY22-23 Capital Projects.**

### **Presentation**

Ms. Goldstein:

I could say the same thank you speech but I also want to say that one thing we've heard from you as a legislative and funding body is that you'd like to see the whole picture, not thing, thing, thing, the totality of what we're doing so it's a little different now. We are presenting the whole year's worth of capital projects for '22/'23. We are hoping that it responds for something you've asked for. It will be Tom Scarice and Elio walking you through it.

Tom Scarice, Superintendent of Schools:

Thank you for the unanimous vote before and thank you, Candace, for the kind words. We really appreciate that.

If we go back a little bit in time, back in the spring, we presented our first pass at a long-term capital plan. It was a five-year plan. There was a request to extend that out to 10 years which we gladly went along with the town as well, a parallel plan. Gary Conrad sought to bring the two plans together so the town has one big picture of capital projects. The priority last year was to get our arms around the facilities, get our arms around all the capital projects. Probably, one of the turning points for us was the partnership with Colliers International where we had started to look at our facilities plan that existed through the Antinozzi projects and then applied a very clear criteria and prioritization so that we would now put forth projects that truly had a priority in mind. That priority is very clear around our building envelopes, which are roofs, which are windows, which are doors, subflooring and so forth and our mechanicals which keep our buildings dry when they are supposed to be dry, cool when they are supposed to be cool and warm when they are supposed to be warm. We then parsed through all of the projects which were laid out in the Antinozzi report and began to prioritize those projects up front and everything else on the back end. So, if you are talking about fixtures and millwork and so forth, we put those on the back end of the plan and, quite honestly, if things are still working, and cabinetry and so forth, it will continue to get pushed out. Our priorities are envelopes and our mechanicals. The 10 year plan that you have seen has been updated which reflects our priorities. The Board has taken action on this already. The bof has on our first year which is this year, of the plan. There are 14 projects included in there. I can speak to all 14 but a couple of highlights that I want to point out. One of the primary differences to some of these projects is that we are moving away from a simple replacing kind mentality for a couple of reasons. That was Antinozzi's charge and for us, we want to look beyond that. Can we get more efficient? Can we get more sustainable, possibly? Can we look at better performance of our systems? So that requires us to study our systems a little bit further. You'll notice a big portion of our dollars are, in this current year, to study our building envelopes and our

current mechanical systems particularly at Saugatuck Elementary School and Bedford Middle School where those mechanical systems are already passed 20 years. That's about the time where replacements are in order. So, you'll see some money set aside for that. The envelope studies and the mechanical studies will allow us to come back to the town and to be very accurate as to where we see replacements down the road. Our project prioritization for this year, starting off, fiscal '23, for the current school year, we've kept these on hold as we go through the funding process, we would have done this a little sooner but the priority for us last spring and then a meeting with the Board of Finance last summer was just to get confidence and faith from the community in our actual long-term forecast first. Now we are ready with the funding mechanisms in place to commit to these projects for this year which will take us through July. District-wide project 001, building envelope evaluations is about \$150,000, what we are requesting here. Those evaluations would not include the current Long Lots and the current Coleytown Middle School, but all the others, for obvious reasons. That would allow us to benchmark in these other six schools, windows, roofs, doors, the entire envelope, to know replacement projects could be three to five years off, could be 10-15 years off. We are going to have professionals come in and evaluate for us in that study to come up with that level of specificity for further planning. This would not be destructive testing, digging through walls and so forth but enough to build a benchmark to move forward and plan accordingly. District-wide project 002 is for security and accessibility evaluations. Since the security assessment was done about eight years ago, School Security Infrastructure Council standards from the State have changed. We have completed all the security targets that were set in the original plan. This would now update that and we would update the district four schools this year and four schools next year just with more evaluations in place just to make it doable and cost effective over the two years. We have a Coleytown renovation status check list project for \$50,000. So, we do know that we have a recommendation from the Board of Education to replace Long Lots Elementary School with a brand new facility that has a building committee so we have passed that work over to the Town Building Committee for that project; however, we have Coleytown Elementary School that is in need of attention as well. The same attention as Long Lots, we don't know. That's what this study is for. When we analyzed Long Lots, it became clear to us that a new construction was the wisest course of action. The Building Committee will ultimately make that decision in the town. For Coleytown, we are going to do a little bit more homework. When our architects looked at it in the spring, they thought there was some viability. The building is dated and needs some renovations. This investment will allow us to go through the State checklist whether or not a building is eligible for renovations which will qualify us for renovation funds. If an architect or licensed engineer cannot go on record and verify that, then it would not be eligible for reimbursement funds, then it's a whole different strategy then. So, that is what this study would allow us to do this year. CES project 002, we have brought the modular classrooms together in pieces for funding. These are the remaining costs that we have, slightly over \$154,000. Greens Farms 001 is retro commissioning HVAC equipment. Retro-commissioning is something that we are recommending at Greens Farms and at Kings Highway, as well, both to the tune of \$25,000. This would allow us to really evaluate the system's, if they are functioning efficiently, per their original design and allow us to determine if excess energy is being spent where it shouldn't be spend and how to reduce the overall energy consumption in the building. These two systems, in particular, were in



need of that evaluation as opposed to Saugatuck and Bedford which are at the end of their useful life for their HVAC systems. We are also looking at Kings Highway 003 evaluation of a gym entrance for \$25,000. This is an initial cost to solicit a proposal from either an architectural or engineering firm to evaluate the lower roof and stairs that lead down to the gym area. We've had a series of leaks there historically and we want to keep our buildings as dry as possible to avoid any long-term problems. This estimate of \$25,000 is about 10 percent of our construction budget if we were to renovate that area of the building. Kings Highway 004 in the library, we need to refurbish some air handling units. Originally, we looked at \$7,500 back in the spring. We increased that because the original estimate went from \$75,000 to slightly over \$100,000 now. Ten percent of that would get us started with our study costs and then we would be able to do the work the following year. Kings Highway 005, demolition of a modular classroom for \$45,000. This had been slated to be demolished for a number of years now. We are finally going to take action to remove that classroom which has been offline for a number of years now. I mentioned the mechanical system evaluation. That's officially Saugatuck 001 and Bedford 001, \$75,000 each. We would look for an engineering firm to do an in depth evaluation of the existing systems to see if we could do something besides replace in kind. I hope the Board can earn some originality points on this. Our original forecast was \$100,000 for each school. By looking at some comps around the State, we were able to see that we could do it for \$75,000 each. So, we are constantly reviewing this. When looking at the 10 year forecast, year one and year two, we can be specific. After that it is a little bit of crystal balling. So, as we got closer to this project, we dug in deeper. We asked for comps through our partners with Colliers project leaders and they were able to find two of those numbers for us. So, we're coming up with a reduction of the request on that. If you're wondering, our original year one was about \$1.8 million and why it is so much lower is the asphalt projects. The town is assuming the asphalt projects. So, those haven't gone away but they are on Pete Ratkiewich's budget. We're looking at an area of Bedford 008 where we have an enclosed courtyard area that has a lot of glass. We are looking to replace some of the insulated glass there. We had Trinity Construction look at some leaks that were happening in that area of the courtyard. They took photographs of those conditions and they saw that the panels there were starting to deteriorate and we're looking for a deeper investigation to see exactly what are those conditions, how pervasive are they? What kind of replacement are we looking at? This is something we can get ahead of and not surprise us in a couple of years being problematic. At Staples, we have pumps and controls. A small figure to start, just some designing and engineering costs. These replacements will take place the following year. You'll notice in our long-term plan that we yoke two years together. We have about a 10 percent planning and design cost and then we have construction would happen the following year. That is the case with Staples High School 001 for the pumps and controls. We are evaluating our auditorium stage rigging. This project is being managed by our staff in town. We have already engaged Supertech, Incorporated to assist with inspections to the system to see if we must upgrade further. That is Staples High School 002. So, those are the projects for fiscal year 2023. We also have on the handout fiscal year 2024 just for your own reference. We will come back for funding once those projects go out to bid as well. Projects for 2024 would start July 1, 2023. Those summer days are precious for us to get work done with kids and teachers out of the buildings.

## **Committees report**

Finance and Education Committees, Seth Braunstein, district 6:

On October 24, Finance and Education met to discuss the appropriation request that Superintendent Scarice just described. Just to be clear, these are school related capital projects for fiscal year '22 and '23. The request only covers projects that are ready for bid and not projects that are on hold. Fiscal year '24 begins on July 1, 2023 will entail a separate appropriation for requests for the next fiscal year so we'll hear about that at some point in the future. Our discussion on the 24<sup>th</sup> included a broad explanation of the changes that are actually being made to the Capital Improvement Plan budgeting process. There has been a material expansion. It now covers a 10 year forecast. Previously, it was five. And there is an explicit acknowledgement that the first two years of this forecast are much more detailed and, frankly, much more knowable. But, as you move out beyond the two years, it becomes a much more imprecise exercise although we can be certain that things in the forecast will change and the priorities over time will change. Speaking of priorities, as Superintendent Scarice stressed here this evening, there is now a very concerted effort to prioritize the physical envelopes of the district's structures with a focus on keeping the structures dry and environmentally sound. He also provided a good overview of the changes that are being made to the timing of the budgeting process which is now being initiated in October. This head start allows for the schools to get ahead of some of the projects required in the next year. I'm not going to go over the 14 specific projects that were mentioned this evening. We had some good detail there. During the discussion, there were some questions that were raised. I think I'll spend most of my time there because they are incremental to what you've heard this evening. Questions arose around additional expenses that may be required for Long Lots existing building in the interim period while the new building is constructed. Board of Education Chair Lee Goldstein suggested that they do not believe there would be meaningful expenses required to keep Long Lots functional in the interim period. There were also questions about the bigger picture through 2029 and how the schools will be very strategic keeping their focus directly on the building envelopes and there will be other projects on the list currently that will be pushed back as you heard here this evening. If no replacement is actually required, they are not going to spend the money. They will be sort of nimble in determining what's an effective use and what can be postponed. There was also some discussion about that schools have finite lifespans. Those lifespans might be 50, 60, 70, we have some schools that are 100 years old, believe it or not. There are differences in the expectations of those lifespans. But, there is no effective way to pre-fund the costs that will be incurred when those schools are no longer viable. A question was raised about how focused the Board of Education is on sustainability as future projects are considered. Board of Education Chair Goldstein responded that they have found Sustainable Westport to be a good partners but that there is a clear understanding that the costs need to be considered and that added expenses up front can sometimes help lead to long term savings. For Finance motion was made by Don O'Day and seconded by Rachel Cohn - passed by unanimous vote 4 - 0. For Education motion was made by Brandi Briggs and seconded by Kristin Schneeman - passed by unanimous vote 8 - 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 Superintendent of Schools, the sum of \$831,000.00 for FY22-23 Capital Projects is hereby appropriated.

### **Members of the RTM**

Nancy Kail, district 9:

I want to thank you all. Lee, what you said about big picture and framing things has been very helpful and I really appreciate that. Along those lines, if you could very broad brush describe your relationship with Colliers, what they bring to the table, what your staff does, their value add and cost savings if you can quantify them. That would be helpful.

Mr. Scarice:

I think it was March of 2021, my first year, after a minor analysis of our capital plan and our capital resources to execute the plan, that I made a recommendation to the Board of Education that we needed to extend our bench and area of expertise in how we were developing the Capital Plan and how we were getting critical feedback on the strategy. So, we started the partnership there and it's probably the biggest role that is played right now through that collaboration. We have access to engineers, to architects, to folks in industrial engineering and environmental engineering. I think it's been a real asset to our team to pick the phone up and make much better decisions with that resource there. I call it the bench. It's just a huge bench that we could tap into at any time. When it comes to putting together a long-term plan, we have really good feedback about what a number of other districts are doing and the strategies they are using as well. We can benchmark and say this is working in other communities like ours. This might not work here in Westport. Let's try something different. Overall, it has been very successful.

Dick Lowenstein, district 5:

The numbers we are talking about tonight are the ones transmitted by Mr. Longo this afternoon, correct? So, if we approve \$831,000 tonight, we are essentially looking for a \$2 million appropriation next year. Is that correct?

Elio Longo, Schools' CFO:

The commitment for fiscal year '24, total number is \$2 million; however, that amount will be based on the results of the studies. In year one, we are capturing a number of projects, their soft costs and we may or may not proceed with the full construction project in year two. But if all projects were to proceed in year two, we are looking at a net cost of approximately \$2 million.

Mr. Lowenstein:

If everything goes to plan, we are talking about \$800,000 the year after and \$12 million the year after that. Those are your numbers, right. It's a lot of money.

Mr. Braunstein:

I just want to follow up on Dick's questions. I don't have the numbers at my fingertips, but I think over the 10 year period, the number was \$12 million overall. You should think of that,

Dick, as an effort by the schools to be as transparent as possible, to communicate what the actual needs would be to make sure that they are being a proper guardian of the school facilities. Some of that expense is inevitably prompted by the fact that we underinvested in maintenance previously. So, in effect, we are kind of catching up with the oversight shortfalls previously. It is a lot of money but you have to think about it in the broader context of the budgetary process that over a multi-decadal period didn't account for some of the maintenance expenses properly. I mentioned the word transparency and I wanted to just highlight, this came up during the committee meeting, there is a tangible sense of collaboration, transparency, and I'd say a real shift in the interaction between the RTM, the Board of Education, and the schools. Having seen now, multiple administrations, it feels to me that there is a different sort of approach. It's not an us versus them as it had felt in previous iterations of the budgeting process. I remember going through budgets in the past and having the sense that there wasn't really a focus on the integrity of the buildings to the extent that it should have been focused. This administration is kind of catching up to that in a very real way, making sure that we don't have some unforeseen issue just pop up. This has occurred in the past. So, it is money well spent. The numbers are large. We have a large budget to begin with, having a lot of facilities. If we are going to take the right kind of care, there are expenses that are going to be incurred. I want to say thank you for the collaboration. I'm going to be voting this evening to approve this completely understanding that there are going to be additional expenses behind this.

Jay Keenan, district 2:

Just a quick question: Each one of the projects listed will be bid out separately, separate RFP's, separate engineers, architects?

Mr. Scarice:

The studies may be yoked together, the envelope studies, as opposed to each individual school.

Mr. Lowenstein:

I am impressed with what Mr. Longo said and Mr. Braunstein about the forecast. It is a forecast but it is also very precise. The contrast I would draw based on my experience is between what the Board of Education shows in the capital forecast and the way the town presents its numbers in its numbers for the capital forecast. There is a lot more precision from the Board of Education than what we see quite often from the town which seems to be here's a number, let's throw it on the wall and see if it sticks with no explanation. The details come much later. I think this forecast is precise and much more acceptable.

**By show of hands, the motion passed unanimously, 27-0.**

Mr. Wieser:

This has been a very feel good meeting, great cooperation. Thank you.

**The secretary read item #3 of the call – To adopt an ordinance restricting the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in Westport. (First reading. Full text available in the Town Clerk's Office).**

Mr. Wieser:

This is a first reading and typically we have no comment during a first reading. I don't think we have any tonight.

Kristine Schneeman, lead petitioner:

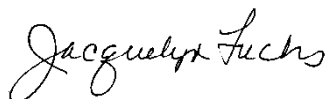
I just want to correct the record that there are six RTM members who are co-sponsoring too: Jessica, Liz, Cathy, Nancy and Harris. Also, I want to say thanks to all of you for sticking with us for what has been a long and complex process. I think we started this more than 18 months ago. It has been through eight committee meetings, I think I counted and a whole bunch of other meetings and conversations and we've gotten a lot of great feedback from all of you and the public both inside and outside of Westport. I just want to say thank you all. I believe we will be voting on it in January if nothing else goes wrong between now and then. Hopefully, I'll see you all back here to have a conversation about it. I'm available any time for questions, information, conversation, debate between now and then. But, happy holidays between now and then.

Mr. Wieser:

Over the past few weeks, we have had committee meetings with Finance, Environment, Parks & Rec, Public Works and the Health & Human Services Committees. I think all of the issues addressed in the amended version of this ordinance, which has created another first reading have been addressed so I do not see a need for further committee meetings. It's most likely that the second reading of the ordinance will be debated at our January meeting. I encourage all stake holders, however, and pretty much everyone in town is a stakeholder, to review this draft so that we have a clear debate in January and provide certainty going forward for the many people that might be affected by the legislation if it passes in this form or some other form. I encourage everyone to be aware of this draft and to share their comments with us which I don't think anyone has been shy about doing to date. With that we will adjourn this meeting. Thank you, good night, stay safe and healthy, and I look forward to seeing you all in person on Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeffrey M. Dunkerton  
Town Clerk



by Jacquelyn Fuchs

**ATTENDANCE: November 1, 2022**

DIST.	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	NOTIFIED MODERATOR	LATE/ LEFT EARLY
1	Matthew Mandell		X	X	
	Liz Milwe		X	X	
	Kristin M. Purcell	X			
	Chris Tait	X			
2	Harris Falk		X	X	
	Jay Keenan	X			
	Louis M. Mall	X			
	Michael Perry	X			
3	Ross Burkhardt	X			
	Lyn Hogan	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	X	
	Rachel Cohn		X	X	
	Lisa Newman		X	X	
	Stephen Shackelford	X			
9	Lori Church	X			
	Nancy Kail	X			
	Sal Liccione	X			
	Kristin Schneeman	X			
<b>Total</b>			<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	