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TOWN OF NEWTOWN

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 3 PRIMROSE STREET, NEWTOWN, CT DECEMBER 18, 2019

MINUTES

PRESENT: Jordana Bloom, Alison Plante, Chris Smith, Phil Carroll, Ryan Knapp, Judit DeStefano, Paul Lundquist, Chris Eide, Dan Wiedemann, Cathy Reiss, Dan Honan.

ABSENT: Andy Clure.

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman Dan Rosenthal, Selectman Maureen Crick Owen, Selectman Jeff Capeci, Representative Raghbir Allie-Brennan, Finance Director Bob Tait, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Director of Business Ron Bienkowski, Director of Facilities Bob Gerbert, Board of Education, Michelle Embree Ku, Debbie Martha Leidlein, Daniel Cruson, Dan Delia, Rebekah Harriman-Stites, John Vouros, Deborra Zukowski, Board of Finance Sandy Roussas, John Madzula, Matthew Mihalcik, Ned Simpson, Booth Library Director Douglas Lord, 1 press.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Lundquist called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:33 pm.

VOTER COMMENT: None.

MINUTES: MR. HONAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 4, 2019 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING. SECOND BY MR. CARROLL. Ms. Reiss pointed out two typographical errors. 1) Under Election of a Vice Chairman, "incite" should be "insight." 2) Under New Business, "replace" should be "replaced." ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSES. (11-0)

COMMUNICATIONS: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT: First Selectman Rosenthal and staff are currently working on the budget. The next Fairfield Hills Forums will be: February 18 - discuss options and March 16 – interested developers to attend. There is a directory on the Town website. The Town will not be proceeding with purchasing the property adjacent to Hawley School.

NEW BUSINESS

Open Budget Planning Discussion Relating to 2020-2021 Operating Budget with BOE, BOS, BOF, Newtown state legislative delegation

Mr. Lundquist invited the Newtown state legislative delegation to attend the Legislative Council meeting to discuss the 2020-2021 operating budget along with the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and Board of Education. Representative Raghbir Allie-Brennan, state rep for 2nd district which includes a small section in Newtown, thanked Council for inviting the state delegation to the meeting, it is still too early to provide substantial feedback on the state budget, addressing tolls is one main topic for discussion. He is working on R&D tax, look to raise the cap to encourage more jobs in Connecticut. Mr. Lundquist said that once the budget is more level, the state legislative delegation will be

invited back for discussion. Others were unable attend due to a special session tonight. Mr. Knapp referred to the OFA report, facing a \$1.5 billion deficit for FY 20 and \$2.2 billion for FY 21. Selectman Capeci asked how tolls will impact municipalities. Representative Allie-Brennan said he is not in favor of tolls and that the transportation committee needs to look at other options. Mr. Eide referred to proposals for alternative sources of revenue, SALT tax deductions, payroll deductions.

Town Operating Budget

First Selectman Rosenthal said he does not anticipate surprises on the Town side of the budget, expects it to be a same services budget, he is in the process of meeting with department heads who have submitted their budgets. The biggest driver in the budget is salaries and wages, which is 30% of the total budget, percentage increase, most contractual increases are around 2 ¼ %, debt service will increase around \$350,000. Roads increase operating around \$250,000 per year and reduce bonding side. Pension – 3rd year of increased amount to lower actuary assumption, medical might be flat, reviewing capital requests, no check yet from FEMA. Mr. Lundquist asked for any indications on positive shifts in the grand list, First Selectman Rosenthal said they will know at end of January. Road funding is shifting from capital to the operating budget. With this plan, the operating budget will grow, roads will not be bonded. Mr. Wiedemann asked for research for the use of FEMA money that could decrease use of bonding for roads. Ms. DeStefano noted that Edmond Town Hall maintenance ended up in the CIP in the past, does not see on a CIP in the future. First Selectman Rosenthal said Edmond Town Hall and the Booth Library cover day-to-day maintenance in the budget, big ticket items appear in the CIP. The Board of Selectmen voted, on Monday, to direct the land use zoning change for Edmond Town Hall, putting application for landmark, which will help with getting different types of professional tenants with some restrictions due to public building status, not just non-profits, to increase revenue opportunities. Mr. Wiedemann asked if there was a drop off in rentals in Town buildings due to the new Community Center. First Selectman Rosenthal said that has not been discussed with Edmond Town Hall, the budget is basically the same. Edmond Town Hall movie revenue has declined due to current entertainment preferences. Other forms of entertainment is being considered for Edmond Town Hall. Ms. DeStefano suggested looking into business plan for revenue producing buildings like Edmond Town Hall and the Library. Mr. Knapp noted trusts for Edmond Town Hall and the Booth Library. First Selectman Rosenthal said the town attorney is looking into and will follow up. Mr. Wiedemann asked about empty space, show how work will go from EDC, First Selectman Rosenthal can provide a report on that. Mr. Lundquist said the Town offers several locations that have potential revenue, space rental for events, cost and size of rooms, should be centralized and presented as a Town offering.

Board of Education Budget

Dr. Rodrigue provided an overview of the Board of Education budget, decreased enrollment will be driving the budget. An enrollment study, indicates 65 fewer students in the district, this will have a direct impact on this budget and future budgets. They still have to advocate for the kids, provide adequate resources, and make sure that campuses are safe and secure. Special education costs are rising, special education enrollment is rising, around 14%, get funding through the Excess Cost Sharing grant, the criteria to capture for each student is \$80,000, there are 37 students who are outplaced, not any different than other school districts. Pre-school numbers have increased, had to add another teacher this year. Afforded through previous budgets, adequate resources and staffing to meet priorities, adequate funding for technology just about 1:1 in technology for all of the buildings. 79% of budget is salaries and benefits, increases range from 2-3%, benefits increased by 3%. Energy has decreased by about 8.6% due to conservation measures and lower overall uses. Biggest hit will be in staffing. Had over \$600,000 support services, counselors that had been grant funded, and look to move over. Mr. Knapp asked about new mandates coming down from the state. Dr. Rodrigue said working in NGSS, resources, technology that impact science standards. Mr. Carroll asked about shifting grants to health insurance, Dr. Rodrigue explained the grants are for staffing, and looking at staff adjustments, and looking at grants for staffing school psychologists, and will be looking at other grants to deflect costs. Mr. Eide asked if there is a school based health center. Mr. Bienkoski said yes, those that use it can use own health insurance, funded by the state, there is a program in place to help students with high anxiety. Mr. Mihalcik asked about the net effect in 65 fewer students. When class size goes down, need to look at staff cuts, the offset is rising cost of special education and state mandates for science. Dr. Rodrigue said they accepted 27 new students in special education, most not expected, moved into the district with IEPs. Dr. Rodrigue

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said the overall special ed population is over 600 students, which is 14%, just below the state which is around 15%. Mr. Lundquist asked for a narrative for clarity, it would be helpful to understand and articulate the staff decreases, administrative component too, and offset by special education needs. Also, describe any state mandates that may have an impact on costs, and anything new. Dr. Rodrigue to provide narrative. Mr. Simpson provided data points, Social Security Administration formula for cost of living next year is going up 1.6%, Kiplinger's says inflation rate is 2.1% which is higher than what the international monetary fund says is 1.8%, CT inflation rate is 1.5%, USDA consumer price index 2.1%, Zillow decrease of home prices by .4% in 06482. Mr. Wiedemann noted that the enrollment decrease is the most dramatic in the high school, he asked how it will be addressed. Dr. Rodrigue said it will be addressed in staffing. She has made teachers, administrators, parents, and union aware of upcoming staffing challenges.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2020-2021 – 2024-2025 CIP

BOE CIP

Dr. Rodrigue said adjustments were made to the CIP noted in red. (ATTACHMENT) Accommodate for an engineering plan to for the Hawley HVAC project, Middle School engineering plan for HVAC project to provide a clearer picture of the scope of work. Mr. Knapp asked how the BOE is going to work with Public Buildings and Site, to be involved and have oversight. Mr. Gerbert is new Director of Facilities and is working with other town commissions and committees, going forward, there will be a collaborative effort. Ms. Plant asked for an explanation of how work is prioritized, which buildings need work. Mr. Bienkowski explained that they try to identify areas of high cost like roofs, boilers, oil tanks, and look at the expected use of life of these items and try to schedule those items as they reach their threshold point, plus try to identify projects that will come up within the next 10 years. Mr. Bienkowski spoke to incentives offered by Eversource, money goes to offset the cost so debt service is less. LED lighting is beneficial for better light, not deteriorate like fluorescents, also require less maintenance because the bulbs go out less often, energy saver, have had good luck with them. Take advantage of energy credits. Incentives and reimbursements. Mr. Knapp asked about prioritization, for example, why the Reed boiler is replaced before the Head O'Meadow boiler, though the Head O'Meadow boiler is older. Mr. Bienkowski explained there is a gas line to Reed and not Head O'Meadow. Ms. Reiss asked about the Hawley new generator, Mr. Bienkowski said they have not had significant outages; it may have higher priority due to location in town. Mr. Smith asked for details on the NHS turf field. Parks & Rec tests the field, BOE to provide ratings by Parks & Rec to Council. Ms. Plante asked about options to go for more energy efficient systems, Mr. Gerbert stays informed, attends monthly meetings, and makes energy efficiency a priority.

Mr. Lundquist will schedule an additional meeting on January 8, 2020 and include the Booth Library. First Selectman Rosenthal will provide more information about the Library roof.

Mr. Lundquist will send an email to the BOE requesting detailed information regarding Reed and Head O'Meadow CIP projects.

Committee Assignments Mr. Lundquist will prepare agendas for committee meeting and elect leadership for each committee.

Appointment of Legislative Council Representative to the Public Safety Committee

Cathy Reiss accepted the appointment as Legislative Council Representative to the Public Safety Committee.

FEMA Reimbursement Allocation – no action.

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VOTER COMMENT: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The next Legislative Council meeting will be on Wednesday, January 8, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

June Sgobbo, Clerk

Attachments: Newtown Board of Education Summary – Capital Improvement Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25, Legislative Council Representative to the Public Safety Committee.

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
AT THE NEXT MEETING.**

**NEWTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUMMARY - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2020/21 TO 2024/25**

Approved
by the BOE 11/6/19

INITIAL FIVE YEARS

CIP Item #	Location	Description of Project	Year 1 2020/21	Year 2 2021/22	Year 3 2022/23	Year 4 2023/24	Year 5 2024/25	TOTALS
1	Hawley Elem.	Engineering for ventilation and A/C renovations	\$300,000					
2	Hawley Elem.	Ventilation, HVAC, Renovations		\$3,962,000				
9	Hawley Elem.	Generator					\$1,000,000	\$5,262,000
8	Middle Gate Elem	Window modifications					\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
7	Head O'Meadow	Boilers, water heater, VFD & pump replacements with LED lighting				\$997,672		\$997,672
5	Reed Intermediate	Install high efficiency gas boilers & LED lighting conversion			\$1,452,730			\$1,452,730
4	Middle School	Engineering for ventilation and A/C renovations			\$300,000			
6	Middle School	Ventilation, HVAC, Auditorium, Media center, replace rooftop units '98		\$0		\$3,568,140		\$3,868,140
3	High School	Replace/restore stadium turf field & track (1 st year)		\$750,000				\$750,000
TOTAL COSTS OF ALL PROJECTS			\$300,000	\$4,712,000	\$1,752,730	\$4,565,812	\$2,000,000	\$13,330,542
TOTAL TO BE BONDED			\$300,000	\$4,712,000	\$1,752,730	\$4,565,812	\$2,000,000	\$13,330,542
Previous BOE approved CIP amounts (June 18, 2019)			\$3,962,000	\$4,666,648	\$1,452,730	\$997,672	\$2,000,000	\$13,079,050
Difference to previously approved plan			-\$3,662,000	\$45,352	\$300,000	\$3,568,140	\$0	\$251,492

Eligibility for project inclusion on the CIP is that the cost must exceed \$200,000.

2017-18 Reimbursement rate 36.43%

Estimates on file are increased by 6% from prior year.

Construction inflation estimate

6.0%

**NEWTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUMMARY - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2025/26 TO 2029/30**

Approved
by the BOE 11/6/19

2020-21 Rev

SECOND FIVE YEARS

CIP Item #	Location	Description of Project	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	TOTALS
			2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	
	Hawley Elem.	Classroom renovations 21 section (ceilings, lighting, floors, etc.) Purchase unsightly House/land adjacent to school (1.06 acres) Repave entire parking lot, curbing, sidewalks Elevator to café	\$450,000		\$954,000	\$1,300,000		\$3,004,000
	Sandy Hook							\$0
	Middle Gate Elem	Repave entire parking lot, curbing, sidewalks Complete kitchen renovation			\$1,300,000	\$375,000		\$1,675,000
	Head O'Meadow	Gas and water lines to school Replace/update A/C Re roofing/restoration		\$3,180,000	\$2,544,000	\$5,830,000		\$11,554,000
	Reed Intermediate	Repave entire parking lot, curbing, sidewalks Re roof entire building (solar remove & reinstall \$225K)		\$3,500,000	\$2,000,000			\$5,500,000
	Middle School	Repave entire parking lot, curbing, sidewalks Window replacements Library and science lab renovations Complete kitchen renovation		\$750,000	\$3,500,000	\$1,590,000		\$5,840,000
	High School	Re roofing/restoration HVAC equipment replacements Fuel Cell Athletic/Stadium field house and storage Rear Practice fields facilities and storage Create turf practice field rear of school	\$954,000 \$1,100,000	\$2,756,000 \$848,000	\$1,590,000		\$5,000,000	\$12,248,000
TOTAL COSTS OF ALL PROJECTS			\$2,504,000	\$11,334,000	\$11,888,000	\$9,095,000	\$5,000,000	\$39,821,000
TOTAL TO BE BONDED			\$2,504,000	\$11,334,000	\$11,888,000	\$9,095,000	\$5,000,000	\$39,821,000

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

			Admin &		
		<u>Muni Ops</u>	<u>Finance</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Ordinance</u>
Bloom	Muni, Ord	X			X
Carroll	Muni, Edu	X		X	
Clure	Muni, Edu	X		X	
DeStefano	Muni, Ord	X			X
Eide	Fin, Ord		X		X
Honan	Muni, Edu	X		X	
Knapp	Fin, Ord		X		X
Lundquist	Fin, Edu		X	X	
Plante	Fin, Edu		X	X	
Reiss	Fin, Ord		X		X
Smith	Fin, Ord		X		X
Wiedemann	Muni, Edu	X		X	