



WESTPORT

**TOWN OF WESTPORT**  
**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING**  
**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING PACKET**  
**MAY 1, 2023**  
**07:30 PM**



## REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING AGENDA

MAY 1, 2023  
07:30 PM

### Agenda

#### Call

All Representative Town Meeting members and inhabitants of the Town of Westport are hereby notified that a meeting of the Representative Town Meeting members will be held at Town Hall, 110 Myrtle Ave. in the auditorium on Monday, May 1, Tuesday May 2; and, if necessary, Wednesday May 3, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. for the purposes listed below. If necessary, the meeting shall reconvene on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 to deal with any agenda items not disposed of at the adjournment of the May 1, 2, or 3, 2023 meeting(s).

Attachment: [Resolutions.pdf](#)

#### Item #1

To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the estimate and recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town of Westport for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.

Attachment: [RTM Finance Committee Budget Report Corrected Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [RTM Health Human Services Committee Report Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [RTM Public Protection Committee Report Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [RTM Transit Committee Report Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Westport Transit District Backup Material Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [RTM Parks Recreation Committee Report Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [RTM Environment Committee Report Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [RTM Library Museum Arts Committee Report Earthplace Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [RTM Library Museum Arts Committee Report Library Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [RTM Public Works Committee Report- Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [BOE FY24 Recommended Budget presentation-Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [RTM Education Committee Report Item 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [RTM Finance Committee Report BOE Budget Item 1.pdf](#)

#### Item #2

To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town Railroad Parking Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.

#### Item #3

To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town Sewer Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.

#### Item #4

To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Wakeman Town Farm Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.

#### Item #5

To take such action as the meeting may determine, to require that property taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, shall be due and payable in four quarterly installments, and to designate the dates of the first days of July, October, January, and April as the dates upon which such installments shall be due and payable, and that all taxes in an amount of \$100 or less shall be due and payable in a single installment on the first day of July.

#### Item #6

To take such action as the meeting may determine to require that the motor vehicle tax shall be due and payable in a single installment.

#### Item #7

To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the request of the First Selectwoman, the Fire Chief, and the Fire Marshal, to adopt an amendment to Chapter 34 -- Fire Prevention and Protection, of the Town Code of Ordinances, adding Article III -- Fire Marshal Fee Schedule. (First reading. Full text available in the Town Clerk's office.)

**Item #8**

To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the request of the First Selectwoman, the Fire Chief, and the Fire Marshal, to adopt an amendment to Appendix C of the Town Code of Ordinances, adopting a fee for Fire Marshal review of construction documents in the amount of \$5 per \$1000 of estimated costs, for commercial buildings and residential buildings of three or more dwelling units. (First reading. Full text available in the Town Clerk's office.)

Attachment: [Fire Marshal Fee Schedule Ordinance Draft-Items 7-8.pdf](#)

**Item #9**

To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the request of the First Selectwoman, to adopt a Fair Rent Commission Ordinance. (First reading. Full text available in the Town Clerk's office.)

Attachment: [Fair Rent Commission Ordinance Request Item 9.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Fair Rent Commission Ordinance Draft Item 9.pdf](#)

**Item #10**

To take such action as the meeting may determine, In accordance with the Policy for Gifts to the Town, 2. C. - Monetary Donations. More than \$20,000, at the request of the Director of Public Works, and upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectwomen, to recommend approval of a donation in the amount of \$50,000 for construction of a bus shelter at 199 Post Road West.

Attachment: [Gifts to Town RTM Donation Approval Request Item 10.pdf](#)

**RTM Meeting  
May 1, 2 & 3, 2023**

**RESOLUTIONS**

MONDAY

(1)

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

(1)

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

(2)

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Railroad Parking Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting, be adopted and the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures.

(3)

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Sewer Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting, be adopted and the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures.

(4)

**RESOLVED:** That the Wakeman Town Farm Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting, be adopted and the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures.

(5)

**RESOLVED:** That property taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024 shall be due and payable in four quarterly installments and the dates upon which such quarterly installments are to be due and payable shall be the first days of July, October, January and April, subject to any applicable tax relief deferral programs; and be it

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

(6)

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

(7)

**RESOLVED:** That upon the recommendation of the First Selectwoman, the Fire Chief, and the Fire Marshal, an amendment to Chapter 34 – Fire Prevention and Protection, of the Town Code of Ordinances, adding Article III – Fire Marshal Fee Schedule is hereby approved. (First reading. Full text is as follows.)

## TOWN OF WESTPORT CODE OF ORDINANCES

### CHAPTER 34 – FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

**NEW:**

**Article III – FIRE MARSHAL FEE SCHEDULE**

Sec. 34-31 - Fee schedule for Fire Marshal duties. Pursuant to Connecticut State Regulation 29-291a-7a(g) and other applicable law, the Fire Marshal, with approval of the Representative Town Meeting, shall adopt a fee schedule for certain prescribed duties in accordance with the Connecticut State Fire Prevention Code and the Connecticut State Fire Safety Code, and other applicable law, including without limit fees for construction document reviews, permits, certificates, notices, approvals, or orders.

Sec. 34-32 - Posting of fee schedule. The Fire Marshal shall post the fee schedule in the Office of the Fire Marshal, in public view, and on the Town's website. The fees shall also be set forth in Appendix C of the Town Code of Ordinances.

Sec. 34-33 - Exemption from fee liability. All municipal projects of the Town of Westport are and shall be exempted from liability for permit fees and may be issued permits and certificates of occupancy without charge therefor.

(8)

**RESOLVED:** That upon the recommendation of the First Selectwoman, the Fire Chief, and the Fire Marshal, an amendment to Appendix C of the Town Code of Ordinances, adopting a fee for Fire Marshal review of construction documents in the amount of \$5 per \$1000 of estimated costs, for commercial buildings and residential buildings of three or more dwelling units is hereby approved. (First reading. Full text is as follows.)

**NEW:**

**TOWN OF WESTPORT CODE OF ORDINANCES**

**APPENDIX C:**

<i>Chapter 34. Fire Prevention and Protection</i>		
<u>34-31</u>	<u>Fire Marshal Fees:</u>	
	<u>Construction Document Reviews</u>	<u>The fee for the Fire Marshal's review of construction documents shall be based on the estimated cost of the project at the rate of Five Dollars (\$5.00) per One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) or part thereof, said fees being assessed only for commercial buildings and for residential dwellings that include three (3) or more dwelling units.</u>

(9)

**RESOLVED:** That upon the request of the First Selectwoman, a Fair Rent Commission Ordinance is hereby adopted. (First reading. Full text is as follows.)

**CODE OF ORDINANCES, TOWN OF WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT**

**Chapter 2 - ADMINISTRATION**

**ARTICLE IV. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**Sec 2-90. - Fair Rent Commission**

(a) *Established.*

(1) Pursuant to and in conformity with C.G.S. §§ 7-148b through 7-148f, 47a-20 and 47a-23c, there is hereby created a Fair Rent Commission (“Commission”) for the purpose of controlling and eliminating excessive rental charges for housing accommodations within the Town, and to carry out the purposes, duties, responsibilities and all provisions of the above described sections and any other sections of the statutes, as they may be amended from time to time, pertaining to fair rent commissions.

(2) The Commission shall consist of five (5) members, all of whom shall be electors of the Town. The members and alternates shall be appointed by the First Selectman in accordance with Section C4-4 of the Town Charter, and according to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Town Charter. Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation.

(3) Members of the Commission shall be appointed for staggered terms of four (4) years. Vacancies on the Commission shall be filled in the manner of original appointment for the unexpired portion of the term. Any member of the Commission may be reappointed in the manner of original appointment.

(b) *Powers*

(1) The Commission’s powers shall include the power to:

- a. Receive complaints, inquiries, and other communications concerning alleged excessive rental charges and alleged violations, including retaliation, of C.G.S. §§ 7-148b to 7-148f, inclusive, C.G.S. § 47a-20, C.G.S. 21-80a and C.G.S. §

47a-23c in housing accommodations, except those accommodations rented on a seasonal basis, within its jurisdiction, which jurisdiction shall include mobile manufactured homes and mobile manufactured home park lots. "Seasonal basis" means housing accommodations rented for a period or periods aggregating not more than 120 days in any one calendar year. "Rental charge" includes any fee or charge in addition to rent that is imposed or sought to be imposed upon a tenant by a landlord, and includes any charge that is already in effect;

- b. Make such studies and investigations regarding rental housing within the Town as are appropriate to carry out the duties and responsibilities delegated hereunder, and subject to the terms, limitations and conditions set forth herein;
- c. Conduct hearings on complaints or requests for investigation submitted to it by any person, subject to the terms, limitations and conditions as set forth herein;
- d. Compel the attendance of persons at hearings, issue subpoenas and administer oaths, issue orders and continue, review, amend, terminate or suspend any of its orders and decisions;
- e. Determine, after a hearing as set forth herein, whether or not the rent for any housing accommodation is so excessive as to be harsh and unconscionable;
- f. Determine, after a hearing as set forth herein, whether the housing accommodation in question fails to comply with any municipal ordinance or state statute or regulation relating to health and safety;
- g. Determine, after a hearing as set forth herein, whether a landlord has engaged in retaliation in violation of subsection (f) below and make such orders as are authorized herein;
- h. Order a reduction of any excessive rent to an amount which is fair and equitable, and make such other orders as are authorized herein;
- i. Order the suspension or reduction of further payment of rent by the tenant until such time as the landlord makes the necessary changes, repairs or installations so as to bring such housing accommodation into compliance with any municipal ordinance or state statute or regulation relating to health and safety;
- j. Establish an escrow account with a local bank or financial institution into which it shall deposit all rent charges or other funds paid to it pursuant to subsection (e) below; and
- k. Carry out all other provisions of C.G.S. §§ 7-148b to 7-148f, inclusive, C.G.S. § 47a-20, 21- 80a and C.G.S. § 47a-23c as now existing and as hereinafter amended, as they apply to fair rent commissions.



(c) *Determination of Excessive Rent*

(1) In determining whether a rental charge or a proposed increase in a rental charge is so excessive, with due regard to all the circumstances, as to be harsh and unconscionable, the Commission shall consider such of the following circumstances as are applicable to the type of accommodation:

- a. The rents charged for the same number of rooms in other housing accommodations in the same and in other areas of the municipality;
- b. The sanitary conditions existing in the housing accommodations in question;
- c. The number of bathtubs or showers, flush waste closets, kitchen sinks and lavatory basins available to the occupants thereof;
- d. Services, furniture, furnishings and equipment supplied therein;
- e. The size and number of bedrooms contained therein;
- f. Repairs necessary to make such accommodations reasonably livable for the occupants accommodated therein;
- g. The amount of taxes and overhead expenses, including debt service, thereof;
- h. Whether the accommodations are in compliance with the ordinances of the Town and the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut relating to health and safety;
- i. The income of the petitioner and the availability of accommodations;
- j. The availability of utilities;
- k. Damages done to the premises by the tenant, caused by other than ordinary wear and tear;
- l. The amount and frequency of increases in rental charges; and
- m. Whether, and the extent to which, the income from an increase in rental charges has been or will be reinvested in improvements to the accommodations.

(2) The rent of a tenant protected by C.G.S. § 47a-23c (certain seniors and persons with disabilities in buildings and complexes with five or more units) who files a complaint with the Commission pursuant to C.G.S. § 47a-23c(c)(2) may be increased only to the extent that such increase is fair and equitable, based on the criteria set forth above.

(d) *Procedures and Hearing on Complaints*

- (1) Upon the filing of a complaint, the Commission shall promptly notify all parties in writing of the receipt of the complaint. Such notice shall also inform the parties that the landlord is prohibited from retaliating against the tenant due to the filing of the complaint. It shall also inform the parties that, until a decision on the complaint is made by the Commission, the tenant's liability shall be for the amount of the last rent prior to the increase complained of or, if there is no such increase, the last agreed-upon rent, and that an eviction based upon non-payment of rent cannot be initiated against a tenant who continues to pay the last agreed-upon rent during the pendency of the Commission proceeding.
- (2) If a complaint alleges housing conditions that violate a housing, health, building or other code or statute, the Commission shall notify the appropriate municipal office or agency, which may then concurrently exercise its own powers. In addition, the Commission may request that the appropriate municipal official or agency promptly investigate and provide a report to the Commission.
- (3) If two or more complaints are filed against the same landlord by tenants occupying different rental units in the same building, complex, or mobile home park that appear to raise the same or similar issues, the Commission may consolidate such claims for hearing.
- (4) The Commission or municipal staff may, to the extent practicable, encourage the parties to the complaint to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution through informal conciliation. Municipal staff (but not Commission members) may serve as informal conciliators. Any agreement to resolve the complaint shall be in writing and signed by the parties.
- (5) A hearing on the complaint shall be scheduled no later than thirty (30) days after the filing of the complaint, unless impracticable. Written notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing shall be given to the parties to the complaint at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing by first class and certified mail and, if practicable, by electronic mail.
- (6) All parties to a hearing shall have the right to be represented, to cross-examine witnesses, to examine documents introduced into evidence, and to call witnesses and introduce evidence. The testimony taken at a hearing shall be made under oath. Hearings shall be recorded.
- (7) In the event that there is insufficient time to complete a hearing or for other cause, the Commission shall have the power to adjourn the hearing to another time and date.
- (8) No sale, assignment, transfer of the housing accommodation in question or attempt to evict the tenant shall be cause for discontinuing any pending proceeding nor shall it affect the rights, duties and obligations of the Commission or the parties.

(e) *Rent Reduction Order and Repairs*

(1) The Commission shall render its decision at the same meeting at which the hearing on the complaint is completed or within thirty (30) days following such date, unless impracticable. In accordance with the state Freedom of Information Act, both the hearing itself and the deliberation by the Commission shall be open to observation by the public. Until a decision on the complaint is made by the Commission, the tenant's liability shall be for the amount of the last rent prior to the increase complained of or, if there is no such increase, the last agreed-upon rent.

(2) If the Commission determines after a hearing that the rental charge or proposed increase in the rental charge for any housing accommodation is so excessive, based on the standards and criteria set forth in subsection (c) above, as to be harsh and unconscionable, it may order that the rent be limited to such an amount as it determines to be fair and equitable, effective the month in which the tenant filed the complaint. A Commission's orders may include, but are not limited to, a reduction in a rental charge or proposed rent increase; a delay in an increased rental charge until specified conditions, such as compliance with municipal code enforcement orders, have been satisfied; or a phase-in of an increase in a rental charge, not to exceed a fair and equitable rent, in stages over a period of time.

(3) If the Commission determines after a hearing that a housing accommodation fails to comply with any municipal ordinance or state statute or regulation relating to health and safety, the Commission may order the suspension or reduction of further payment of rent by the tenant until such time as the landlord makes the necessary changes, repairs or installations so as to bring the housing accommodation into compliance with such laws, statutes, or regulations. If the Commission's order constitutes a complete suspension of all rent, the rent during such period shall be paid to the Commission to be held in escrow subject to such ordinances or provisions as may be adopted by the town, city or borough. Upon the landlord's full compliance with such ordinance, statute or regulation for which payments were made into such escrow, the Commission shall determine after hearing such distribution of the escrowed funds as it deems appropriate.

(f) *Retaliation*

(1) No landlord shall engage in retaliatory actions. Retaliatory actions by a landlord include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Engaging in any action prohibited by C.G.S. § 47a-20 or § 21-80a within six months after any event listed in such statutes, including but not limited to within six months after the tenant has filed a complaint with the Commission;
- b. Refusing to renew the lease or other rental agreement of any tenant; bringing or maintaining an action or proceeding against the tenant to recover possession of the dwelling unit; demanding an increase in rent from the tenant; decreasing the services to which the tenant has previously been

entitled; or verbally, physically or sexually harassing a tenant because a tenant has filed a complaint with the Commission;

- c. Engaging in any other action determined by the Commission, after a hearing, to constitute landlord retaliation as set forth in C.G.S. 7-148d(b).

(2) In the initial notice scheduling a hearing or conciliation on a complaint, and in its notice of decision, the Commission shall include notice, in plain language, to landlords and tenants that retaliatory actions against tenants are prohibited.

(3) Any tenant who claims that the action of his or her landlord constitutes retaliatory action may file a notice of such claim with the Commission. If the Commission determines, after a hearing, which hearing shall be expedited, that a landlord has retaliated in any manner against a tenant because the tenant has complained to the Commission, the Commission may order the landlord to cease and desist from such conduct and order the landlord to withdraw or remediate such conduct as has already occurred.

(g) *Appeals*

(1) Any person aggrieved by any order or decision of the Commission may appeal to the Superior Court within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the written notice of the decision to the parties. Such notice shall include notice of the right to appeal, the court to which an appeal may be taken, and the time in which an appeal must be filed. Unless otherwise directed by the Commission or the court, the filing of an appeal shall not stay any order issued by the Commission.

(h) *Failure to Comply with Commission Orders*

(1) Any person who violates any order of rent reduction or rent suspension by demanding, accepting or receiving an amount in excess thereof while such order remains in effect, and no appeal pursuant to § 7-148e is pending, or who violates any other provision of this chapter or C.G.S. § 47a-20 or 21-80a or who refuses to obey any subpoena, order or decision of the Commission pursuant thereto shall be fined not less than \$25 nor more than \$100 for each offense. If such offense continues for more than five days, it shall constitute a new offense for each day it continues to exist thereafter.

(2) The Commission, in its own name or through the municipality, may bring a civil action to any court of competent jurisdiction or take any other action in such a court to enforce any order of the Commission made pursuant to this subchapter, or to enjoin a violation or threatened violation of any order of the Commission.

(i) *Amendments to State Law.*

*Section 1.*

(1) Any amendments to the state law referring to fair rent commissions shall be

automatically incorporated into this article and made a part hereof. Any provisions and amendments to the Town Charter that apply to appointed commissions shall apply to the Commission.

(10)

**RESOLVED:** That upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectwomen and a request by the Director of Public Works, in accordance with the Policy for Gifts to the Town, 2. C.-Monetary Donations. More than \$20,000, a donation in the amount of \$50,000 for construction of a bus shelter at 199 Post Road West is hereby approved.

(1)

TUESDAY

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Education's budget items as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting be adopted and the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the Board of Education Budget is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures; and be it,

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Town of Westport General Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting, be adopted and the sum of the Board of Education Budget, the First Selectwoman's Budget, and the Other Agencies and Organizations Budget in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures and that for the purpose of raising a tax on the Grand List of 2022, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is hereby appropriated.

**Westport Representative Meeting**  
**RTM Finance Committee**  
**Report on the 2023-2024 Town Budget**  
*For the RTM Meeting, May 1, 2023*

As stated in the Town Code, the RTM Finance Committee studies Town revenues and financial policies and practices, exclusive of individual department budgets. The Committee works with Town officials to secure adequate reports for the RTM. The Finance Committee further studies the Town's current financial position, the financial aspects of the annual budget, capital requirements and long-term financial planning.

We started our formal review of the Town's financial position early in this new year with the Boards of Finance and Education, and other members of Town government and the RTM. We followed closely the deliberation of the Boards of Finance and Education at their various budget workshops and meetings. While individual department budgets have been reviewed and voted upon by appropriate RTM Committees, the Finance Committee met to discuss the aggregate budgets that the larger body is now being asked to approve.

As we move forward to the final steps in this budgeting process this evening, it is worth taking a moment to recognize that inflation is a significant factor in our lives and is readily apparent in the budget we are considering this evening. Additionally, Westport continues to successfully assimilate a large number of new residents post Covid, while working to ensure that we maximize opportunities for equal access to housing. From the Board of Selectman, the Board of Finance, the Board of Education, to the department heads and all of the incredibly dedicated employees and volunteers our town is so fortunate to rely upon, there has been an unwavering focus on attending to the well-being of our community.

We met with the Town Administration on Wednesday, April 26th. First Selectwoman Jen Tooker and Finance Director Gary Conrad joined us to review the Town of Westport's General Fund Budget and we were also joined by the Directors or deputy Directors of most town departments as well as Lee Caney from the Board of Finance. This report, covering the Town Budget only, is the first of two reports prepared by the Finance Committee (there will be a second report with focus on the BOE's budget and presentation which will be submitted by my colleague on the Finance Committee, Nancy Kail, tomorrow night). The RTM Finance Committee also met on Tuesday, April 18th (on Zoom) with School's Superintendent Thomas Scarice and Chief Financial Officer Elio Longo, Director of Human Resources John Bayers, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Anthony Buono, Assistant Superintendent for

Pupil Services Michael Rizzo along with Board of Education Chair Lee Goldstein and Vice Chair Liz Heyer, to review the BOE budget. As mentioned, the report on the 2023 - 2024 Education Budget will be presented to the full RTM on Tuesday, May 2nd, 2023.

I'd like to thank the Finance Committee and fellow members, Noah Hammond, Nancy Kail, Don O'Day, Stephen Shackelford, Rachel Cohn and Lyn Hogan for their time and effort in reviewing the budgets. And as a Committee, I'd like to thank all of the individuals, named and not named in this report, for their patience in helping us deal efficiently with the many intricacies of the budgeting process and for remaining so focused on the best interests of our community.

### **BACKGROUND**

The preparation and approval of the budget is at least a five-month exercise involving the Town Administration, the Boards of Finance and Education, and the RTM, among others. The approval by the RTM is the culmination of reviews by the Town, various boards, and RTM committees. Our reviews this year, as always, balanced the many priorities of the Town, namely:

The maintenance of:

- 1) our superior educational environment;
- 2) Town Services and Safety; and
- 3) our relatively modest tax burden.

We reviewed in addition:

- 1) the appropriate funding of our future pension and OPEB obligations;
- 2) the responsible maintenance of the Town's outstanding debt levels and how that impacts our credit rating;
- 3) the effect on Town finances of Federal Funds, State mandates (and efforts to pass one size fits all zoning laws that clearly don't fit all towns well), and local efforts to expand affordable housing.

At our April 26th Committee meeting, Board of Finance member Lee Caney presented the Town Budget, as approved by the Board of Finance (BOF) at its March 8th meeting. Each of the departmental budgets were reviewed with specific variances noted YOY. The total town budget request is \$81,333,668 which represents a 3.44% or \$2,706,191 net increase over the previous budget. The 3.44% increase mentioned here this evening vs. the 4.2% increase approved by the BOF back in March reflects a nearly \$1.1M reduction in debt service resulting from a reduction in required debt issuance due to the timing of certain expenses being delayed.

Over the last many years, the Town budget has experienced modest operational increases while the Administration has worked aggressively to meet its large OPEB and pension liabilities. The progress on improving our funding levels towards these obligations has been quite remarkable. Through consistent and conservative annual contributions to the pension and OPEB liabilities we are appropriately funded and should continue to maintain a disciplined approach to be certain that we can keep the promises we've made to our town employees and retirees. With the OPEB Account having built up over the last twelve years from \$0 to ~\$97 million, the account is about 86% funded. This "catch up" in funding of this liability is one of the Town's great successes of the past dozen years and deserves to be recognized as a source of Town strength provided by the taxpayers.

In terms of some of the more notable operational variances, we noted:

- An increase in the Parks & Recreation budget of 7.85% which was mainly driven by inflationary impacts which have impacted everything from fuel to fertilizer pricing.
- An increase in Public Works of 7.1% reflecting significant increases in the cost of solid waste disposal and the cost of asphalt as well as an increase in the cost of tree maintenance.
- Public Protection budgets that remarkably experienced a minimal 1.07% increase due in large part to the very good fortune of the Police Department having been able to add experienced new officers that allowed the department to avoid incurring expensive training expenses. It should also be noted that the 1.07% increase for Public Protection excludes the costs associated with the Fire Department's open contract since July 1, 2001.

Like the broader economy, Westport has fallen victim to the impact of rising prices. We heard a common theme across many town departments detailing the many and varied ways in which inflation is playing an increasing role in driving higher expenses. While the town has been strategic with respect to how we purchase certain products and services we are inevitably forced to contend with the rising cost of goods; whether it be fuel related, services related, materials related, or labor related.

Moving beyond the operating items associated with the Town's budget, we also reviewed the "Other Organizations" budgets which cover the Health District, the Library, Earthplace and the Westport Transit District. In total, the "Other Organizations" budget added another \$6,451,931 to the requested budget. On a year over year (YOY) basis, this represents a 1.05% increase from the 2023 BOF approved budget for these items. This included the Health District (a 2.5%



increase); Library (a 5.24% increase); Earthplace (flat YOY) and the Westport Transit District (which as reduced by the BOF represents a decrease of 66.74%\*).

This last item, the Transit District budget, continues to be a topic that generates significant discussion and debate. Our committee heard a presentation by Westport Transit District (WTD) Director Peter Gold which provided updated details on the Wheels2U program, overall finances for all of the services provided by the WTD which concluded with a request for restoration of the \$291,231 that the Board of Finance previously cut from the WTD budget on March 8th. After lengthy discussion focused on the repeated nature of this particular restoration request and the need to imminently address a more integrated transportation plan, the Finance Committee moved to vote on the request and unanimously voted to recommend restoration of these funds to the full RTM.

\*Should restoration be approved, the WTD budget would be \$405,388 which would be an increase of 18.1% YOY which reflects both an increase in ridership across all of their services and a variety of inflationary impacts.

#### **BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

With all of that as background, The RTM Finance Committee voted unanimously, 5 - 0, to recommend the full 2023 - 24 Town budget of \$81,333,668 to the RTM. (Seth Braunstein, Nancy Kail, Don O'Day, Lyn Hogan, and Noah Hammond voting on all items)

We also voted to recommend to the full RTM approval of the "Other Organizations" budget of \$6,743,162. As mentioned above, the Finance Committee also unanimously recommended a restoration of the Transit District's budget, with a restoration request in the amount of \$291,231.

Additionally, we reviewed the three benefits-assessed budgets which do not form a part of the General Fund Town Budget. Each of these were approved by the committee along a 5 - 0 vote.

1. the Sewer Fund of \$5,193,132, up 4.232% from 2022-2023;
2. the Railroad Parking Fund of \$1,855,199, up 5.475%; and
3. the Wakeman Town Farm Fund of \$474,835, down 0.74%.

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

#### **TAXATION IMPLICATIONS**

Once the final Town of Westport and Board of Education budgets are adopted by the RTM at our meetings this week, the Board of Finance will then be able to set the mill rate for the 2023-24 fiscal year. At present, the final amounts are still to be determined pending the one restoration request that will be considered this evening related to the Transit District's budget. To recap, the mill rate will use the following inputs; Selectman's Budget of (1) \$81,333,668 (2) Other Organizations expenses of \$6,451,931 (which may increase by \$291,231 pending the restoration request by Transit); (3) BOE Debt Service of \$7,219,639 and (4) an overall Board of Education requested budget of \$136,287,710 plus BOE-related budgets for (a) Program Expenses (\$199,556); and (b) Aid to Private/Parochial Schools (\$561,927) These amounts represent changes to last year's final budgets of;

- (1) Town Budget: +3.44%
- (2) "Other Organizations": +1.05% with the Library funding seeing the greatest increase of 5.24% (subject to restoration of Transit funding)
- (3) Education Operating Budget: +5.24%
- (4) Total General Fund Budget: +3.75%.

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

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

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

When the BOF sets the mill rate they determine any contribution from the General Fund balance. When possible, the BOF uses this balance to reduce taxes while keeping the fund in a previously set range of 9-11% of total budgeted annual expenses. This range is an important feature in the Town's discussions with the ratings agencies. We need to balance a level of available "rainy day funds" with an undertaking by the Town to keep tax rates as low as possible so that current taxpayers are not disproportionately funding future obligations. The Board of Finance will determine in late May the contribution, if any, from the General Fund. In

setting the mill rate this year, the BOF will consider the many uncertainties arising from the State's well-known fiscal woes, and the residual impacts that remain as a result of the pandemic (some favorable in terms of how interest in our town has grown as people have sought to exit New York City, and some negative as certain expenses have increased to support the sudden increases we've experienced in school enrollment and the wide ranging impact of economic inflation).

#### **PROJECTED TAXES 2023-2024**

The BOF will set the mill rate with the factors that are known in mid-May. The current mill rate of 18.06 was essentially unchanged YOY. As you can see in the table below, the town completed its most recent revaluation three years ago (a process undertaken every 5 years) which was based on property values just prior to the pandemic.

What does this mean to the taxpayer?

The historic tax charge on a home with a market rate of \$1,000,000, and a consequent assessed value of \$700,000 has been as follows:

2010-2011 (mill rate: 0.01485):	\$10,388
2011-2012 (mill rate: 0.01743):	\$12,201
2012-2013 (mill rate: 0.01791):	\$12,537
2013-2014 (mill rate: 0.01807):	\$12,649
2014-2015 (mill rate: 0.01794):	\$12,558
2015-2016 (mill rate: 0.01809):	\$12,663
2016-2017 (mill rate: 0.01686):	\$11,802
2017-2018 (mill rate: 0.01686):	\$11,802
2018-2019 (mill rate: 0.01686):	\$11,802
2019-2020 (mill rate: 0.01686):	\$11,802
2020-2021 (mill rate: 0.01671):	\$11,697
2021-2022 (mill rate: 0.01807):	\$12,649 Revaluation (without which the Mill Rate = 0.01695)
2022-2023 (mill rate: 0.01806):	\$12,642 Essentially the same as a decade ago

Apart from a few Litchfield County rural communities, our mill rate is among the lowest in the state. It compares favorably to neighboring towns like Weston (.03297), Wilton (.02823) and New Canaan (.01837), but we remain well above the Greenwich mill rate (.01128), and slightly above Darien (.01723).

#### **OTHER FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Taxes, and any potential increase in the tax rate, are always a principal consideration of the RTM Finance Committee at this time of the year. There are other issues which are important to mention here, however.

For Fiscal Year End (FYE) 2023, after an expected bond issuance of \$10.1 million, total debt will be \$105.9 million. While this is a great reduction from the peak level of debt at FYE 2006 (\$177,120,000) we are likely to contend with higher debt levels over the next decade as our capital investment may include two new school buildings and a new firehouse. It is also important to recognize that while Interest rates remain favorable vs. higher historical levels for long term debt issued and refinanced by the Town, interest rates have increased significantly over the past year and the cost of future bonding for the town will certainly increase from recent historically low levels. Our May, 2023 offering is expected to carry an interest rate close to 3.6 to 3.7% for 20 years (issuance in May of 2022 was done at 3.38%).

Employee pension funds are re-evaluated every year. Total funding is 95.8% of the most recent 2022 liabilities valuation. As of February 28, 2023 the market value of the pension fund was \$370.3 million (up from \$360.0 million at the close of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022).

Additional items that will be factored in:

- The 2022-2023 annual results should end in a \$2.7+ million gain for the General Reserve.
- Historically low interest rate levels have allowed the town to smartly refinance debt that had higher rates which has resulted in reduced financing costs (but we should all note that interest rates have inflected and the cost of future borrowing will be increasing).

All of these considerations will help impact the generation of the mill rate later this month. As we have learned, a consistently conservative and prudent approach to capital spending should allow the town to handle the inevitable, unanticipated expenses that are certain to emerge. We must remain vigilant to ensure that we are able to finance our excellent schools at a pace which over the last many years has far outpaced inflation; be responsible stewards of the town's infrastructure assets (which are beginning to show their age); recognize the challenged condition of the finances of the State of CT; and maintain a vibrant Town that continues to attract residents looking for the best place to live in the world. I am sure we are up to the task.

The RTM Finance Committee appreciates the assistance it has received in this budget cycle from Jen Tooker, Gary Conrad, Thomas Scarice, Elio Longo, Lee Caney, the Board of Education, the Board of Finance, and all our Town's Department Heads.

Respectfully submitted,

Seth Braunstein

Chair, RTM Finance Committee

RTM - District 6

Westport RTM *Health & Human Services Committee* | April 11th, 2023 | Budget Meeting Minutes

## Summary

Called to order: 7:34 PM  
Adjourned: 8:50 PM

Agenda:  
Budget Materials:  
Audio Recording:

Member Attendance: **Jessica Bram, Chairperson**  
**Jack Klinge**  
**Sal Liccione**  
**Chris Tait**  
**Wendy Batteau**  
**Harris Falk**  
**Julie Whamond**

Guest Attendance: **Elaine Daignault, Human Services Director**  
**Mark Cooper, Aspetuck Health District Director**

Agenda Item One: *Review and discussion of the 2023/2024 Westport Human Services budget.*

**Approved** 4.1% / \$61,422 increase  
Motioned: Sal Liccione, 8:15 PM  
Seconded: Jack Klinge  
*Unanimously Approved*

Agenda Item Two: *Review and discussion of the 2023/2024 Aspetuck Health District budget.*

**Approved** -2.5% \$571,700  
Motioned: Sal Liccione 8:40 PM  
Seconded: Jack Klinge  
*Unanimously Approved*

Adjournment: **Jessica Bram, Chairperson**

*Respectfully submitted by Julie Whamond, 04/12/23, Health & Human Services Committee | 1/4*

Westport RTM *Health & Human Services Committee* | April 11th, 2023 | Budget Meeting Minutes

## Report

### Agenda Item One: Human Services; +4.1%

Presenting: Elaine Daignault, Director

**Presentation Begins:** 7:35 PM

Elaine began the presentation by describing a 4.1% increase over last year, amounting to \$61,422. These monies are split into three major cost centers within the Department:

- **Social Services**
- **Youth Services**
- **Center for Senior Activities**

Elaine continued to describe the overall goals and objectives of the Department, which includes assisting both at-risk and general status residents with access to local, state, and federal resources - such as youth and senior programming, health, wellness, and addiction or abuse resources, financial resources, emergency resources, and housing.

A brief overview of each cost center was provided with their own individual increase:

#### **Social Services: 5.4% increase**

Located in Town Hall, Room 200. This is the main office for Human Services and is where they facilitate contact with households, field questions, and help residents access the appropriate resources. A part time social worker became full time this year. There is an opening for another full time social worker. Increase is for salary. Difficult to find another social worker. Market is very competitive.

#### **Youth Services: 5.9% increase**

Youth services facilitates programs and services for Westport Public School students and other young residents. These include counseling, addiction services, as well as social-emotional engagement activities.

A portion of their increase for the cost center comes from the rent of Toquet Hall, which is increased ~2.5% annually. The other portion of the increase comes from their staffing. They were able to expand their student outreach services through a contracted service for counseling and intervention while adding a licensed Drug & Alcohol Counselor from the Liberations Program for 2 days/week at Staples High School.

#### **Senior Services: 2.1% increase**

*Respectfully submitted by Julie Whamond, 04/12/23, Health & Human Services Committee | 2/4*

*Westport RTM Health & Human Services Committee | April 11th, 2023 | Budget Meeting Minutes*

Senior Services facilitates programs and resources for elderly and at-risk aging residents through the Center for Senior Activities, through home visits, or through Zoom activities. Increase is for maintenance to the center for aging equipment in the kitchen and the gym and an increases in salary with a cushion in the budget for staff shortages that are covered by part-time employees.

## Discussion

Members asked Elaine what her priorities are with her increases. She stated that she needs to maintain and pay her staff. The number of cases in town have increased. Chris suggested to increase the pay of the social worker needed for the department and to work with the First Selectwoman. This plan worked with the DPW a few years ago.

Wendy feels it is not acceptable that the DHS has to fund raise and write grants to fund their budget. Elaine writes all the grants. Jack mentioned that having someone from the Senior Center who is well versed in grant writing could assist. Chris suggested that the town hires a grant writer to handle and assist all grant writing for all departments who need them. Grant writers are paid by a percentage of the grant awarded in some cases and perhaps that would help all who spend a lot of time filling out grant forms for funds.

Jack mentioned how much the bond between Staples students and the Senior Center is important and would like to see more activities between the generations.

Elaine shared that the Westport Together program is running well. It is a positive youth development program that has all youth services under one roof. Everything is online in one place. It is similar to a mini Celebrate Westport. Many events happen under this umbrella such as narcan training, suicide prevention, parent discussions, Kool to be Kind and the Westport Youth Commission made up of 15 adults and 15 youth.

Wendy felt that it should be noted that the staff at the WDHS work incredibly hard.

**8:15 - Sal motioned to approve budget; Seconded by Jack Klinge. Unanimously approved.**

## Agenda Item Two: Aspetuck Health District; -2.5%

Presenting: Mark Cooper, Director of the Aspetuck Health District

**Presentation Begins:** 8:15 PM

Mark stated that the increase in AHD budget is for electrical and heating bills and staffing.

*Respectfully submitted by Julie Whamond, 04/12/23, Health & Human Services Committee | 3/4*

*Westport RTM Health & Human Services Committee | April 11th, 2023 | Budget Meeting Minutes*

Covid is winding down but there is an uptick in pneumonia cases to be blamed on less mask wearing. The staff is kept very busy. The side effect of covid is staffing issues. The office has been down one employee for over a year.

CT has a new FDA food code and has not provided information for inspectors on the perimeters of new rules. Part timers are hired but there are many changes with the new system. The biggest difference is for local food enforcement with a push for electronic forms entered into a database with public access to information, especially restaurant grades.

The health department is looking at electronic data systems to help with inspection reports. We are governed by the state so must follow new FDA food code or lose our funding.

According to the state, Westport's population has decreased.

The AHD needs one more environmental inspector. The travel clinic is being used more which is good news as it is a revenue source. The office has plenty of nurses.

## Discussion

Jack asked Mark how the three towns who use Aspectuck share the expenses. Mark answered: 24% Weston, 60% Westport and 14% Easton. Usage is calculated by permits issued and as Westport has more salons, restaurants, spas etc. the number of permits is bigger.

Mark shared that the AHD has just contracted with a consulting group, [Harvard Business School Club of CT Community Partners](#) to work on a community needs assessment. This is to be paid for by a state grant. The AHD is working on a 5 year plan on what the community wants and needs from their health department.

The condition of the building was discussed by many committee members. Painting is needed. Sal mentioned new doors and windows should be installed to save on energy costs. Wendy suggested having Sustainable Westport tour the building to help with cost saving ideas. Mark mentioned that the building department had also visited. Mark mentioned one of the best improvements would be repairing the handicapped access space in the parking lot. It is muddy in the rain and the grading is in poor condition.

The RTM suggests that ARPA money be allotted to the Health District for building improvements. The building is a town owned asset. We commend the job being done by our health department under the current building conditions.

**8:40: Sal motioned to approve the budget. Seconded by Jack. Unanimously approved.**

*Respectfully submitted by Julie Whamond, 04/12/23, Health & Human Services Committee | 4/4*



April 20, 2023

On Tuesday April 18, 2023, The RTM Public Protection Committee meet with the Westport Police and Fire Department to discuss, and vote to recommend to the full RTM on the Board of Finance approved budgets for the fiscal year 2023 to 2024.

The Police budget was broken down into 3 parts – Police, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Animal control. The total budget of all 3 divisions of Police management came to \$11,400,335.00. The breakdown is as follows Police \$9,873,004.00. EMS \$1,375,000.00 and Animal Control \$173,842.00. The total increase 1.3% for Police

The Fire budget was also broken down into 3 parts as well. Fire, Water, and Emergency Services. The total cost came to \$12,330,904.00. The breakdown as follows Fire \$9,983,440.00 Water \$1,375,000.00 Emergency Services \$972,460.00 The total increase .3% for Fire.

The committee spent an hour reviewing and asking questions concerning manpower, schools, population increase and general safety of both the public and our Police and Fire personnel.

Lou Mall made both motions to approve each budget. Sal Liccione seconded both motions.

Both budgets passed unanimously 8-0

In Attendance – Public Protection Jimmy Izzo, Louis Mall, Claudia Schaum, Andrew Collabella, Salvatore Liccione, Candace Banks, Richard Lowenstein, Karen Kramer. Police Chief Foti Koskinas, Deputy Chiefs David Farrell and Ryan Paulson. Fire Chief Michael Kronick, Deputy Chief Nicholous Marsan, Assistant Chief Jeffrey Gootman, Firefighter Matthew Willie, RTM member Lauren Clark.

My humble apologies if I missed anyone!

Respectfully Submitted,

Jimmy Izzo Chair – RTM Public Protection Committee

**Westport RTM Transit Committee Meeting Report, April 17, 2023**

Meeting in person, Town Hall room 309

**Agenda:**

1. Railroad Parking budget
  - Vote was unanimous in favor
2. Westport Transit District budget
  - Vote was unanimous in favor, Peter Gold recused himself

**In Attendance:**

RTM Transit Committee Members

- Kristin Schneeman, Brien Buckman, Ross Burkhardt, Peter Gold, Nancy Kail, Sal Liccione, Dick Lowenstein, Liz Milwe, Claudia Shaum (by phone)

Presenters

- Foti Koskinas, Chief; Dave Farrell, Deputy Chief; and Ryan Paulsson, Deputy Chief, Westport Police Department
- Peter Gold, Director, Westport Transit District

Others

- RTM members Don O'Day, Harris Falk
- Matt Pentz, Norwalk Transit District CEO; Marty Fox, former WTD Director; Jennifer Johnson, former WTD Director; Thane Grauel, Westport Journal reporter; other members of the public

**Agenda Item 1 – Railroad Parking**

Police Chief Foti Koskinas and Deputy Chief Dave Farrell presented the 2023-2024 Railroad Parking budget request of \$1,855,199, a 5.475% increase from the previous year. Major drivers for the increase are salaries and benefits and the possible purchase of an electric truck. Significant improvement projects coming up include replacement of elevators. Koskinas noted that since the WPD has taken over management of railroad parking the number of spaces has increased 22%.

Questions and discussion revolved around:

- **Numbers and pricing of permits.** Koskinas noted that the WPD would likely be seeing an increase in the price of annual and daily parking for the first time in many years; annual permits are currently \$325, while other towns in Fairfield County charge as much as \$1000. (Koskinas was not able to announce the new rates at the meeting; in subsequent days it was revealed the proposed new rate for an annual permit for a single space would be \$400, with daily rates proposed to go up from \$5 to \$6.) There is still no longer a waitlist for permits, but Koskinas said on some days of the week (mostly Tuesday through Thursday) lots are as much as 80% full. He also said he expects there to again be a waitlist for permits sometime within the next 18 months. Peter Gold asked for the WPD's help getting data from the state on current MTA ridership numbers, to give us some sense of transit trends as the pandemic appears to be easing.
- **The railroad reserve fund.** As in the past, members of both the committee and the public noted that by state law railroad parking reserve funds may be used for other projects, and advocated that Westport consider devoting some of them to other transit-related efforts (which it has, in fact, done in the past). Koskinas appealed to members to take into consideration the needs and interests of train commuters in all future discussions about transit.
- **Other projects.** By July 1 the EV charging stations at the RR Parking lots will charge a fee. WPD is working with the state to expand deployment of solar at the stations. A new venture (a partnership with the Town and schools focused on employment for those with disabilities) should be announced soon to go into the retail space at the Greens Farms station.
- **The future.** There was some discussion, which continued into the WTD portion of the agenda, about the future of transit in Westport and the role of Railroad Parking in that context. There was also some discussion about the proposed Hamlet project and its impact on traffic and parking in Saugatuck.

**Sal Liccione made a motion to approve the Railroad Parking Fund budget of \$1,855,199; Liz Milwe seconded, and the vote to approve was unanimous.**

**Agenda Item 2 – Westport Transit District**

As has been the case in previous years, the Committee was asked to consider restoring funds for the Westport Transit District's commuter shuttle service cut by the Board of Finance. This year the Board of finance cut \$291,231, representing the entire budget for the Wheels2U (W2U) shuttle service. Last year the Board of Finance cut the W2U budget by 50%.

Peter Gold, who is both the volunteer Westport Transit Director and a member of the RTM and its Transit Committee, presented the full WTD budget of \$405,388; this includes \$114,157 for the door-to-door transportation service for seniors and the disabled – which is non-controversial – as well as the amount for W2U, the reimagined shuttle service which picks up residents at their homes and takes them to the train stations. The budget is a bit more than 18% over the FY22-23 budget – a 48% increase for the seniors and disabled services and 9.4% for W2U. Reasons for the increase include growing ridership as well as increases in personnel and fuel costs. Westport's funding leverages \$664,100 in additional funds from the state for the WTD.

Key elements from Gold's presentation included:

- Three basic services provided via contract with Norwalk Transit District (NTD)
  - Wheels2U, an on demand, mobile app supported commuter shuttle service
  - Door to Door "in town" services for seniors and those with disabilities
  - Door to Door "town to town" (between Fairfield County towns) services for seniors and those with disabilities
- Ridership data
  - Wheels2U is on track to significantly exceed its current FY target of 21,000 rides, with the current projection being 26,000; ridership in FY22 was a little over 18,000. Despite changing commuting patterns, ridership on the shuttles continues to grow steadily and is expected to continue to grow as commuters return to the office more days per week
  - 1140 unique riders through March 31 of this FY
- Rationale, benefits, support for Wheels2U
  - Increasingly flexible, efficient, easy to use and affordable. Meets all trains in rush hours, has later service than old fixed routes
  - More environmentally friendly than old fixed route system - will use over 27,300 fewer gallons of fuel (45% less) and drive 88,000 fewer miles (56% decrease) in FY23 than in FY19
  - Provides services to all residents in town (now including Saugatuck Shores) and those commuting into town to work
  - Widespread enthusiasm among residents for the service, with more than 280 emails sent in support to date
  - Leverages state subsidies (~ 66% of budget) while maintaining local control of service

Several members suggested changes to W2U including a fare increase, alternative revenue sources, and more marketing; Brien Buckman shared in advance of the meeting an analysis of a sample of supportive emails received from residents and their willingness to pay higher fares. Gold expressed willingness to consider all suggestions and noted he is working on a state grant that could enable expanded service. Matt Pentz from Norwalk Transit District noted they are about to launch a "comprehensive operational analysis" that will include public input to help inform an assessment of Westport's transit needs.

Since last year's budget approval, the political landscape for transit in our area has changed. The state legislature has passed a bill that, unless significantly amended, will likely mean Westport's Transit District will need to merge with another larger district (likely Norwalk or Bridgeport) by FY25 or have its state funding frozen. Many members of the Committee expressed frustration with the Administration's continued lack of ownership over a comprehensive transit/transportation/traffic agenda for Westport, and that they did not believe the RTM and the volunteer leadership of WTD should have to drive the District's planning and operations.

Jennifer Johnson advocated that the RTM simply abolish the WTD to force the Administration to step in and provide services. Sal Liccione made a motion to cut all funding for the W2U service, which was not seconded. Members advocated, and Committee chair Kristin Schneeman agreed, to convene another Committee meeting after the budget meetings to discuss ways the Committee might influence the Administration to take ownership and lead on these issues.

**Dick Lowenstein made a motion to restore \$291,231 to the WTD's budget and approve the full WTD budget of \$405,388; Nancy Kail seconded. Peter Gold recused himself, and the vote was 7-0 in favor.**

Submitted by Kristin Schneeman, RTM Transit Committee Chair  
April 24, 2023



## RTM Budget Meeting May 1, 2023



## The Issue

- Recommend approval of the Westport Transit District (WTD) budget for FY 24, including restoration of the \$291,231 for the Westport Transit District's Wheels2U shuttle cut by the Board of Finance.
- Absent restoration by Westport's Representative Town Meeting (RTM), the Wheels2U on-demand, group ride, door-to-door shuttle service to and from Westport's two train stations will end on June 30, 2023.
- The RTM will be asked to restore the full funding for Wheels2U at the RTM's May 1 meeting.
- Door-to-door services for the elderly and persons with a disability will not be affected by the Board of Finance cut.

## Westport Transit District Services

- Commuter shuttles to and from Saugatuck and Greens Farms train stations.
- Door-to-Door transportation for seniors and residents with disabilities “within Westport.” (Elderly and Disabilities Within Town)
- Door-to-Door transportation for residents with disabilities between Westport and Fairfield Cty communities to our west (“Town-to-Town”).
- Services are provided under subcontract arrangement with Norwalk Transit District which assists the WTD in a number of ways.
  - NTD operates buses and provides support services.
  - WTD determines scope of operations after considering input of elected officials and the public, oversees arrangements with NTD, and manages activities such as marketing and budgeting.
- WTD services do NOT include the Coastal Link service operated by Norwalk Transit, Greater Bridgeport Transit and Milford Transit or ADA required services within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile corridor on either side of the Post Road.

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## Proposed FY 24 Westport Assistance to the WTD

	<u>FY 23 RTM Approved Budget</u>	<u>FY 24 Proposed Budget</u>	<u>Change \$</u>	<u>Change %</u>
Wheels2U	\$266,100	\$291,231	\$25,131	9.4%
Total Elderly and People With Disabilities	\$77,100	\$114,157	\$37,057	48.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$343,200</b>	<b>\$405,388</b>	<b>\$62,188</b>	<b>18.1%</b>

Increases due to:

- Increase in ridership for all services
- Cost inflation

# What is Wheels2U?

## Wheels2U Westport Microtransit Operating Model

[Wheels2UWestport.com](http://Wheels2UWestport.com)



## Wheels2U Westport

Wheels2U Westport is an on-demand, door-to-door, group ride service tailored to Westport's needs.

- Hours of operation:  
Peak commuting periods into and out of Westport:
  - Morning pickups: between 5:45 AM and 10:00 AM
  - Evening pickups: between 4:00 PM and 9:30 PM
- Area of operation: Between locations anywhere in Westport and the Greens Farms and Westport train stations.
- Scheduling a ride:  
Use the Wheels2U App. Average ETA until bus arrives is less than 10 minutes.
- Fares:  
\$2.00 paid with App.
- User Satisfaction: Average of 4.8 out of 5.

For more information go to [www.Wheels2UWestport.com](http://www.Wheels2UWestport.com)

# WHEELS 2U Westport

## How it Works

### 1. Download the Wheels2U App



### 2. Request A Pickup

### 3. Get Going



# Requesting a Pickup

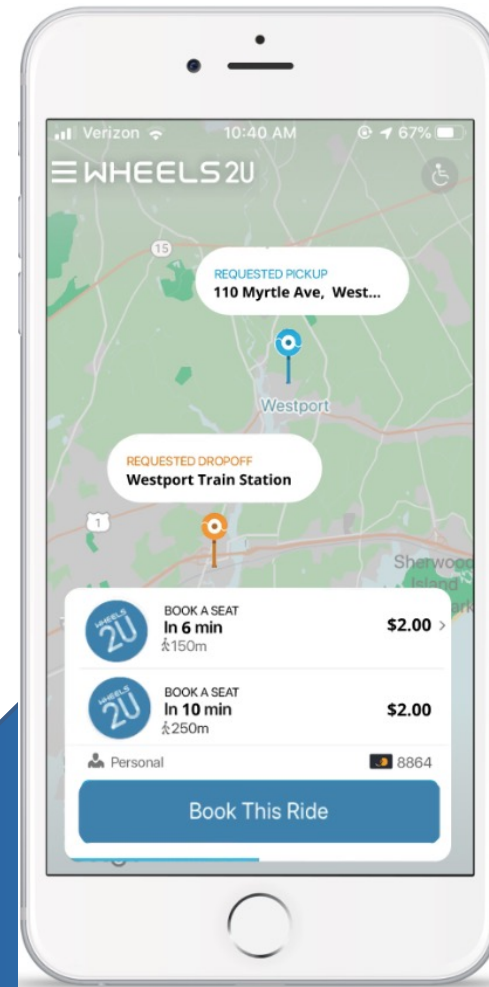
## Follow these simple steps:

- **Open the app and allow location services**
- **Enter your pick-up & drop-off locations\***
  - **Just choose a location from your “Favorites” list, which will be established as you use the App!**
- **Choose a pick-up time**
- **Select pay option: App or Uniticket**

## You can monitor expected pick up and arrival times!

\* **Pick-up or drop-off must be at a train station. App will ask if there is more than one passenger or a wheelchair is required. (All vehicles are wheelchair accessible.)**

\*\* **Vehicle will wait no more than 2 minutes for passengers to board.**



# Restore Wheels2U Funding

## Ridership Growth

- Ridership continues to grow

Fiscal Year	Rides
Fiscal 22 Actual	18,144
Fiscal 23 Budget	21,000
Fiscal 23 Projected as of 3/31/23	26,000+

- For FY 23 through April 30, 2023 (ten months)
  - Wheels2U provided over 22,900 rides
  - Over 1,200 individuals took at least one ride on Wheels2U
  - Rides increased by 62.26% and number of individual riders increased by 58.43% over the same period in FY 22
- FY 23 rides through February are 77.6% of rides through February in FY 20 (the last comparable period prior to COVID) despite the change to hybrid work schedules.
- Ridership will continue to grow as more companies encourage or mandate employees to be in the office more days.

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## Wheels2U Westport – User Benefits

- Door-to-train platform service eliminates the walk from remote parking lots to the train platform.
- Provides service to all of Westport; greater geographic coverage than previous fixed route system. Wheels2U shuttles are convenient to all residents, increasing ridership potential.
- Meets every train during peak commuting hours; previous fixed route service did not meet every train due to resource constraints.
- Permits those commuting to work in Westport to easily go to and from the train stations and their business or place of employment wherever in Westport that may be.
- Provides a reasonable alternative to get to work for reverse commuters who may not be able to afford private alternatives.

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## Wheels2U Westport—User Benefits

- Given additional funding, the Wheels2U Westport model enables the WTD to easily invest in future enhancements such as:
  - Additional morning and afternoon operating hours.
  - Adding pick-up and drop-off locations in addition to the train stations such as downtown and the Senior Center.
- Step towards possible less costly on-demand door-to-door service for seniors and residents with a disability (vs. current process of arranging ride prior day).

## Wheels2U Westport — Town Benefits

- Wheels2U helps improve environment and meet Town goals of Net Zero 2050.
  - Wheels2U is a long-term foundation for “Green” transportation.
  - **Wheels2U will use over 27,300 fewer gallons of fuel (a 45% decrease) and will drive 88,000 fewer miles (a 56% decrease) in FY 23 than in FY 19, the last fiscal year with the fixed route system.**
  - District will be third in the state to go all electric.



## Wheels2U Westport — Town Benefits

- Wheels2U helps reduce congestion.
- Wheels2U helps promote diversity, inclusion, and equity.
  - Support and attract new residents to Town who don't have a car or who prefer a public transit alternative (e.g., millennials, young families).
  - Provide access to and from the train stations for lower income residents and workers commuting into Town who can't afford to purchase a car for commuting.
  - Make it easier to find sites for affordable housing.
  - Are a motivating factor for many families in choosing Westport over other Fairfield County towns.

## Wheels2U Westport — Town Benefits

- Wheels2U supports Westport businesses and economic development by providing a cost effective link between the train stations, employers and downtown.
- Wheels2U differentiates Westport from other towns, supporting the real estate market and enhancing the “Westport brand.”
- Longer term, Wheels2U reduces the need for additional parking at the train stations, reducing capital and on-going maintenance costs.

## Wheels2U Westport—Financial Benefits

- The Town’s cost per ride is only \$10.17 for the fiscal year through March 31. Projected cost for FY 24 is \$11.03 per ride.
- Wheels2U’s operating model enables resources to be matched with demand to increase efficiency.
  - Number of vehicles employed can be scaled up or down three times / year to match demand and control costs.
  - Vehicles travel only where commuters need to go and only go on demand.
    - Buses no longer continually drive around fixed routes looking for riders.
    - Lowers the miles traveled, fuel consumption, and cost / trip.
    - Makes the service “greener” with a lower carbon footprint.

## Wheels2U Westport—Financial Benefits

- Financial benefit for low and moderate income users and those on fixed incomes who can't afford a second "station car" for commuting or alternate private transportation services to get between the train and their homes and employers.

## Leverage Wheels2U Westport

- Can help meet new and emerging Town needs for transportation
  - Teens and youth
  - Seniors
  - Underserved populations
  - Increased use by workforce and reverse commuters
  - Discussions with other Town bodies and organizations regarding transportation needs such as:
    - Human Services Department
    - Homes With Hope
    - Team Westport
    - Downtown Merchants Assn.
    - Westport Housing Authority
    - Parks and Recreation Department
    - Gillespie Shelter
    - Other social service organizations
    - Chamber of Commerce
    - Senior/assisted living facilities

## Ultimate Goal

Integrate WTD's Wheels2U and door-to-door services into the Town's overall strategy for traffic, parking, bicycles, and pedestrians to help meet the Town's transportation goals and needs.

## Why Wheels2U's Funding Should be Restored

Wheels2U's funding should be restored for all the user benefits, Town benefits, and financial benefits it provides.

## Why Wheels2U's Funding Should be Restored

- Wheels2U's services are desired and appreciated by Westporters
  - The RTM received emails from over 325 Westport residents and organizations urging restoration of the funding (vs. 208 last year). These organizations and individuals included:
    - Commission on People with Disabilities
    - Save Westport Now
    - Homes With Hope
    - Individual commuters and non-commuters
    - New Residents
    - Sustainable Westport
    - Staples Club Green
    - Business owners and employees
    - Realtors
    - Long-time residents
- In March 2023 alone, Wheels2U provided nearly 2,800 rides to and from Westport's two train stations.



## Why Wheels2U's Funding Should be Restored

- Wheels2U offers great service to its riders; it's consistently rated 4.8 out of 5 stars.
- Two Town-wide surveys found overwhelming support for the shuttle service from both commuters and non-commuters.
- Every time the Westport Transit District (WTD) came to the RTM to restore budget cuts (May of 2013, 2015, 2019, 2021, and 2022) the RTM voted overwhelmingly to restore all funds cut by the Board of Finance.

## Why Wheels2U 's Funding Should be Restored

### WTD Services are a Public Service and a Westport Asset

- The WTD should be treated as a public service, not as a business. Public transit is heavily subsidized in almost all cases.
- The 2017 Town Plan of Conservation and Development said:

“Westport should strive to preserve the service provided by the [WTD] for those who need it, those who use it because of the convenience it provides, and *for those who like to know the service is available for the situations where they may need it.*” (*italics added*).
- The Downtown Master Plan and other recent studies also support more public transportation in Westport.

# Westport Transit District Budget Request

## Proposed FY 24 Westport Assistance to the WTD

	<u>FY 23 RTM Approved Budget</u>	<u>FY 24 Proposed Budget</u>	<u>Change \$</u>	<u>Change %</u>
Wheels2U	\$266,100	\$291,231	\$25,131	9.4%
Total Elderly and People With Disabilities	\$77,100	\$114,157	\$37,057	48.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$343,200</b>	<b>\$405,388</b>	<b>\$62,188</b>	<b>18.1%</b>

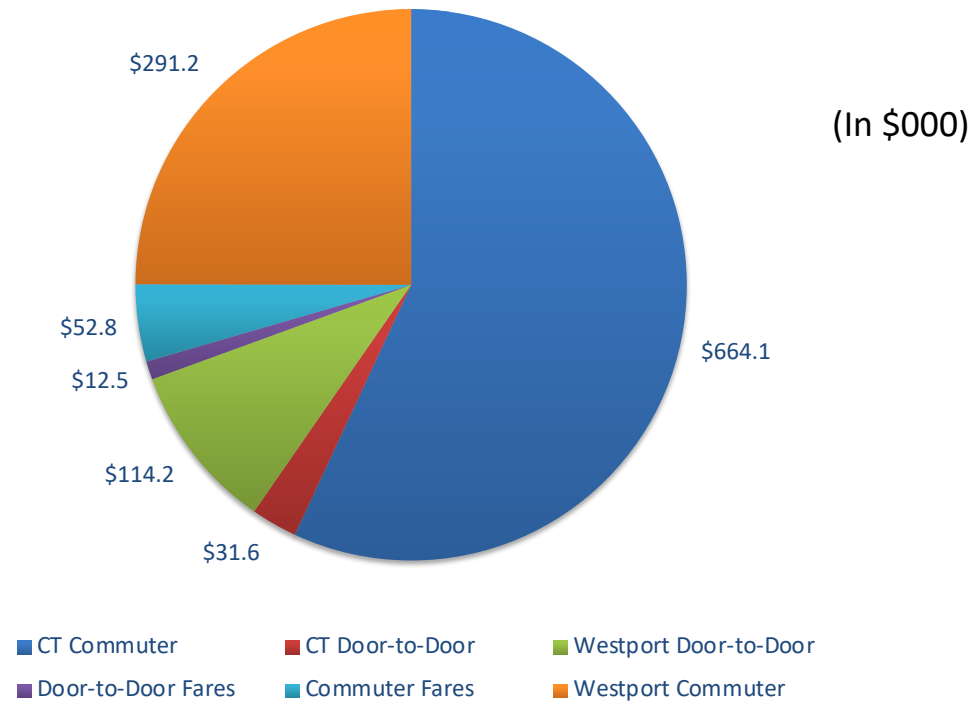
## Explanation of Increases

- Number of rides for Wheels2U commuter shuttle projected to increase to at least 26,400 rides in FY 24 from FY23 budget assumption of 21,000 rides.
- Projected number of rides for services for the elderly and people with a disability increased to 2,328 rides in FY 24 based on annualized actual rides from July 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022, compared to FY budget of 1,958 rides.
- Increase in operating costs (fuel, payroll, benefits, etc.) due to inflation.

## Wheels2U Cost Savings

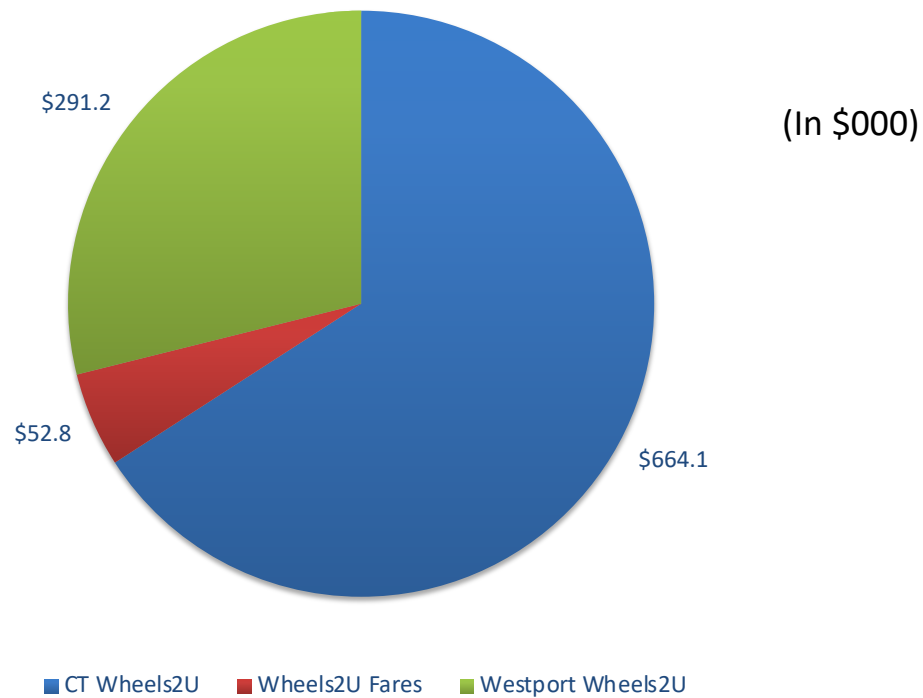
- Cost inflation partially offset by significant projected decrease in bus miles traveled and gallons of fuel used due to change to Wheels2U operating model.
- Data analysis enabled \$126,480 in Wheels2U cost savings by reducing the number of buses in use during non-peak times while changing bus positioning to help avoid increases in estimated arrival times. Can change bus schedules three times per year.
- State funding will increase by \$35,069 in FY 24 versus FY 23.

## FY24 WTD Budget Funding by Service and Source



CT funding is \$664,109 (65.9%) of the commuter shuttle budget and \$31,600 (27.7%) of the door-to-door service budget.

## FY23 Wheels2U Budget Funding by Source



CT funding (\$664,109) is 65.9% of the Wheels2U shuttle budget. The Westport Transit District's restoration request (\$291,231) is only 12/100<sup>th</sup> of 1% (0.12%) of the \$233,152,942 total Board of Finance approved Town and Education budgets.

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# RECURRING CONCERNS

## “Green” Issues

- Conversion of old fixed route system to Wheels2U permits resources to be more closely matched with demand, increasing efficiency.
  - Vehicles travel only where commuters need to go and only go on demand.
    - Buses no longer continually drive around fixed route looking for passengers.
    - Lowers the miles traveled, fuel consumption, and cost / trip
    - Makes the service “greener” with a lower carbon footprint.
  - Electric buses. NTD breaking ground on facilities to serve electric buses. NTD is third in line in state (after Hartford and Waterbury) for full electric bus service.
  - Ending existing WTD commuter services significantly increases difficulty of the Town adding electric bus service in the future.

## “Green” Issues

- Need to coordinate all actions to meet Town goal of Net Zero by 2050.
- One aspect is to change car culture to help reduce carbon emissions, ease pollution.
- Yet Town actions undermine transit use, e.g.,
  - Created additional parking spots at train stations
  - Charge below market fees for train station parking

## Subsidies for “Hedge Fund Millionaires”

- Town subsidizes railroad parking by charging below market rates for permits and daily parking.
- Railroad parking fees are currently lowest (except for Southport) on New Haven main line between Fairfield and Greenwich.
- Town subsidizes Tesla and other electric car owners by maintaining 13 public charging stations at the Greens Farms and Westport train stations, 2 at the library, and 2 more at Town Hall while not charging users for the electricity.
- Median Westport household income is \$236,892 and per capita income is \$122,799, both far below “hedge fund millionaire” level. Source: US Census Quick Facts at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/westporttownfairfieldcountyconnecticut>

## Recent Developments

- Possible regionalization and/or merger of the Westport Transit District with Norwalk or Greater Bridgeport Transit Districts.
  - Pros and cons of various approaches to Westport need to be evaluated and weighed.
  - Westport benefits significantly from its current relationship with the Norwalk Transit District.
    - Leveraging NTD’s microtransit experience and paratransit experience
    - NTD management and employees provide significant attention and resources to Westport.
  - Local Westport involvement and oversight is critical to meeting Westport’s transit needs.
  
- Upcoming NTD Comprehensive Operations Analysis study will include Westport
  - Opportunity for Westport residents and stakeholders to provide input.
  - Consultants will look at Westport transit needs and opportunities and make recommendations.

# Appendix

## Cost Per Ride FY22 to 3/31/23

Service	# of Rides	# of Unique Riders	Cost/Ride
Wheels2U	20,488	1,147	\$10.17
Town to Town for People With Disability	509	22	70.15
Elderly & People With Disability Within Westport	675	22	41.74

- Westport cost is cost of service to Town through February 28 plus estimated cost for March, after State support and fares
- Wheels2U cost per ride excludes \$1,064 in marketing expenses
- Number of rides and riders for Town to Town and Elderly & Disability services do not include personal care assistants who ride for free.

Westport Transit District —Wheels2U FY 24 Budget Assumptions			
Daily Service Hours	55.25		FY 2023 Daily Service Hours
Weekly Service Days	5		
Weekly Service Hours	245.25		FY 24 Weekly Service Hours Reduces FY 23 Service Hours by 31 hours per week by reducing buses used on Fridays and during periods of low ridership on Mondays through Thursdays.
Annual Service Hours	12,508		Annual Service Hours is 51 weeks (after 5 no service holidays).
Cost Per Hour	80		
Marketing	7,500		
Annual Cost	1,008,140		
Fares	52,800		Assumes 2,200 rides monthly (26,400 rides per year) Fare remains \$2.00 per ride.
Cost - Net of Fares	955,340		
State Portion - 67% up to dollar cap	664,109		State funding is least of (a) 67% of annual cost,(b) 100% of annual cost net of fares, or (c) dollar cap. Dollar cap is 664,109 for FY 24.
<b>Westport Portion</b>	<b>291,231</b>		



**Westport Transit District—Elderly and People with a Disability FY 24 Budget Assumptions**

**Within Westport for the Elderly and People With a Disability**

FY 23 Trips Annualized	1,072.00			
Cost per Ride	68.00			
Total Cost	72,896.00			
Fares Projection	3,752.00		\$3.50 per trip	
Cost - Net of Fares	69,144.00			
Anticipated Muni Grant	31,603.00			
<b>Westport Portion</b>	<b>37,541.00</b>			

**Town-to-Town for People With a Disability**

FY 23 Trips Annualized	1,256.00			
Cost per Ride	68.00			
Total Cost	85,408.00			
Fares Projection	8,792.00		\$3.50 times 2 per trip	
Cost - Net of Fares	76,616.00			
<b>Westport Portion</b>	<b>76,616.00</b>			

**Total Door-to-Door for the Elderly and People With a Disability**      **114,157.00**

**RTM Parks & Recreation Committee**  
**Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Room 309, Town Hall**

**Committee Attendance:** Chris Tait (Chair), Jimmy Izzo, Andrew Colabella, Julie Whamond, Sal Liccione

**Public Attendance:** Jen Fava (Director, Parks & Recreation), Rick Giunta (Operations Director), Mike West (Parks Superintendent) Elaine Whitney (Parks & Recreation Commissioner).

**Agenda:**

- 1.) To discuss the Parks & Recreation Department BOF approved 2022-23 Budget and make recommendations to the full RTM.

The meeting was called to order by Chris Tait at 7:06PM. Mr. Tait addressed the committee that there was a mistake to the original agenda post that stated, "2022-2023 budget," rather than, "2023-2024 budget," and that the change and correction to the agenda had to be voted on. A motion by Sal Liccione, seconded by Jimmy Izzo, the vote was unanimous.

Jen Fava presented for the Parks & Recreation Department, distributing a brief report that was three pages long. Before getting into the report, Ms. Fava stated to the committee that the Parks & Recreation Commission voted on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, approving unanimously the Longshore Plan. The plan, a ten-year projection describing the bulk of the \$47 million projects would be treated as a living document that would obviously change as time goes on, but highlighting that every single item, would go through its own entire process, the same process as every appropriation would.

Ms. Fava distributed a packet, outlining the prior years of revenues and expenditures. The Cost Recovery for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 operating budget was 94% cost recovery with 6% subsidy, with respect to 85% cost recovery and 15% subsidy if you were to include debt service. The outcome of these findings is not only a description that Parks & Recreation is entirely user fee based, but per the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA), most agencies, towns, departments in 2022 recover 23.6% of operating expenditures from non-tax revenue. Therefore, highlighting Westport's recovered is above stellar and setting an example for other agencies and towns to follow.

Chris Tait added to that by explaining Westport's Parks Department is user fee revenue based serviced relies on very little tax incentive .

Ms. Fava went on to discuss the expenditure increase. FY2024 request is \$7,848,321, while FY2023 was \$7,277,327, a \$570,994 difference (7.846%)

There were three variables highlighted within these expenditures that are beyond control: Staffing, Inflation, and Vehicles. Staffing is contractual, showing a \$167,786 (29%) change, with

respect to majority of staff returning, the minimum wage increases per state law, and the department's incentive base creativity of competing hourly wages with other municipalities. To retain great talent and loyalty from past seasonal employees, the incremental change is appropriate and fair. Inflation showed a \$111,603 (20%) spike due to scarcity of resources and materials also brought up by lack of human power to produce and/or maintain the needs outside the department such natural resources, materials, equipment, private contractual services, and their goods. Finally, vehicles are \$15,000 (3%) increase due to abnormally high demand with a low supply chain still catching up from actual vehicles to a halt from precious metals involved in the production. A total of 52% being out of the control.

Ms. Fava discussed also about new sustainability initiatives such as one of them being evasive control of phragmites within our own parks and finding means to control with little to no adverse effect or impact on the environment, a 12% increase.

Ms. Fava also discussed the impact of revenues and sales. When beach emblems went on sale, they were sold out within 24 hours. This was possible because the fee had decreased, but number of emblems had increased, thus generating more revenue without loss and accommodating more patrons.

Mr. Sal Liccione posed the question if it was possible to sperate revenues by line item to see, such as Compo Beach, Burying Hill, Tennis, Pool, Golf, etc.

Mr. Chris Tait explained that the Town of Westport had acquired a computer program two years ago that boosted and provided transparency for the public to be able to view these intricate and extreme details by line item in budget form.

FY2023 Revenue of \$6,324,966 with a proposed revenue for FY2024 \$6,840,277, a \$515,311 increase, a \$55,683 difference with respect to expenses highlighted in Ms. Fava's report, covering 90%.

Ms. Fava also brought up that Tennis will be opening ten days in advance.

Mr. Jimmy Izzo asked about Pickleball and the plans of building and whereas highlighted in the Longshore Plan for first year.

Ms. Fava responded that because of the growing sport being so popular and high in demand and Compo beach courts do not meet the specifications along with other variables, this is a year one priority. Everyone agreed.

Mr. Tait asked about the timeline of future projects for this year.

Ms. Fava stated that the P.J. Romano Track is being replaced this year while construction for the new PAL Clubhouse would be going on at the same time.

Pickleball plans are currently being proposed and created as promised in the first year for the Longshore plan.

A parks master plan for RFP's is being written currently with large and in-depth research.

Finally, Mr. Mike West stated that the department is also working on a Coastal Resiliency plan on how to improve our beaches, while protecting and creating new ways for our ecosystems and environment to sustain yet grow. This would require a permit from the State of Connecticut, which takes roughly 18 months, for licensed and approved specialists to go below the high tide line to remove excess runoff, erosion, and material from past weather-related events to be put back onto the beach, graded to proper specification of degree, and mitigate flooding.

Mr. Tait highlighted the intricate work and detail from the construction company that has regraded the beaches, removed large stones and rocks, and saved by moving sand collected in other areas due to wind and waves from weather related events.

**Motion:** To approve the Parks & Recreation FY 2024 budget of \$7,848,321 by Sal Liccione.

Ms. Kristin Mott Purcell seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously 6-0.

**Report of the RTM Environment Committee Meeting - 4/27/23**

Agenda: To Review the 2023-24 Conservation Department Budget

Attendees: Andrew Colabella, Matt Mandell, Wendy Batteau, Lyn Hogan, Ellen Lautenberg, Lori Church, Colin Kelly - Director, Conservation Dept, Thomas Carey - Chair, Conservation Commission

Colin Kelly, Conservation Dept Director, presented an overview of the budget. Essentially, he said he is keeping it the same as last year since he became the Director recently when Alicia Mozian retired and determined it was better to keep things as they were given that transition. Staff duties are split up to oversee various responsibilities such as managing permitting. The department shares a part time person with P & Z and gets 200 hours of that person's time.

Questions from the Environment Committee:

Ellen Lautenberg: Does he feel that the budget is adequate for their needs?

Colin Kelly: The plan for now was to keep things stable through the transition but he will evaluate moving forward. He is also focusing on continuing to develop relationships with other departments and collaborating with them as much as possible.

Wendy Batteau: Who is writing Grant Applications?

Colin Kelly: We don't have anyone currently dedicated to that but we are working with Earthplace in some cases. It has really been a secondary focus.

Wendy: How is the enforcement piece working out?

Colin: We have a lot of working violations but the process seems to be manageable at this time. However, moving forward with leaf blowers, we will have to manage the educational campaign and out time. We are hopeful that we will not be dealing with too many back-logs. Single use plastics enforcement got put aside with Covid but will resume that and we are in discussions with the Selectman's office about ongoing enforcement. Most of the department's time is taken up by serious violations and applications for larger scale projects.

Wendy: Did the department ever get the new car that was needed?

Colin: It was in the budget last year and now we have a new electric car (see line item increase)

Wendy: Are you involved with recycling?

Colin: No - it is under public works

Wendy: Have you been coordinating with the tree office?

Colin: Yes, we are in very good communication and are having ongoing discussions.

Lyn Hogan: Any big concerns?

Colin Kelly: There are a few items going forward to look into - we would like to be more public facing, have more public outreach, press releases, Social Media, etc. There are good partnerships that we would like to fortify, like Harbor Watch and water quality testing. The budget has been flat for 10 years and with inflation, etc, we would like to suggest increasing for

the following year. We would also like to work more closely with Aspetuck Land Trust re: open space and mapping.

There were no further questions.

Wendy Batteau made a motion for the Environment Committee to recommend approval of the Conservation budget.

Andrew Colabella seconded the motion.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Written and Submitted by Ellen Lautenberg  
Chair, Environment Committee

**MINUTES RTM LIBRARY, MUSEUM & ARTS COMMITTEE MEETING – EARTHPLACE BUDGET VOTE**

**April 24, 2023 5:00 PM - Location: Zoom**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kristin Mott Purcell – Chair  
Candace Banks  
Brandi Briggs  
Lori Church  
Harris Falk  
Dick Lowenstein  
Karen Kramer  
Brian Buckman

The LMA met to vote on the 2023/2024 Earthplace Budget by zoom on April 24<sup>th</sup>. The budget was presented and discussed on March 3<sup>rd</sup> as detailed below. Given there were no changes to the budget, the committee had no additional questions.

Karen Kramer made the motion to recommend to the full RTM approval of the 2023/2024 Earthplace budget. Harris Falk seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to support the recommendation to the full RTM.

**MINUTES RTM LIBRARY, MUSEUM & ARTS COMMITTEE MEETING – EARTHPLACE BUDGET REVIEW**

**March 3, 2023 5:00 PM - Location: Westport Library**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kristin Mott Purcell – Chair  
Candace Banks  
Brandi Briggs  
Lori Church  
Harris Falk  
Dick Lowenstein  
Karen Kramer  
Michael Perry

**REPRESENTING EARTHPLACE:**

Tony McDowel, Executive Director

Tony provided a brief update on Earthplace and a review of this year’s budget request of \$105,000 for Fiscal year 2023/2024.

Key points reviewed/discussed:

- Revenues from early childhood education programs and summer camp jumped 25% year over year to nearly \$1.7 million contributing to an earned income base of 50% of total revenues.
- Program delivery was 82% of total operating expenses of \$3.2 million

- Earthplace received two large legacy gifts which helped restore the balance sheet and invest in new exhibits and displays.
- Earthplace was also granted several Employee Retention Tax Credits (ERTC's) from lost revenues in prior quarters totaling \$398,000, plus \$49,000 in residual PPP funds--all related to prior income losses due to Covid restrictions.
- Expenses are expected to be 8% over budget due to higher payroll
- Predicting a \$163k deficit after depreciation
- Year-end surplus including the legacy gifts is expected to be just under\$2.6M which when combined with investments equals ~\$3.4M, about the equivalent on their annual expenses. Which is a typical measure of soundness for a non-profit.

Questions:

Michael Perry – Is Harborwatch break-even?

No, half of the \$105k from the Westport Town Budget is given back to the town through Harborwatch expense of roughly \$50k.

Voting to submit to the full RTM will occur after the Board of Finance



**MINUTES RTM LIBRARY, MUSEUM & ARTS COMMITTEE MEETING –LIBRARY BUDGET VOTE**

**April 24, 2023 5:00 PM - Location: Zoom**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kristin Mott Purcell – Chair  
Candace Banks  
Brandi Briggs  
Lori Church  
Harris Falk  
Dick Lowenstein  
Karen Kramer  
Brian Buckman

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**

Dorothy Curran  
Stephen Nevas

The LMA met to vote on the 2023/2024 Westport Town Library Budget by zoom on April 24<sup>th</sup>. The budget was presented and discussed on March 3<sup>rd</sup> as detailed below. Given there were no changes to the budget, the committee had no additional questions.

Members of the public were invited to address the committee.

Dorothy Curran had three questions specific to the budget:

1- Has the Westport Library budgeted for storage of the River of Names beyond July 1<sup>st</sup>?

Kristin Mott Purcell noted that Bill Harmer had assured the committee in a prior meeting that storage costs were in the FY 2023/2024 budget and would most likely be budgeted for FY 2024/2025 if needed.

2- Has the Westport Library budgeted for the restoration of the River of Names in the FY 2023 Budget?

Kristin Mott Purcell noted that based on the presentation of the budget by the Library, we do not believe the Library has budgeted for the restoration of the River of Names.

3- Has the Westport Library made provision in its FY 2023-2024 Budget for funding the costs for possible litigation defense vs. the appeal, filed today, April 24, 2023, by Attorney Stephen Nevas.

Kristin Mott Purcell stated that since the committee's conversation with the Library was on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, there has been no discussion regarding any litigation costs associated with the appeal.

Attorney Stephen Nevas also addressed the committee regarding the River of Names and the appeal filed by him and offered to send the committee a copy of the appeal.

Seeing no further comments from either the public or the committee, Brandi Briggs submitted a motion to recommend to the full RTM approval of the 2023/2024 Westport Library budget. The motion was seconded by Karen Kramer and approved unanimously by the committee.

**MINUTES RTM LIBRARY, MUSEUM & ARTS COMMITTEE MEETING –LIBRARY BUDGET REVIEW**

**March 3, 2023 5:00 PM - Location: Westport Library**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kristin Mott Purcell – Chair  
Candace Banks  
Brandi Briggs  
Lori Church  
Harris Falk  
Dick Lowenstein  
Karen Kramer  
Michael Perry

**REPRESENTING THE LIBRARY:**

Bill Harmer, Westport Library Executive Director  
Melanie Myers – Westport Library Chief of Staff  
Jeremy Price, President, Library Board of Trustees  
Scott Bennewitz -- Chair Finance Committee, Board of Trustees  
Barrie Rosen – Secretary, Board of Trustees  
Andrew Wilk - Board of Trustees  
Peter Zakowich – Board of Trustees

Library Museum and Arts Committee met to review and vote on the Westport Public Library's Fiscal year 2023/2024 budget request of \$5,661,074.

Bill Harmer provided a brief update on the Westport Library:

- The Westport Library was nominated as a 5 Star Library
- Library attendance is up 33% YoY
- 1,300 people per day enter the library
- 1,000+ Library programs/vvents
- Events included very successful summer reading program & tutoring
- Versofest a huge success last year and looks to be even better this year
- Numerous non-profits meetings and events held at the library
- Meeting rooms and desk space getting used – waist list most days for meeting rooms
- The Library's used book store continues to grow in popularity with 20% increase in contribution to the Library
- Verso Studios have been integral to the Library's support of the community. Dozens of podcasts have been taped there and a number of emerging musicians and writers have used the facility to record new music and books on tape.
- Fiscal Year '24 Priorities:
  - Increase already excellent services and programming for the town of Westport
  - Maintain competitive salaries & benefits for staff
  - Utilize new endowment commitment to develop more curriculum and high interest, topical events
  -

Scott Bennewetz walked us through key points of the budget request:

The budget request is for \$ 5,661,074.00 reflecting a 5.4% increase to last year's budget

The town provides approximately 80% of the annual operating budget and the Library raises the remaining through fundraising and operations including fines, rental fees and revenue from the Verso studios. The Library increased its contribution by 10.9%

- Notes on Expenses
  - 73% of expenses are people
    - FTEs are done 1 person this year
  - 13% of expenses are supplies
  - 15% other
  - 85% of spending is non-discretionary
  - 15% is discretionary
- Notes on Revenues:
  - Library contribution is up 10.9%
  - Bookstore contribution is up 20%
  - Large endowment grant this year dedicated to programming
  - Café has been a focus
  - Fundraising continues to be key to the Library generated revenues

Questions addressed by Scott and Bill:

- Staffing \$\$ increases – Where is it being spent?
  - Marketing director hire
  - Will be discussing with union in June
- Why does the Library not disclose salaries of the top people?
  - It is publicly filed with our tax documents
- What % of the Town's Medical Plan is used by the Library?
- Are the Retirement plans DC or DB – Varies by union/non-union
- Where does rental revenue get listed in the budget?
- Was there a deficit this year and where did it come from?
  - Expenses were up mostly offset by increased revenues
  - Liability and staffing expenses are up
  - Café lost money this year
- Is there \$ in the budget for storage for River of Names – Yes
- How is the Westport library utilized versus other towns?

Voting to submit to the full RTM will occur after the Board of Finance

## RTM PUBLIC WORKS & FINANCE COMMITTEES

**DATE;** Wednesday, April 26, 2023

**LOCATION;** Town Hall, Room 201, 6:30 – 7:30 PM

**PURPOSE;**

1. To accept a donation under the Town’s Gift Policy, of \$50,000 from 191 Post Property Owner, LLC toward construction of a bus shelter project at 199 Post Road West.
2. Review Board of Finance approved 2023/24 Public Works Department/WPC Budgets

**PRESENTED BY;** Pete Ratkiewich, Public Work Director

1. **Donation toward 199 Post Road West Bus Shelter Project** – Pete Ratkiewich, Public Works Director, requested that the committee accept a donation in the amount of \$50,000 dollars from the property owner 191 Post Property Owner toward the construction of the new Bus Shelter at 199 Post Road West. Those in attendance from the Public Works Committee voted unanimously to recommend accepting the gift to the full RTM. (Though listed first this was the second agenda item).

2. **2023-24 Budget Discussion** - Overall budget, salaries, fuel costs, road paving, garbage and sewers were all reviewed. The overall Public Works funding has increased by \$881,106.00 from the 2022/23 “amended” budgets for the fiscal year to \$13,284,383 an increase of +7.1%. Mr. Ratkiewich explained that the changes within his budget were the increase within Engineering to accommodate salary increases, fees and equipment purchases (+\$48,188), Highways due to previously negotiated salary increases, fuel costs and capital equipment purchases (+\$41,934), Equipment Maintenance increased due to capital purchases (+\$14,450), P&R Property Maintenance (+\$90,000) due to capital projects (roofing/pool heater). Solid Waste is increased (+\$259,951) due to some maintenance projects and the decrease in value of recyclables leading to an increase in cost to take away. Mr. Ratkiewich also mentioned that the solid waste contract was currently in negotiations and would likely increase in the future. Street Lighting was increased (+\$5,000) due to inflation. Building Maintenance was increased (+\$37,650) due to capital projects (town hall stucco/ceiling tile replacement and painting projects) and equipment purchase. Road maintenance was increased (+\$424,725) due to increase in asphalt cost and some drainage and capital projects. Tree maintenance was increased (+\$93,343) due to re-negotiated tree service contract. With the exception of previously negotiated salary increases and some capital purchases the remainder of the budget items are slightly increased/decreased from 2022/2023 fiscal year. The line items are outlined below (nearest dollar);

Engineering	\$1,136,347 increased to \$1,184,535	+\$48,188	+4.2%
Highway	\$2,197,611 increased to \$2,239,543	+\$41,934	+1.9%
Equip Maintenance	\$424,771 Increased to \$439,221	-\$14,450	+3.4%
Road Maintenance	\$2,796,775 increased to \$3,221,500	+\$424,725	+15.2%
Street Lighting	\$100,000 increased to \$105,000	+\$5,000	+5.0%
Solid Waste	\$2,971,956 increased to \$3,231,907	+\$259,951	+8.7%
Build Maintenance	\$1,409,937 increased to \$1,447,587	+\$37,650	+2.7%
Building Custodians	\$358,952 increased to \$373,317	+\$14,365	+4.0%
Property Maintenance	\$37,000 increased to \$38,500	+\$1,500	+4.1%
P&R Maintenance	\$367,000 increased to \$457,000	+\$90,000	+24.5%
Tree Maintenance	\$402,928 increased to \$496,271	+\$93,343	+23.2%
Facilities Management	\$200,000 decreased to \$50,000	-\$150,000	-75.0%
WPC (incl. debt svc.)	\$4,982,276 increased to \$5,193,132	+\$210,856	+4.2%

Mr. Ratkiewich explained the WPC budget has increased by 4.2% due to some capital costs associated with maintenance of the pumps and ultra violet lamps, capital purchases and the increase in costs associated with sludge removal. These costs are passed directly to the property owners on the sewer system through a sewer use fee.

The committee had several other questions and clarifications. The Public Works committee voted unanimously to recommend the PW and WPC budgets for approval to the full RTM.

RTM attendance;  
Jay Keenan (Chair), Peter Gold, Andrew Colabella, Chris Tait, Don O’Day, Matt Mandell, Lori Church and Jack Klinge



# Westport Public Schools

2023-2024 BOARD OF EDUCATION'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

PRESENTATION TO THE WESTPORT REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING –  
MAY 2, 2023

# Annual and 2023-2024 Budget Priorities

Annual Priorities	2023-2024 Budget Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Continue Reputation as Premier School District</li><li>➤ Prudently Maintain Current Services</li><li>➤ Ensure Safety &amp; Security of Students and Staff</li><li>➤ Respond to Master Plan Facility Study</li><li>➤ Comply with all Federal &amp; State Mandates</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Preserve:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Mental Health Positions and Supports</li><li>➤ Positions Within the Instructional Core</li></ul></li><li>➤ Maintain Broad Student Course Selection Opportunities</li><li>➤ Rectify Technology Replacement Schedule</li><li>➤ Strategic Initiatives<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strategic Plan</li><li>• Equity Study</li><li>• Technology Plan</li><li>• K-12 Curriculum Review Process<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FY24: K-12 Spanish evaluation</li></ul></li><li>• Transportation Study</li><li>• Expand Effective School Solution (ESS) to middle schools</li></ul></li></ul>



# Key Budget Drivers

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- **Maintaining Current Programming**
- **Fund additional staffing due to increased enrollment**
- **Cover high starting salaries for new certified staff due to market demand**
- **Fund contractual health insurance increase (up to 8%)**
- **Preserve academic grant funded positions**
- **Fully fund building and maintenance projects**
- **Re-implement tech replacement cycle**
- **Absorb inflation**



## The Basics: BOE’s Recommended FY24 in Brief

Budget Request	Amount	\$ increase	% increase
<b>Administrators &amp; Central Office Requests</b>	<b>\$140,251,790</b>	<b>\$10,751,215</b>	<b>8.30%</b>
<i>Superintendent’s Reductions</i>	<i>(3,845,072)</i>	<i>(3,845,072)</i>	<i>(2.97)</i>
<b>Superintendent’s Proposed Budget</b>	<b>\$136,406,718</b>	<b>\$6,906,143</b>	<b>5.33%</b>
<i>Board of Education’s Reductions</i>	<i>(119,008)</i>	<i>(119,008)</i>	<i>(0.09)</i>
<b>Board of Education’s Recommended Budget</b>	<b>\$136,287,710</b>	<b>\$6,787,135</b>	<b>5.24%</b>
<u><i>Breakdown:</i></u>			
<i>Current Services budget</i>	<i>135,895,821</i>	<i>6,395,246</i>	<i>4.94%</i>
<i>Changes due to Enrollment</i>	<i>193,692</i>	<i>193,692</i>	<i>0.15%</i>
<i>Changes due to Program</i>	<i>198,198</i>	<i>198,198</i>	<i>0.15%</i>





# The Basics: FY 24 in Brief

Budget Request	Amount	\$ increase	% increase
<b>Superintendent’s Proposed Budget (TOTAL)</b>	<b>\$136,406,718</b>	<b>\$6,906,143</b>	<b>5.33%</b>
<i><u>Breakdown:</u></i>			
<i>Current Services budget</i>	135,895,821	6,395,246	<b>4.94%</b>
<i>Changes due to Enrollment</i>	193,692	193,692	0.15%
<i>Changes due to Program</i>	317,206	317,206	0.24%
<b>Administrators &amp; Central Office Requests (TOTAL)</b>	<b>\$140,251,790</b>	<b>\$10,751,215</b>	<b>8.30%</b>
<i><u>Breakdown:</u></i>			
<i>Current Services budget</i>	138,226,092	8,725,517	<b>6.74%</b>
<i>Changes due to Enrollment</i>	998,911	998,911	0.77%
<i>Changes due to Program</i>	1,026,788	1,026,788	0.79%



Budget Request	Amount	\$ increase	% increase
<b>Superintendent’s Proposed Budget</b>	<b>\$136,406,718</b>	<b>\$6,906,143</b>	<b>5.33%</b>
<b>Administrators &amp; Central Office Requests</b>	<b>\$140,251,790</b>	<b>\$10,751,215</b>	<b>8.30%</b>
<b>Reductions (TOTAL)</b>	<b>(\$3,845,072)</b>		<b>(2.97%)</b>
<u>Breakdown (Personnel):</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Reduction</u>	<u>In Budget</u>
102 Teachers Regular Ed (2.0 elementary enrollment)	2.0	-	2.0
104 Teachers Support (4.0 ESSER & 1.0 SHS Math Coach)	5.0	(1.0) <sup>1</sup>	4.0
109 Teachers Special Education (2.0 districtwide)	2.0	(2.0) <sup>2</sup>	-
110 Psychologists (0.5 LLS)	0.5	(0.5)	-
114 Speech & Hearing Therapists ( <sup>0.1</sup> KHS & 0.3 BMS)	0.4	(0.4)	-
<del>120 Non-Certified Supervisors (Facilities)</del>	1.0	-	<del>1.0</del> <sup>3</sup>
121 Secretaries (1.0 Transportation)	1.0	(1.0)	-
122 Paraprofessionals Regular (3.0 SHS, -1.0 SHS)	2.0	(2.0)	-
123 Paraprofessionals Special Ed. (1.0 CES, 2.0 LLS, 3.0 BMS)	6.0	(6.0)	-
126 Nurses	0.1	(0.1)	-
133 Other Assistants	1.0	reclass	-
135 Occupational Therapists	<u>0.4</u>	<u>(0.4)</u>	=
<b>TOTAL FTE</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>(13.4)</b>	<b>7.0 6.0</b>
<b>Cost Estimate (Salaries, Wages &amp; Benefits)</b>	<b>\$1,908,835</b>	<b>(1,045,386)</b>	<b>\$863,449</b>
115 Staff Leadership (Stipends)	\$247,334	(\$247,334)	=
118 Intramurals (Stipends)		(\$89,109)	(\$89,109)
124 Custodians (-1.0 SHS & \$100K credit café fund)		(\$185,000)	(\$185,000)
<b>TOTAL REQUESTED PERSONNEL INCREMENTAL COST</b>	<b>\$2,156,169</b>	<b>(\$1,566,829)</b>	<b>\$589,340</b>
<b>11.0 FTE IDEA grant    20.5 FTE IDEA</b>			<b>7.0 6.0 FTE</b> <b><sup>3</sup>(\$119,008)</b>



Budget Request	Initial Ask	Add/(Reduce)	% Change
<b>Breakdown (Non Personnel accounts):</b>			
323 Instructional Program Improvements (TLC)	\$269,480	(\$24,000)	-9%
435 Building Projects (HVAC)	905,019	(50,000)	ESSER
567 Tuition – Litigation/Settlements	1,100,000	(50,000)	-5%
600-level Supplies	900,000	(90,000)	-10%
612 Software	1,158,650	(11,395)	-1%
641 Textbooks (TLC)	254,340	(100,000)	-39%
736 Tech Equipment – Instructional	835,530	(179,076)	-21%
<b>TOTAL (Non Personnel accounts)</b>	<b>\$5,423,019</b>	<b>(\$504,471)</b>	
<b>ALL OTHER NON PERSONNEL ACCOUNTS (on average) – LEVEL FUNDED (FY23)</b>		<b>(\$1,773,772)</b>	



# FY 23 Unfunded Positions rolled into FY 24

Position	FTE	Est. Amount	% increase
Teachers – Regular Education	3.0	\$200,643	0.33%
Paraprofessionals – Special Education	6.0	171,486	0.02%
Related insurance benefits		<u>256,446</u>	<u>0.24%</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>\$628,575</b>	<b>0.49%</b>



# FY 24 ESSER-3 Grant

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Account	Positions	Est. Amount
210 – Health Benefits	4.0 FTE Support Teachers (Health Benefits)	\$107,000

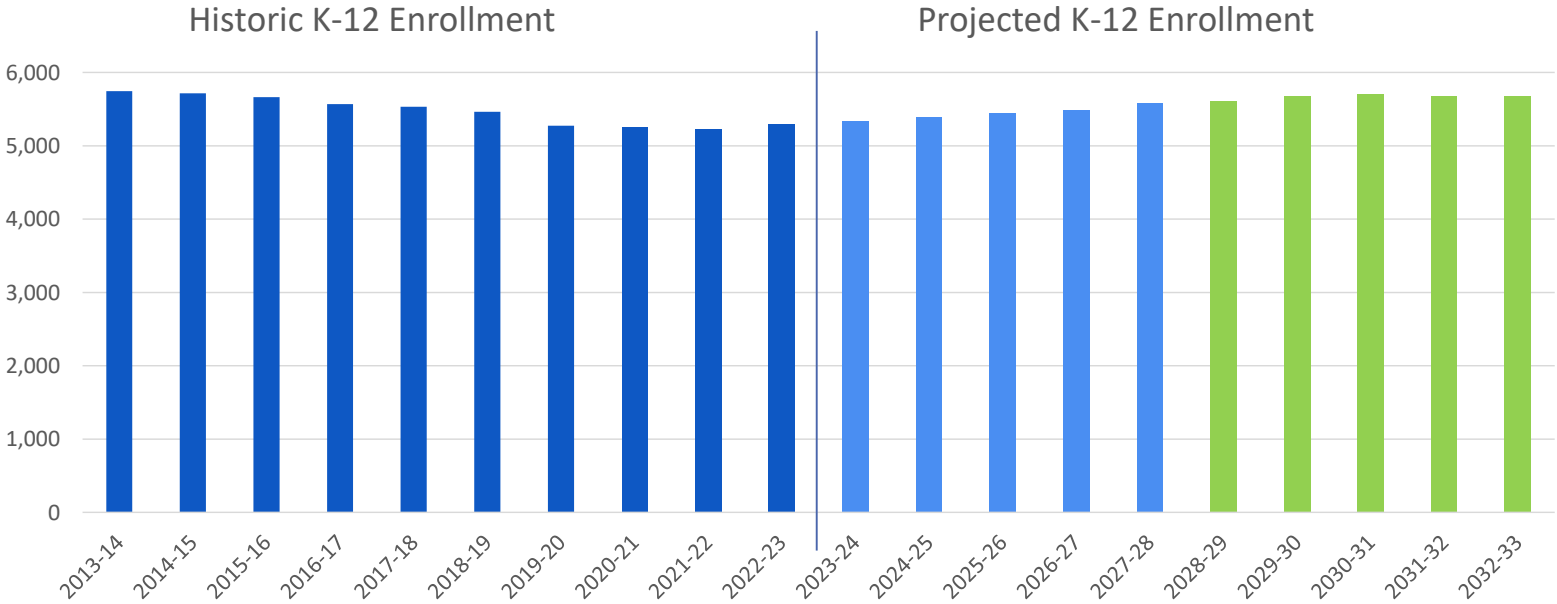


# Enrollment 23-24

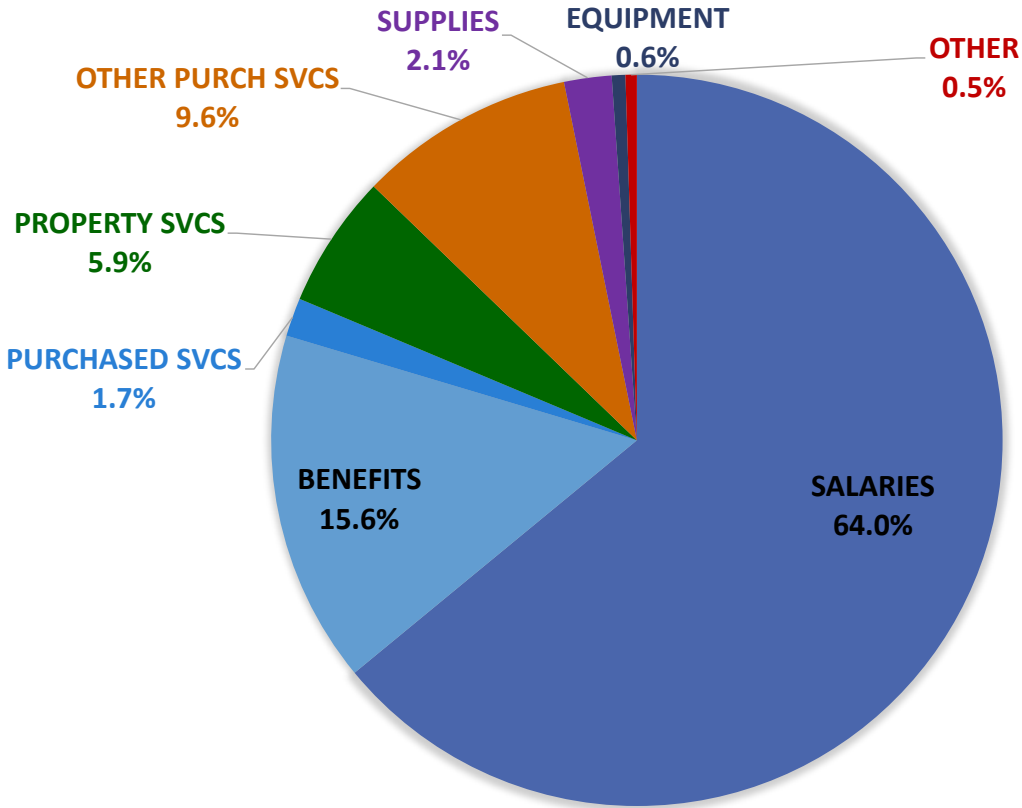
	2022-2023	2023-2024 (Projected)	
K-5	2,418	2,452	+34
6-8	1,195	1,262	+67
9-12	1,689	1,616	-73
Preschool	60	72	+12
Placed Out (K-12)	32	32	-
		<b>NET:</b>	<b>+40</b>



# Districtwide Enrollment



# Cost Composition FY 2023-2024



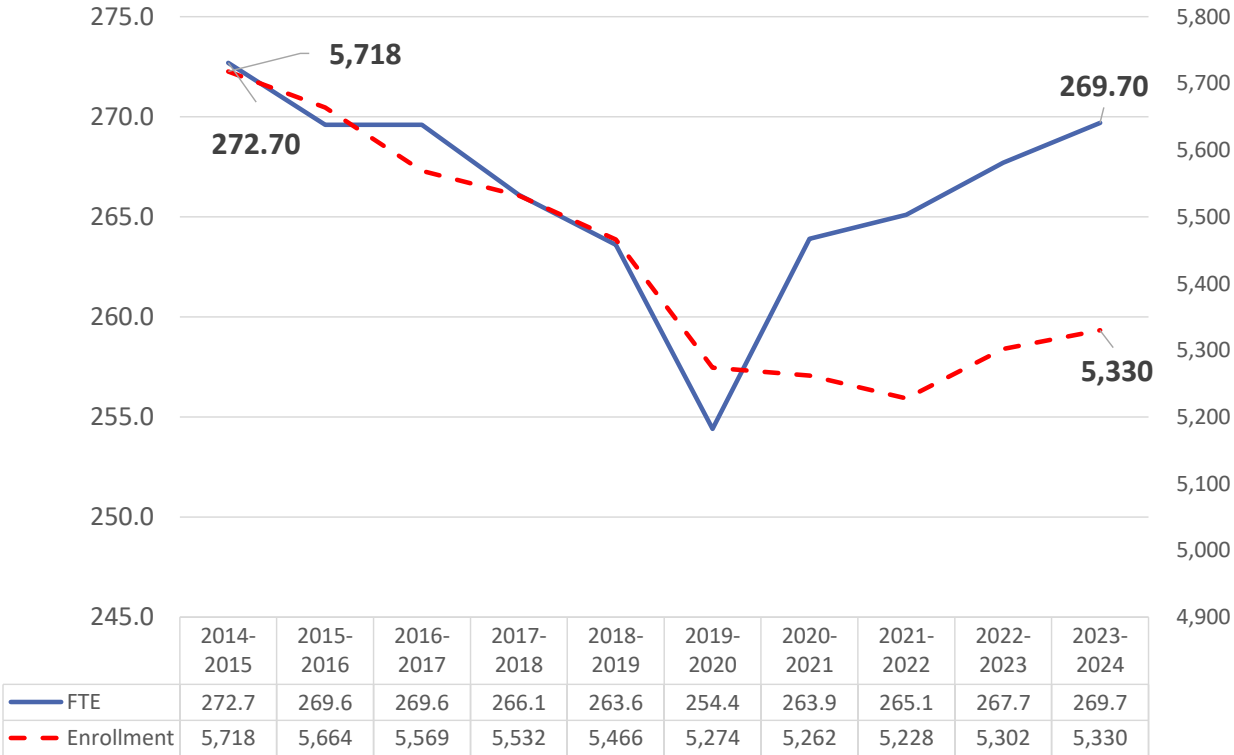


## Accounts with Exposure to Inflation/Market Pressures: ~0.81% Budget Impact

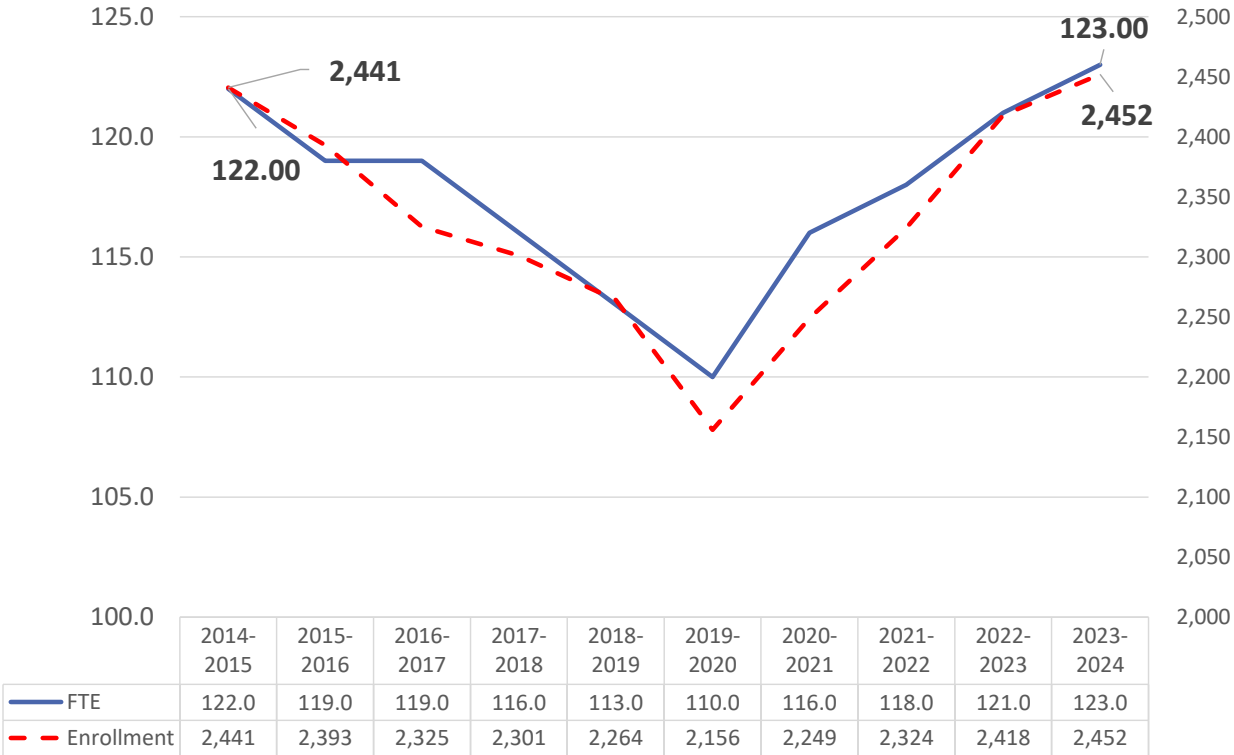
Account	FY24 Budget	YOY \$ Increase	YOY % Increase	FY24 Budget Impact
413 - Electricity	\$2,441,053	172,657	7.6%	<b>0.13%</b>
421 – Contracted Maintenance	\$874,775	109,550	14.3%	<b>0.08%</b>
432 – Grounds Maintenance	\$351,140	75,965	27.6%	<b>0.06%</b>
451 – Custodial Supplies	\$321,764	53,627	20.0%	<b>0.04%</b>
510-512 – Transportation (Internal)	\$6,518,338	368,963	6.0%	<b>0.28%</b>
513 – Transportation – Spec. Ed (External)	\$784,400	164,400	26.5%	<b>0.13%</b>
612 – Computer Software (Instructional)	\$760,344	36,207	5.0%	<b>0.03%</b>
812 – Student Athletics (Transportation)	\$350,000	106,959	44.0%	<b>0.08%</b>



### Teachers (FTE) – Regular Education



### Teachers (FTE) – Regular Education - Elementary

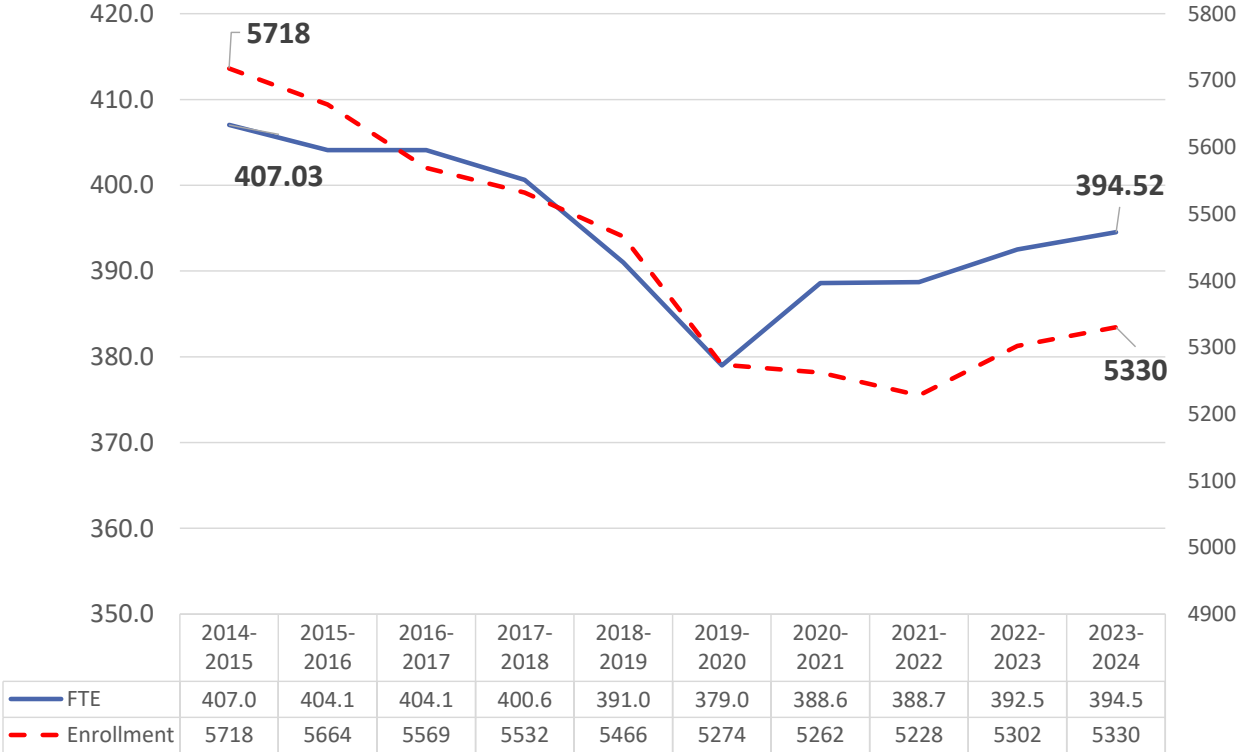


# K-5 Enrollment Compound Annual Growth Rate

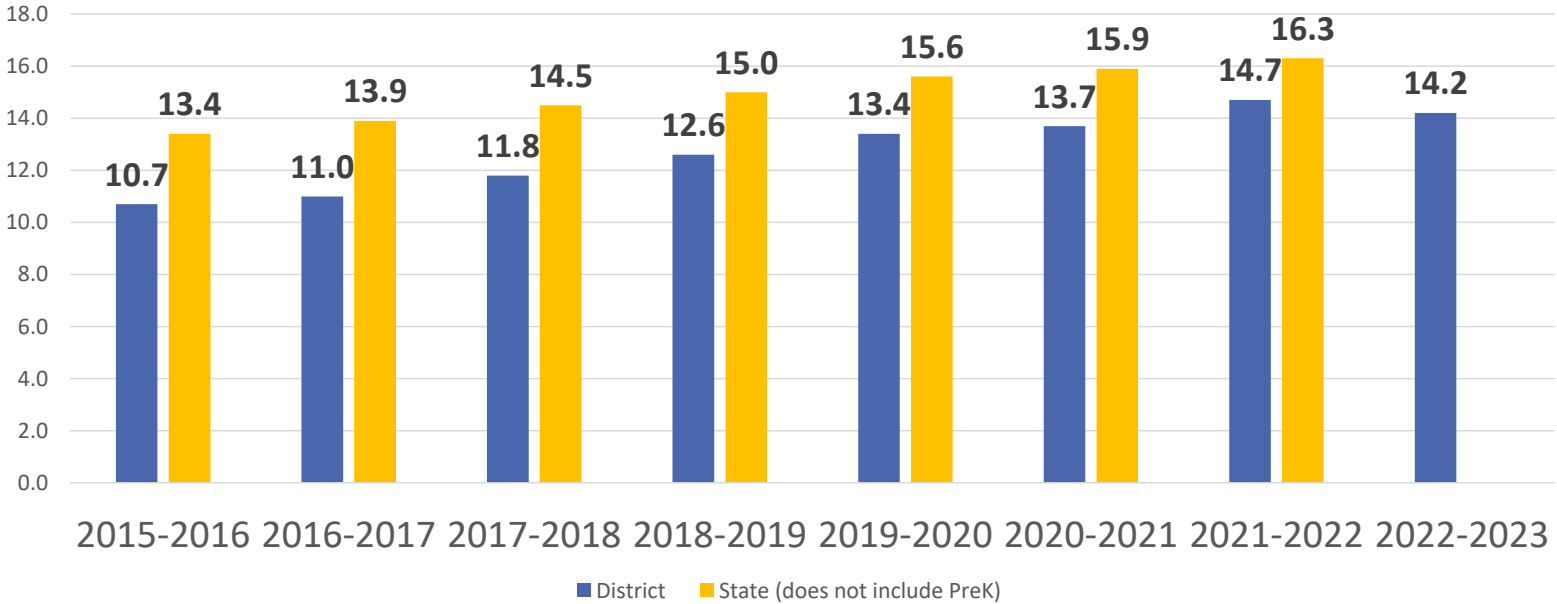
DISTRICT	10/01/13	10/01/19	10/01/22	2013-2022 Enrollment	9 Yr. CAGR	2019-2022 Enrollment	3 Yr. CAGR
Darien	2,344	2,091	2,100	-10%	-1.2%	0%	0.1%
New Canaan	1,602	1,554	1,491	-7%	-0.8%	-4%	-1.4%
Ridgefield	2,193	1,926	1,951	-11%	-1.3%	1%	0.4%
Weston	999	906	876	-12%	-1.4%	-3%	-1.1%
<b>Westport</b>	<b>2,496</b>	<b>2,156</b>	<b>2,418</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
Wilton	1,854	1,553	1,546	-17%	-2.0%	0%	-0.2%
Easton	585	534	579	-1%	-0.1%	8%	2.7%
Redding	605	505	530	-12%	-1.5%	5%	1.6%
			<b>Median:</b>	<b>-11%</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
			<b>Mean:</b>	<b>-9%</b>	<b>-1.1%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>



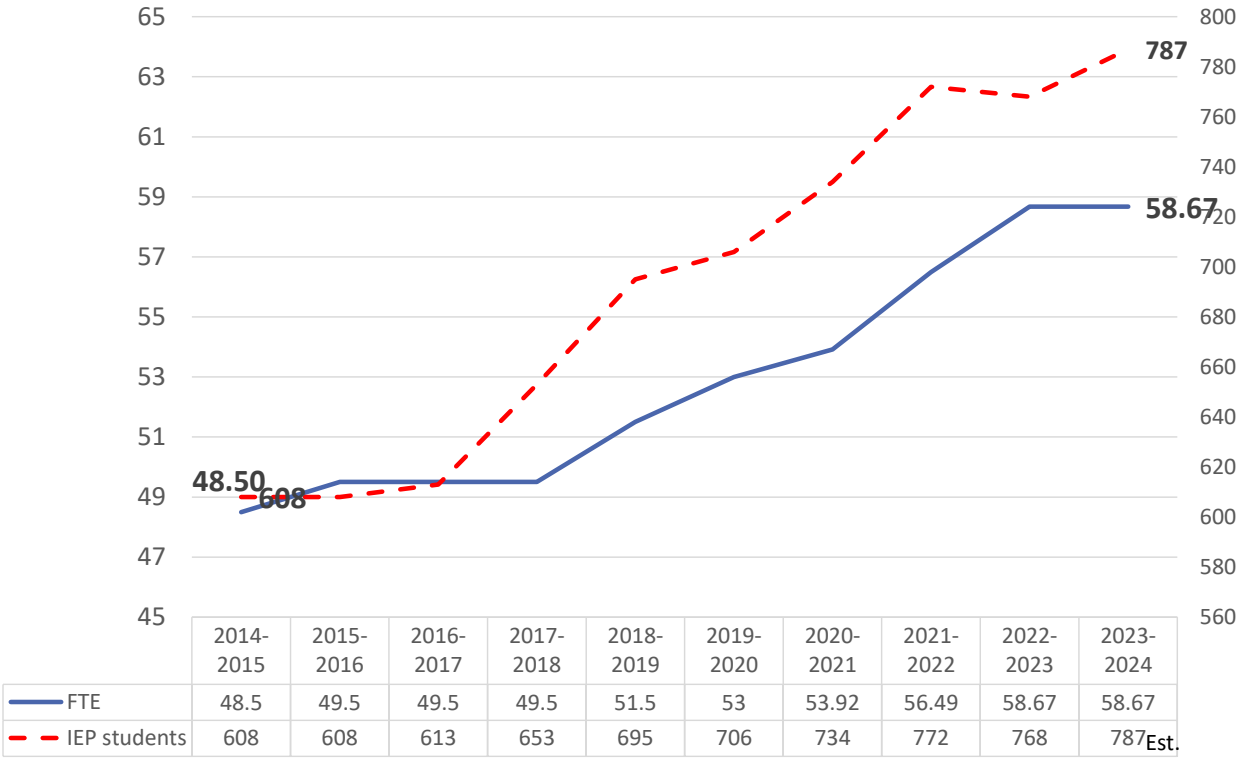
### Teachers (FTE) – Regular Education & Special Areas



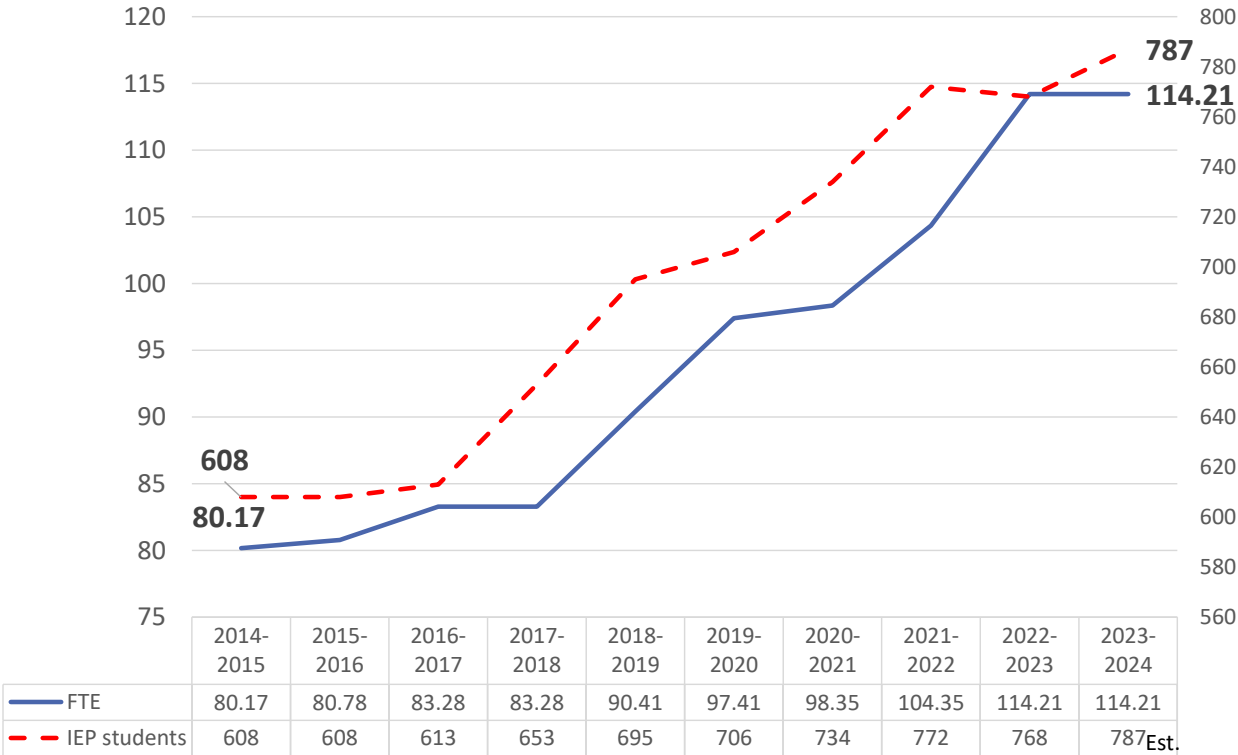
# Percentage of Students with Disabilities



### Teachers (FTE) – Special Education



### Paraprofessionals (FTE) – Special Education





# Increasing Educator Diversity Recruitment Efforts

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## ➤ **Teacher Residency Program**

The CT Teacher Residency Program (TRP) is focused on diversifying the teaching staff across the state of Connecticut. TRP partners with school districts in a “grow-your-own” model leading to CT State Certification. Residents and graduates of the program give students windows and mirrors into their lived experiences and possibilities for their future.

## ➤ **CSDE-RESC Alliance Increasing Educator Diversity Recruitment Fairs**

## ➤ **Initiate Recruitment Efforts at HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)**



## Budget Comparisons – Compound Annual Growth Rate

District (DRG A)	FY 13/14	FY 22/23	9 Yr Growth	FY23 CAGR	FY24 CAGR
Westport Public Schools	\$104,177,609	\$129,500,575	24%	2.45%	2.72%
Darien Public Schools	87,714,338	110,607,016	26%	2.61%	2.71%
New Canaan Public Schools	77,671,886	99,052,999	28%	2.74%	2.95%
Ridgefield Public Schools	82,029,557	106,600,490	30%	2.95%	3.04%
Weston Public Schools	45,575,418	56,391,182	24%	2.39%	2.45%
Wilton Public Schools	76,457,070	86,677,862	13%	<u>1.40%</u>	<u>1.71%</u>
			Median:	<b>2.53%</b>	<b>2.72%</b>

Westport BOE Budget	FY 22/23 Projected	FY23/24 Proposed	Growth
Total Certified Salaries	\$64,715,300	\$66,662,863	3.01%
% of total budget	50.0%	48.9%	



## FY23 Efficiencies – Cost Avoidance/Savings

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- Electricity (rate lock): est. \$300k in FY23
- Solar (Virtual Net Metering): est. \$200k in FY23
- Effective School Solutions (ESS): est. \$320k in FY23
- Intensive Resource program for autism and spectrum disorder students
- Health Insurance move to High Deductible Health Plan
- Shared staff across buildings
- Outreach Counselor at SHS funded by Town Dept. of Human Svcs.
- IT interactive whiteboard alternative: 40% reduction in cost
- Buses for general education transportation reduced by 2 in recent years
  - Forced reduction in buses due to driver shortage (negative impact to students/families)
- Partnering with the Town:  
Paving, utilities, snow removal, in-kind services, phones, contracts (ie., copiers)



# FYE Balances – Funds returned to Town

Fiscal Year	Funds returned to Town	% of Budget
2017	\$390,000	0.34%
2018	151,205	0.13%
2019	43,044	0.04%
2020*	616,805	0.52%
2021* (release of BOE COA funds)	675,000	0.55%
2021*	887,568	0.73%
2022	-	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,763,622</b>	
<b>*COVID-19 savings</b>		



# Tuition Receipts – Transferred to Town

Fiscal Year	Tuition Receipts	% of Budget
2017	\$136,666	0.12%
2018	157,337	0.14%
2019	168,247	0.14%
2020	216,755	0.18%
2021	255,534	0.21%
2022	<u>246,422</u>	0.20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,180,961</b>	



# Education Cost Sharing Grant – Direct Payment to Town

Fiscal Year	ECS Amount	% of Budget
2017	\$454,422	0.40%
2018	380,517	0.33%
2019	493,831	0.42%
2020	526,903	0.45%
2021	588,050	0.48%
2022	<u>523,496</u>	0.43%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,967,219</b>	



# Percent of Annual Budget Credited Back to Town

Fiscal Year	Funds Returned	Tuition Receipts	Education Cost Sharing Grant	TOTAL PERCENT CREDITED BACK
2017	0.34%	0.12%	0.40%	<b>0.86%</b>
2018	0.13%	0.14%	0.33%	<b>0.60%</b>
2019	0.04%	0.14%	0.42%	<b>0.60%</b>
2020	0.52%	0.18%	0.45%	<b>1.15%</b>
2021	1.28%	0.21%	0.48%	<b>1.97%</b>
2022	-	0.20%	0.43%	<b>0.63%</b>





# Q&A

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## 2023-2024 BOARD OF EDUCATION'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET



**RTM Education Committee Meeting  
March 28, 2023**

On March 28, 2023, members of the Board of Education (BOE) and administration met with the RTM Education Committee via Zoom to discuss and vote on the 2023-2024 BOE Recommended Budget. Present were Tom Scarice, Elio Longo, Anthony Buono, Mike Rizzo, John Bayers, Lee Goldstein, Liz Heyer, all 7 members of the Education Committee (Lauren Karpf, Lou Mall, Brandi Briggs, Kristin Schneeman, Kristin Purcell, Candace Banks, Jack Klinge), members of the RTM (Jimmy Izzo, Wendy Batteau, Andrew Colabella) and members of the public.

**Background:**

In around January 2023, the Superintendent proposed a budget of \$136,406,718, amounting to a 5.33% increase over last year's budget. After extensively reviewing and revising the Superintendent's Proposed Budget, the BOE presented to the Board of Finance (BOF) a proposed budget in the amount of \$136,287,710, an increase of 5.24% over last year's budget. The BOF approved the budget by unanimous vote.

During our meeting, the Administration presented an overview of the 2023-2024 BOE Recommended Budget and answered questions posed by the Committee. The Committee discussed many topics, including challenges this past year, changing enrollment, capacity across schools, school security and staffing.

**Challenges This Budget Year:**

The Administration discussed several challenges endured this past year and expected to continue next year. First, enrollment increases over the past year in K-8 necessitated the hiring of additional teachers. For example, we had 108 elementary sections three years ago. Today, we have 123 sections. This is a much greater increase than any of our peer districts (ie: New Canaan, Darien, Wilton had flat elementary enrollment). Specifically, there were 9 unfunded positions in 2023 that need to be rolled into fiscal year 2024. Enrollment projections forecast continued growth in PreK-8 of over 100 students. That said, our 9 year compound annual growth rate is less than the median of our DERG and at the median for 2023-2024 even with much higher enrollment growth.

Special education costs and staffing also continue to rise in the district as well as the state as more students qualify for special education services, and the percent of students with more complex disabilities increases. By way of example, in the 2015-2016 school year, 10.7% of Westport students were identified as students with disabilities. During the 2022-2023 school year, however, 14.2% of students were identified as students with disabilities. Thus, services and costs, including the number of teachers and paraprofessionals, have increased and are expected to continue to increase.

Other factors include higher starting salaries for newly certified staff due to market demand and a decrease in teachers, inflation, increased health insurance costs, preserving academic grant funded positions, and building and maintenance projects.

**Discussion:**

The RTM Education Committee acknowledged the work of the BOE and Administration, and the thorough budget process from workshops through presentations to funding bodies. The Committee acknowledged the continued efforts to balance quality education and fiscal responsibility.

We discussed cost saving initiatives implemented by the BOE and Administration, including partnerships with the Town. A transportation study and redistricting plans will lead to further savings in the next two years.

We discussed the capacity study and concerns about density and equal opportunity available to students at overcrowded schools. We were assured that redistricting in order to better balance the elementary and middle schools is being discussed, and that it will be implemented by September 2025.

RTM members spoke about the importance of vocational programs for students. We also spoke about executive functioning and study skills programs, and a desire for increased focus in those areas.

The meeting shifted to a discussion about school security after a member of the public raised concerns about safety, specifically at the elementary and middle school levels. The Kroll report has not been refreshed since 2014, and of course school safety has changed in many ways since that time. We were told that the plan is currently being refreshed. Members of the Committee agreed with the member of the public and expressed their concerns. After a lengthy discussion, we agreed to set up a future meeting to discuss school safety and security.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend RTM approval of the Board of Education Recommended Budget of \$136,287,710.

Submitted by Lauren Karpf, Chair, RTM Education Committee

**RTM Finance Committee Meeting**  
**The Board of Education's 2023 – 24 Operating Budget**  
**April 18th, 2023 - Meeting via Zoom**

The RTM Finance Committee met to consider the Westport Board of Education's FY 2023-24 Operating Budget of \$136,287,710, representing a 5.24% year over year increase and a .09% decrease from the Superintendent's proposed budget of \$136.4 million, (5.33% increase).

**In Attendance for the RTM Finance Committee:**

- Seth Braunstein – Chairman
- Noah Hammond, Nancy Kail, Don O'Day, Lynn Hogan (Lynn left before the Committee vote)

**For the Board of Education & School District:**

- Lee Goldstein - BOE Chairwoman
- Liz Heyer – BOE Vice Chairwoman
- Thomas Scarice – Superintendent of Schools
- Elio Longo – Chief Financial Officer
- John Bayers – Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and General Administration
- Anthony Buono – Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning
- Mike Rizzo – Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services

**Others In Attendance:**

- RTM members Lauren Karpf and Andrew Colabella

**Budget Meeting Overview**

BOE Chair Lee Goldstein opened the discussion and thanked the RTM Finance Committee for the opportunity to share and explain the town's collective endeavors to provide award winning, excellent educational services while prudently managing resources. Schools Superintendent Tom Scarice and his team presented on budget priorities, drivers, process, analysis, and details regarding key areas. There was some discussion and Q&A during and following the presentation. Then the Finance Committee voted on its recommendation to the full RTM.

**Budget Priorities**

Annual budget priorities include remaining a premier school district, prudently managing resources to maintain current level services, responding to facilities needs as per the facilities plan, ensuring safety and security and complying with numerous state and federal mandates. FY 2023-24 operating budget priorities include mental health positions/supports, instructional core (academic) positions, adherence to the strategic plan, transportation and expanding Effective School Solutions (ESS) to the middle schools.

**Budget Drivers**

Key budget drivers include funding: additional staff due to increased enrollment, higher starting salaries for new certified staff due to market demand, contractual health insurance increases, key academic grant funded positions (ESS), funding building and maintenance projects, reimplementing a tech replacement cycle and absorbing inflation. Highlights are below and details are included in the BOE/WPS budget presentation.

**Budget Process**

The initial ask from the WPS administrative team was \$140.2 million, a year-over-year increase of 8.30%, or \$10.7 million. Superintendent Scarice and his admin team worked two full days to reduce the request by \$3.8 million to \$136.4 million, a 5.33% year-over-year increase. The BOE, satisfied that the WPS met its reasonable and responsible mandate, tweaked the 5.33% increase, and approved a 5.24% increase. The Superintendent emphasized that no cuts were made to current services while working to reduce the budget to its \$136.3 million level.

**Expense Highlights**

The BOE recommended budget for the 2023-24 school year is \$136.3 million, which represents a \$6.8 million, or 5.24% increase over the current 2022-23 school year.

Maintaining current services represent \$6.4 million, or 4.94% of the \$6.8 million of the increase. Included in the current services increase is funding for the addition of 9 FTEs (3 Regular FTEs and 6 SPED FTEs), totaling \$628,575 (.49% of the increase). The 9 FTEs were unfunded positions in the FY 22-23 budget that were added due to unexpected enrollment increases.

In addition, \$194,000 (.15%) of the increase was from the addition of 2 FTEs due to ES enrollment and \$198,000 (.15%) of the increase was due to the incorporation of 4 FTEs – 3 MS math instructors and 1 MS math interventionist for students struggling in math due to Covid. These 4 positions were previously funded through an Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant.

**“Jaw Dropping” Enrollment**

The FY23-24 budget is based on projected enrollment of 5,330 students, 40 more students than are currently enrolled. Pre-K, ES and MS enrolled students are expected to increase while HS enrollment is expected to decrease. Unexpected enrollment increases have led to staff increases, especially at the ES level and have been a key budget driver. Next year’s budget calls for ES enrollment of 2,452 students, a 10 year high for the district and an increase of 34 ES students from the current year which also saw large year over year ES level student increases. Further, from 2019-2022 ES enrollment increased 12%, representing a CAGR of 3.9%. Meanwhile, comparable neighboring school districts experienced 3-year median ES enrollment increases of 2.0% and 3-year growth rates of 0.8%. As Tom Scarice commented “Westport has been an outlier in the region with respect to enrollment.”

**SPED**

The FY23-24 SPED budget request includes 58.67 FTEs and 114.21 paraprofessionals to serve 787 students, or 14.7% of total students who are projected to be identified with disabilities next year. This percent is slightly higher than the current year and has been steadily increasing over the last 10 years in the district as well as throughout the state. It is a point of pride that 96% of SPED students’ needs are met within the District. The critical role paras play supporting staff and caring for students is another SPED program point of pride. SPED programs such as Effective School Solutions or ESS, a program for students with social and emotional challenges which has expanded to the MS level, are also a source of pride; ESS has been good for students and has helped to save an estimated \$320,000 (through outside service cost avoidance).

**Various Budget Related Items**

Higher starting salaries due to labor shortages in many areas - paras, ES teachers, bus drivers for example - have served to increase costs in the FY 2023-24 budget.

Surprisingly, budget accounts with direct exposure to inflation are minimal, representing an estimated .81% budget impact. An example is electricity, which the schools purchase through a joint plan with the town and that includes a 2-year price lock.

Contractual health insurance increases have a negative impact on the budget, but the new high deductible health plan at least includes a cap on these increases.

On the ongoing transportation study which got underway this year, Tom Scarice mentioned that he is confident his team has confronted the transportation issue and is approaching a long-term strategy to address this decade plus problem area.

#### **Expense Growth and Staffing Trends**

School expenses, inclusive of next year's budget, will have grown at a CAGR of 2.72% since 2013, with annual operating expenses increasing by \$25 million (24%). This budget growth rate is in line with growth rates of comparable, neighboring school districts. Total certified staff costs are projected to grow 3.01% year over year to \$67.2 million and represent 49% of the total FY 2023-24 operating budget.

#### **Budget Give Back to Town**

The WPS again returned funds to the town, and the Committee acknowledged with appreciation this ongoing effort by the School Administration to return unspent money.

#### **Additional Discussion and Conclusion**

Most discussion/questions focused on enrollment. There was concern over sufficient room in the budget for additional staff needs in the event of still more enrollment increases, especially given low levels of carryover funds. There was also concern about further enrollment increases in schools that are already capacity constrained. Tom Scarice expressed confidence in the budget and replied that he would rather approach the community if and when additional enrollment increases occurred.

There was a question about any additional ESSR grant funding that would hit the budget. WPS responded that the only remaining ESSR funded expense was \$107,000 in healthcare costs for the 4 Math FTEs that were incorporated into the FY 2023-24 budget. These healthcare costs will be incorporated into the following year's budget.

Lee Goldstein commented that the BOE and WPS are not shy about what is needed but are also careful about increases. Tom Scarice added that even though the 5.2% budget increase is higher than usual, it is lean and represents excellent financial stewardship. Seth Braunstein agreed the BOE, Superintendent and his team had been prudent and thanked everyone for an effective and collaborative budget process.

**Actions:** Finance Committee member Don O'Day made the motion to recommend approval of the BOE FY 2023-24 Operating Budget. Nancy Kail seconded the motion. The vote by the RTM Finance Committee was unanimous: 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

**DRAFT 4-18-23**

**RTM Resolutions:**

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the First Selectwoman, the Fire Chief and the Fire Marshal, an amendment to Chapter 34 – Fire Prevention and Protection, of the Town Code of Ordinances, adding Article III – Fire Marshal Fee Schedule and Enforcement, is hereby approved.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the First Selectwoman, the Fire Chief and the Fire Marshal, an amendment to Appendix C of the Town Code of Ordinances, adopting a fee for Fire Marshal review of construction documents in the amount of \$5 per \$1000 of estimated costs, for commercial buildings and residential buildings of three or more dwelling units, is hereby approved.

**TOWN OF WESTPORT CODE OF ORDINANCES**

**CHAPTER 34 – FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION**

**NEW:**

**Article III – FIRE MARSHAL FEE SCHEDULE**

Sec. 34-31 - Fee schedule for Fire Marshal duties. Pursuant to Connecticut State Regulation 29-291a-7a(g) and other applicable law, the Fire Marshal, with approval of the Representative Town Meeting, shall adopt a fee schedule for certain prescribed duties in accordance with the Connecticut State Fire Prevention Code and the Connecticut State Fire Safety Code, and other applicable law, including without limit fees for construction document reviews, permits, certificates, notices, approvals, or orders.

Sec. 34-32 - Posting of fee schedule. The Fire Marshal shall post the fee schedule in the Office of the Fire Marshal, in public view, and on the Town’s website. The fees shall also be set forth in Appendix C of the Town Code of Ordinances.

Sec. 34-33 - Exemption from fee liability. All municipal projects of the Town of Westport are and shall be exempted from liability for permit fees and may be issued permits and certificates of occupancy without charge therefor.

**NEW:**

**TOWN OF WESTPORT CODE OF ORDINANCES**

**APPENDIX C:**

<i>Chapter 34. Fire Prevention and Protection</i>		
<u>34-31</u>	<u>Fire Marshal Fees:</u>	
	<u>Construction Document Reviews</u>	<u>The fee for the Fire Marshal's review of construction documents shall be based on the estimated cost of the project at the rate of Five Dollars (\$5.00) per One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) or part thereof, said fees being assessed only for commercial buildings and for residential dwellings that include three (3) or more dwelling units.</u>





**WESTPORT<sup>SM</sup>**  
CONNECTICUT

Jennifer S. Tooker, First Selectwoman

MEMORANDUM

To: Jeff Wieser, Moderator of the Representative Town Meeting  
Jeff Dunkerton, Town Clerk

From: Jennifer S. Tooker, First Selectwoman

Cc: Eileen Lavigne Flug, Assistant Town Attorney

Date: April 14, 2023

Re: Request for Agenda Item for May 1 Agenda: Fair Rent Commission Ordinance

Please add the attached Fair Rent Commission Ordinance to your May 1, 2023 agenda. Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 7-148b through 7-148f, the ordinance will create a Fair Rent Commission in Westport for the purpose of controlling and limiting excessive rental charges on housing accommodations.

Section 7-148b(b) requires that every municipality in Connecticut with a population of 25,000 or more shall, through its legislative body, adopt an ordinance that creates a fair rent commission, by July 1, 2023.

Thank you.

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
WESTPORT TOWN CLERK  
2023 APR 18 A 10:44

Town Hall • 110 Myrtle Avenue • Westport, CT 06880 • (203) 341-1111 • Fax (203) 341-1038  
Email: [selectwoman@westportct.gov](mailto:selectwoman@westportct.gov) • Website: [www.westportct.gov](http://www.westportct.gov)

**CODE OF ORDINANCES, TOWN OF WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT**

**Chapter 2 - ADMINISTRATION**

**ARTICLE IV. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**Sec 2-90. - Fair Rent Commission**

(a) *Established.*

(1) Pursuant to and in conformity with C.G.S. §§ 7-148b through 7-148f, 47a-20 and 47a-23c, there is hereby created a Fair Rent Commission (“Commission”) for the purpose of controlling and eliminating excessive rental charges for housing accommodations within the Town, and to carry out the purposes, duties, responsibilities and all provisions of the above described sections and any other sections of the statutes, as they may be amended from time to time, pertaining to fair rent commissions.

(2) The Commission shall consist of five (5) members, all of whom shall be electors of the Town. The members and alternates shall be appointed by the First Selectman in accordance with Section C4-4 of the Town Charter, and according to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Town Charter. Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation.

(3) Members of the Commission shall be appointed for staggered terms of four (4) years. Vacancies on the Commission shall be filled in the manner of original appointment for the unexpired portion of the term. Any member of the Commission may be reappointed in the manner of original appointment.

(b) *Powers*

(1) The Commission’s powers shall include the power to:

a. Receive complaints, inquiries, and other communications concerning alleged excessive rental charges and alleged violations, including retaliation, of C.G.S. §§ 7-148b to 7-148f, inclusive, C.G.S. § 47a-20, C.G.S. 21-80a and C.G.S. § 47a-23c in housing accommodations, except those accommodations rented on a seasonal basis, within its jurisdiction, which jurisdiction shall include mobile manufactured homes and mobile manufactured home park lots. “Seasonal basis” means housing accommodations rented for a period or periods aggregating not more than 120 days in any one calendar year. “Rental charge” includes any fee or charge in addition to rent that is imposed or sought to be imposed upon a tenant by a landlord, and includes any charge that is already in effect;

b. Make such studies and investigations regarding rental housing within the Town as are

appropriate to carry out the duties and responsibilities delegated hereunder, and subject to the terms, limitations and conditions set forth herein;

- c. Conduct hearings on complaints or requests for investigation submitted to it by any person, subject to the terms, limitations and conditions as set forth herein;
- d. Compel the attendance of persons at hearings, issue subpoenas and administer oaths, issue orders and continue, review, amend, terminate or suspend any of its orders and decisions;
- e. Determine, after a hearing as set forth herein, whether or not the rent for any housing accommodation is so excessive as to be harsh and unconscionable;
- f. Determine, after a hearing as set forth herein, whether the housing accommodation in question fails to comply with any municipal ordinance or state statute or regulation relating to health and safety;
- g. Determine, after a hearing as set forth herein, whether a landlord has engaged in retaliation in violation of subsection (f) below and make such orders as are authorized herein;
- h. Order a reduction of any excessive rent to an amount which is fair and equitable, and make such other orders as are authorized herein;
- i. Order the suspension or reduction of further payment of rent by the tenant until such time as the landlord makes the necessary changes, repairs or installations so as to bring such housing accommodation into compliance with any municipal ordinance or state statute or regulation relating to health and safety;
- j. Establish an escrow account with a local bank or financial institution into which it shall deposit all rent charges or other funds paid to it pursuant to subsection (e) below; and
- k. Carry out all other provisions of C.G.S. §§ 7-148b to 7-148f, inclusive, C.G.S. § 47a-20, 21- 80a and C.G.S. § 47a-23c as now existing and as hereinafter amended, as they apply to fair rent commissions.

*(c) Determination of Excessive Rent*

(1) In determining whether a rental charge or a proposed increase in a rental charge is so excessive, with due regard to all the circumstances, as to be harsh and unconscionable, the Commission shall consider such of the following circumstances as are applicable to the type of accommodation:

- a. The rents charged for the same number of rooms in other housing accommodations in the same and in other areas of the municipality;

- b. The sanitary conditions existing in the housing accommodations in question;
- c. The number of bathtubs or showers, flush waste closets, kitchen sinks and lavatory basins available to the occupants thereof;
- d. Services, furniture, furnishings and equipment supplied therein;
- e. The size and number of bedrooms contained therein;
- f. Repairs necessary to make such accommodations reasonably livable for the occupants accommodated therein;
- g. The amount of taxes and overhead expenses, including debt service, thereof;
- h. Whether the accommodations are in compliance with the ordinances of the Town and the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut relating to health and safety;
- i. The income of the petitioner and the availability of accommodations;
- j. The availability of utilities;
- k. Damages done to the premises by the tenant, caused by other than ordinary wear and tear;
- l. The amount and frequency of increases in rental charges; and
- m. Whether, and the extent to which, the income from an increase in rental charges has been or will be reinvested in improvements to the accommodations.

(2) The rent of a tenant protected by C.G.S. § 47a-23c (certain seniors and persons with disabilities in buildings and complexes with five or more units) who files a complaint with the Commission pursuant to C.G.S. § 47a-23c(c)(2) may be increased only to the extent that such increase is fair and equitable, based on the criteria set forth above.

(d) *Procedures and Hearing on Complaints*

(1) Upon the filing of a complaint, the Commission shall promptly notify all parties in writing of the receipt of the complaint. Such notice shall also inform the parties that the landlord is prohibited from retaliating against the tenant due to the filing of the complaint. It shall also inform the parties that, until a decision on the complaint is made by the Commission, the tenant's liability shall be for the amount of the last rent prior to the increase complained of or, if there is no such increase, the last agreed-upon rent, and that an eviction based upon non-payment of rent cannot be initiated against a tenant who continues to pay the last agreed-upon rent during the pendency of the Commission proceeding.

(2) If a complaint alleges housing conditions that violate a housing, health, building or other

code or statute, the Commission shall notify the appropriate municipal office or agency, which may then concurrently exercise its own powers. In addition, the Commission may request that the appropriate municipal official or agency promptly investigate and provide a report to the Commission.

(3) If two or more complaints are filed against the same landlord by tenants occupying different rental units in the same building, complex, or mobile home park that appear to raise the same or similar issues, the Commission may consolidate such claims for hearing.

(4) The Commission or municipal staff may, to the extent practicable, encourage the parties to the complaint to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution through informal conciliation. Municipal staff (but not Commission members) may serve as informal conciliators. Any agreement to resolve the complaint shall be in writing and signed by the parties.

(5) A hearing on the complaint shall be scheduled no later than thirty (30) days after the filing of the complaint, unless impracticable. Written notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing shall be given to the parties to the complaint at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing by first class and certified mail and, if practicable, by electronic mail.

(6) All parties to a hearing shall have the right to be represented, to cross-examine witnesses, to examine documents introduced into evidence, and to call witnesses and introduce evidence. The testimony taken at a hearing shall be made under oath. Hearings shall be recorded.

(7) In the event that there is insufficient time to complete a hearing or for other cause, the Commission shall have the power to adjourn the hearing to another time and date.

(8) No sale, assignment, transfer of the housing accommodation in question or attempt to evict the tenant shall be cause for discontinuing any pending proceeding nor shall it affect the rights, duties and obligations of the Commission or the parties.

(e) *Rent Reduction Order and Repairs*

(1) The Commission shall render its decision at the same meeting at which the hearing on the complaint is completed or within thirty (30) days following such date, unless impracticable. In accordance with the state Freedom of Information Act, both the hearing itself and the deliberation by the Commission shall be open to observation by the public. Until a decision on the complaint is made by the Commission, the tenant's liability shall be for the amount of the last rent prior to the increase complained of or, if there is no such increase, the last agreed-upon rent.

(2) If the Commission determines after a hearing that the rental charge or proposed increase in the rental charge for any housing accommodation is so excessive, based on the standards and criteria set forth in subsection (c) above, as to be harsh and unconscionable, it may order that the rent be limited to such an amount as it determines to be fair and equitable, effective the month in which the tenant filed the complaint. A Commission's orders may include, but are not limited to, a reduction in a rental charge or proposed rent increase; a delay in an increased

rental charge until specified conditions, such as compliance with municipal code enforcement orders, have been satisfied; or a phase-in of an increase in a rental charge, not to exceed a fair and equitable rent, in stages over a period of time.

(3) If the Commission determines after a hearing that a housing accommodation fails to comply with any municipal ordinance or state statute or regulation relating to health and safety, the Commission may order the suspension or reduction of further payment of rent by the tenant until such time as the landlord makes the necessary changes, repairs or installations so as to bring the housing accommodation into compliance with such laws, statutes, or regulations. If the Commission's order constitutes a complete suspension of all rent, the rent during such period shall be paid to the Commission to be held in escrow subject to such ordinances or provisions as may be adopted by the town, city or borough. Upon the landlord's full compliance with such ordinance, statute or regulation for which payments were made into such escrow, the Commission shall determine after hearing such distribution of the escrowed funds as it deems appropriate.

(f) *Retaliation*

(1) No landlord shall engage in retaliatory actions. Retaliatory actions by a landlord include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Engaging in any action prohibited by C.G.S. § 47a-20 or § 21-80a within six months after any event listed in such statutes, including but not limited to within six months after the tenant has filed a complaint with the Commission;
- b. Refusing to renew the lease or other rental agreement of any tenant; bringing or maintaining an action or proceeding against the tenant to recover possession of the dwelling unit; demanding an increase in rent from the tenant; decreasing the services to which the tenant has previously been entitled; or verbally, physically or sexually harassing a tenant because a tenant has filed a complaint with the Commission;
- c. Engaging in any other action determined by the Commission, after a hearing, to constitute landlord retaliation as set forth in C.G.S. 7-148d(b).

(2) In the initial notice scheduling a hearing or conciliation on a complaint, and in its notice of decision, the Commission shall include notice, in plain language, to landlords and tenants that retaliatory actions against tenants are prohibited.

(3) Any tenant who claims that the action of his or her landlord constitutes retaliatory action may file a notice of such claim with the Commission. If the Commission determines, after a hearing, which hearing shall be expedited, that a landlord has retaliated in any manner against a tenant because the tenant has complained to the Commission, the Commission may order the landlord to cease and desist from such conduct and order the landlord to withdraw or remediate such conduct as has already occurred.

(g) *Appeals*

(1) Any person aggrieved by any order or decision of the Commission may appeal to the Superior Court within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the written notice of the decision to the parties. Such notice shall include notice of the right to appeal, the court to which an appeal may be taken, and the time in which an appeal must be filed. Unless otherwise directed by the Commission or the court, the filing of an appeal shall not stay any order issued by the Commission.

(h) *Failure to Comply with Commission Orders*

(1) Any person who violates any order of rent reduction or rent suspension by demanding, accepting or receiving an amount in excess thereof while such order remains in effect, and no appeal pursuant to § 7-148e is pending, or who violates any other provision of this chapter or C.G.S. § 47a-20 or 21-80a or who refuses to obey any subpoena, order or decision of the Commission pursuant thereto shall be fined not less than \$25 nor more than \$100 for each offense. If such offense continues for more than five days, it shall constitute a new offense for each day it continues to exist thereafter.

(2) The Commission, in its own name or through the municipality, may bring a civil action to any court of competent jurisdiction or take any other action in such a court to enforce any order of the Commission made pursuant to this subchapter, or to enjoin a violation or threatened violation of any order of the Commission.

(i) *Amendments to State Law.*

(1) Any amendments to the state law referring to fair rent commissions shall be automatically incorporated into this article and made a part hereof. Any provisions and amendments to the Town Charter that apply to appointed commissions shall apply to the Commission.

**CODE OF ORDINANCES, TOWN OF WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT**

**Chapter 2 - ADMINISTRATION**

**ARTICLE IV. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**Sec 2-90. - Fair Rent Commission**

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(2) The Commission shall consist of five (5) members, all of whom shall be electors of the Town. The members and alternates shall be appointed by the First Selectman in accordance with Section C4-4 of the Town Charter, and according to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Town Charter. Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation.

(3) Members of the Commission shall be appointed for staggered terms of four (4) years. Vacancies on the Commission shall be filled in the manner of original appointment for the unexpired portion of the term. Any member of the Commission may be reappointed in the manner of original appointment.

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b. Make such studies and investigations regarding rental housing within the Town as are



appropriate to carry out the duties and responsibilities delegated hereunder, and subject to the terms, limitations and conditions set forth herein;

- c. Conduct hearings on complaints or requests for investigation submitted to it by any person, subject to the terms, limitations and conditions as set forth herein;
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- g. Determine, after a hearing as set forth herein, whether a landlord has engaged in retaliation in violation of subsection (f) below and make such orders as are authorized herein;
- h. Order a reduction of any excessive rent to an amount which is fair and equitable, and make such other orders as are authorized herein;
- i. Order the suspension or reduction of further payment of rent by the tenant until such time as the landlord makes the necessary changes, repairs or installations so as to bring such housing accommodation into compliance with any municipal ordinance or state statute or regulation relating to health and safety;
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- f. Repairs necessary to make such accommodations reasonably livable for the occupants accommodated therein;
- g. The amount of taxes and overhead expenses, including debt service, thereof;
- h. Whether the accommodations are in compliance with the ordinances of the Town and the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut relating to health and safety;
- i. The income of the petitioner and the availability of accommodations;
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- k. Damages done to the premises by the tenant, caused by other than ordinary wear and tear;
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(2) The rent of a tenant protected by C.G.S. § 47a-23c (certain seniors and persons with disabilities in buildings and complexes with five or more units) who files a complaint with the Commission pursuant to C.G.S. § 47a-23c(c)(2) may be increased only to the extent that such increase is fair and equitable, based on the criteria set forth above.

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(2) If a complaint alleges housing conditions that violate a housing, health, building or other

code or statute, the Commission shall notify the appropriate municipal office or agency, which may then concurrently exercise its own powers. In addition, the Commission may request that the appropriate municipal official or agency promptly investigate and provide a report to the Commission.

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- (5) A hearing on the complaint shall be scheduled no later than thirty (30) days after the filing of the complaint, unless impracticable. Written notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing shall be given to the parties to the complaint at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing by first class and certified mail and, if practicable, by electronic mail.
- (6) All parties to a hearing shall have the right to be represented, to cross-examine witnesses, to examine documents introduced into evidence, and to call witnesses and introduce evidence. The testimony taken at a hearing shall be made under oath. Hearings shall be recorded.
- (7) In the event that there is insufficient time to complete a hearing or for other cause, the Commission shall have the power to adjourn the hearing to another time and date.
- (8) No sale, assignment, transfer of the housing accommodation in question or attempt to evict the tenant shall be cause for discontinuing any pending proceeding nor shall it affect the rights, duties and obligations of the Commission or the parties.

(e) *Rent Reduction Order and Repairs*

- (1) The Commission shall render its decision at the same meeting at which the hearing on the complaint is completed or within thirty (30) days following such date, unless impracticable. In accordance with the state Freedom of Information Act, both the hearing itself and the deliberation by the Commission shall be open to observation by the public. Until a decision on the complaint is made by the Commission, the tenant's liability shall be for the amount of the last rent prior to the increase complained of or, if there is no such increase, the last agreed-upon rent.
- (2) If the Commission determines after a hearing that the rental charge or proposed increase in the rental charge for any housing accommodation is so excessive, based on the standards and criteria set forth in subsection (c) above, as to be harsh and unconscionable, it may order that the rent be limited to such an amount as it determines to be fair and equitable, effective the month in which the tenant filed the complaint. A Commission's orders may include, but are not limited to, a reduction in a rental charge or proposed rent increase; a delay in an increased

rental charge until specified conditions, such as compliance with municipal code enforcement orders, have been satisfied; or a phase-in of an increase in a rental charge, not to exceed a fair and equitable rent, in stages over a period of time.

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(f) *Retaliation*

(1) No landlord shall engage in retaliatory actions. Retaliatory actions by a landlord include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Engaging in any action prohibited by C.G.S. § 47a-20 or § 21-80a within six months after any event listed in such statutes, including but not limited to within six months after the tenant has filed a complaint with the Commission;
- b. Refusing to renew the lease or other rental agreement of any tenant; bringing or maintaining an action or proceeding against the tenant to recover possession of the dwelling unit; demanding an increase in rent from the tenant; decreasing the services to which the tenant has previously been entitled; or verbally, physically or sexually harassing a tenant because a tenant has filed a complaint with the Commission;
- c. Engaging in any other action determined by the Commission, after a hearing, to constitute landlord retaliation as set forth in C.G.S. 7-148d(b).

(2) In the initial notice scheduling a hearing or conciliation on a complaint, and in its notice of decision, the Commission shall include notice, in plain language, to landlords and tenants that retaliatory actions against tenants are prohibited.

(3) Any tenant who claims that the action of his or her landlord constitutes retaliatory action may file a notice of such claim with the Commission. If the Commission determines, after a hearing, which hearing shall be expedited, that a landlord has retaliated in any manner against a tenant because the tenant has complained to the Commission, the Commission may order the landlord to cease and desist from such conduct and order the landlord to withdraw or remediate such conduct as has already occurred.

(g) *Appeals*

(1) Any person aggrieved by any order or decision of the Commission may appeal to the Superior Court within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the written notice of the decision to the parties. Such notice shall include notice of the right to appeal, the court to which an appeal may be taken, and the time in which an appeal must be filed. Unless otherwise directed by the Commission or the court, the filing of an appeal shall not stay any order issued by the Commission.

(h) *Failure to Comply with Commission Orders*

(1) Any person who violates any order of rent reduction or rent suspension by demanding, accepting or receiving an amount in excess thereof while such order remains in effect, and no appeal pursuant to § 7-148e is pending, or who violates any other provision of this chapter or C.G.S. § 47a-20 or 21-80a or who refuses to obey any subpoena, order or decision of the Commission pursuant thereto shall be fined not less than \$25 nor more than \$100 for each offense. If such offense continues for more than five days, it shall constitute a new offense for each day it continues to exist thereafter.

(2) The Commission, in its own name or through the municipality, may bring a civil action to any court of competent jurisdiction or take any other action in such a court to enforce any order of the Commission made pursuant to this subchapter, or to enjoin a violation or threatened violation of any order of the Commission.

(i) *Amendments to State Law.*

(1) Any amendments to the state law referring to fair rent commissions shall be automatically incorporated into this article and made a part hereof. Any provisions and amendments to the Town Charter that apply to appointed commissions shall apply to the Commission.



**WESTPORT**  
CONNECTICUT

Jennifer S. Tooker, First Selectwoman

TO: Jeff Wieser, RTM Moderator  
Jeff Dunkerton, Town Clerk

FROM: Jennifer S. Tooker, First Selectwoman

DATE: April 26, 2023

RE: RTM Donation Approval

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Jennifer S. Tooker, is placed over the 'FROM' field of the email header.

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At its public hearing of April 26, 2023, the Board of Selectwomen approved the acceptance of a donation to the Town in the amount of \$50,000 for construction of a bus shelter at 199 Post Road West, and further, to forward such recommendation to the Moderator of the RTM for placement on the next RTM Agenda.

Therefore, in accordance with the Policy for Gifts to the Town, 2. C. - Monetary Donations, More than \$20,000, and at the request of the Director of Public Works, I hereby request that the acceptance of the donation be placed on the upcoming RTM agenda for its consideration. Attached are documents related to the request. On behalf of the Board of Selectwomen, I recommend its acceptance.

Thank you.

Attachments

cc: G. Conrad  
P. Ratkiewich  
E. Flug  
T. Plachi

Town Hall • 110 Myrtle Avenue • Westport, CT 06880 • (203) 341-1111 • Fax (203) 341-1038  
Email: [selectwoman@westportct.gov](mailto:selectwoman@westportct.gov) • Website: [www.westportct.gov](http://www.westportct.gov)



**WESTPORT™**

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

TOWN HALL, 110 MYRTLE AVE.  
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880  
(203) 341 1120

April 25, 2023

Ms. Jennifer S. Tooker  
First Selectwoman  
Town Hall  
Westport, CT 06880

RE: Acceptance of a \$50,000 donation to the Town of Westport for construction of a Bus Shelter at 199 Post Road West

Dear Ms. Tooker,

Last year this office received an offer of a donation to construct a bus shelter in front of 199 Post Road West, from the Owner of 191 Post Road as part of a text amendment negotiation for a co-working space office complex, involving reduced parking requirements.

The condition of the approved text amendment was that the donor would provide the donation to the Town within 30 days of the Town's request to access the funds. We are at the point where we are poised to construct the bus shelter and have requested the funds. The donor is ready to provide a check.

Under the terms of the Town's gift policy the Board of Selectwomen will have to accept the donation and since it is over \$20,000.00 the RTM also needs to approve it.

The bus shelter project seeks to construct four bus shelters along the Post Road. As you may recall we requested an appropriation of \$150,000 out of ARPA funds in 2022 for the project. This donation is specific to one of those shelters located at 199 Post Road West.

It is my recommendation that the Board of Selectwomen accept this donation.

Peter A. Ratkiewich, P.E.  
Westport Public Works Director  
Donation199PRW.docx

**TOWN OF WESTPORT**

**POLICY  
FOR  
GIFTS TO TOWN  
(Approved 7/15/98; Amended 10/28/98; Revised 11/12/14)**

1. Purpose.
2. Monetary donations.
3. Nonmonetary gifts.
4. Criteria for acceptance of gifts; tax considerations.
5. Naming/Dedication as a condition.
6. Administrative procedures.

**1. Purpose.**

The purpose of this Policy is to establish uniform procedures to govern the donation to and receipt by the Town of gifts of money or of value from citizens, foundations, business concerns and others, both for specific purposes and for general use by the Town.

**2. Monetary donations.**

**A. \$1 to \$5,000.**

The First Selectman is hereby authorized to accept, on behalf of the Town, monetary donations of up to and including five thousand dollars (\$5,000) without Board of Selectmen approval. All such gifts accepted by the First Selectman shall be reported to the Board of Selectmen on an annual basis.

**B. \$5,001 to \$20,000.**

A donation in excess of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) up to and including twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) shall not be accepted by the Town unless it has received the prior approval of the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen shall report all such contributions received to the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) members on an annual basis.

**C. More than \$20,000.**

A donation in excess of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) shall not be accepted by the Town unless it has been recommended for approval by the Board of Selectmen and has received the approval of the RTM. All such donations shall first be submitted to the Board of Selectmen which shall forward its recommendation to the Moderator of the RTM to be placed on the agenda for the next available meeting.

**D. Special Account**



The Controller shall establish a special account for the deposit of donations which the donor has designated for use for specific purposes. After a period not to exceed two years and/or the completion of the specific purpose for which the funds have been donated, excess funds shall be deposited in the general fund unless the town has accepted the gift under different conditions.

**3. Nonmonetary gifts.**

- A. The First Selectman is hereby authorized to accept, on behalf of the Town, non-monetary donations of up to and including five thousand dollars (\$5,000) without Board of Selectmen approval.
- B. A nonmonetary gift to the Town with a value in excess of \$5,000 shall not be accepted without the prior approval of the Board of Selectmen.
- C. A nonmonetary gift to the Town of real estate or of a structure which is intended to be permanently placed on Town property shall be accepted only upon the prior approval of the RTM. In addition, prior to the acceptance of such a gift, a positive report by the Planning & Zoning Commission pursuant to CGS §8-24 must be obtained as well as the approval from any other Town Board or Commission.

All such donations shall be submitted to the Board of Selectmen, which shall forward its recommendation to the Moderator of the RTM to be placed on the agenda for the next available meeting.

- D. All gifts to the Town which are works of art shall be referred to the Arts Advisory Committee which shall forward its written recommendation as to acceptance and placement of the work of art to the Board of Selectmen.

**4. Criteria for acceptance of gifts; tax considerations.**

- A. In considering whether to approve acceptance of a gift, the following criteria shall be considered:
  - (1) Whether the gift is appropriate for a public building, facility, or parcel of land.
  - (2) Whether the gift is being offered by a donor who is acceptable to the reviewing entity.
  - (3) Whether the gift will benefit the Town and the community.
  - (4) Whether there is space in a public facility to accommodate it.

- (5) Whether there are, construction, maintenance or repair costs involved and, if so, how they will be funded.
- (6) Whether there are insurance costs associated with receiving and maintaining the gift and, if so, how they will be funded.
- (7) Whether the gift will begin a program or service which the Town would be unwilling to take over when the gift or grant funds are exhausted.
- (8) Whether receipt of the gift may conflict in any way with the Town's purchasing or gift policies.
- (9) Whether any conditions attached to the gift conflict with or in any way commit the Town to a course of action which conflicts with Town policies, practices, ordinances, standards, or state or federal laws or regulations.

- B. The Board of Selectmen reserves the right to specify the manner in which gifts are made, to define the type of gift which it considers appropriate, and to reject those which it deems inappropriate or unsuitable.
- C. The Board of Selectmen shall be empowered to remove, dispose of, or modify those gifts that become unwanted or obsolete as conditions warrant. If acceptance of the gift required approval by the RTM, any such removal, disposal or modification will be subject to final approval by the RTM.
- D. The Town will not evaluate gifts for tax purposes. The First Selectman, upon request by a donor, shall acknowledge the receipt of a gift for purposes of enabling the donor to receive a tax deduction.

**5. Naming/Dedication as a condition attached to a gift.**

- A. All gifts which have the condition that the giving of the gift is contingent upon naming it or other Town property shall be referred to the Board of Selectmen which shall forward its recommendations to the Moderator of the RTM to be placed on its agenda for the next available meeting.
- B. In considering whether to approve naming a property, the reviewing entity shall make a finding that, in light of all the circumstances, it is in the best interests of the town to honor the condition of naming.
- C. The Board of Selectmen shall determine the method and time period for recognizing all gifts dedicated to the memory of an individual. Such recognition may be in the form a plaque placed at an appropriate location for an appropriate period of time or in some other form as determined by the Board of Selectmen.

- D. All gifts that have the condition that the giving of the gift is contingent upon naming it or other Town property, or the gift is to be dedicated to the memory of an individual, shall also be subject to the approval of any other appropriate Town board or commission.

**6. Administrative procedures.**

- A. Before a donor offers a gift to the Town, the donor shall submit a letter designating the purpose and conditions, if any, of the gift and relinquishing any future claim to the gift. Individuals desiring anonymity shall so state in the letter. Such letter shall be submitted to the First Selectman, or designee, who shall thereupon secure any additional information pertinent to the decision whether to accept the gift and forward the letter and such information, including a recommendation, to the Board of Selectman.
- B. Potential donors to a program, department or the Town offices shall be advised by the First Selectman, or designee, that, in determining whether to accept a gift, the Board of Selectmen will base its determination upon whether the gift is in the best interests of the Town and the community at large.
- C. Individuals desiring anonymity shall so state in the document, in which event the Town will undertake to preserve their anonymity.
- D. The Board of Selectmen is empowered, on behalf of the Town and without action by the RTM, to devote, apply, expend or utilize such gifts to such purposes and with such restrictions, if any, as may have been established by the donor; and to take all necessary and appropriate action to accomplish the purposes set forth by the donor. If no special purposes have been set forth, funds shall be deposited in the general fund.
- E. Any gifts to the Board of Education which directly impact on Town-owned property shall be reviewed in accordance with this policy and its administrative procedures.