Mayor DelBuono called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. ROLL CALL
   Councilor Braverman (via zoom)
   Deputy Mayor Budrejko
   Councilor Camillo
   Councilor Donahue
   Councilor Manke
   Councilor Nagel
   Councilor Page
   Councilor Radda
   Mayor DelBuono

   Staff Attendees:
   Keith Chapman, Town Manager (via zoom)
   Janet Murphy, Director of Finance (via zoom)
   Joe Salamone, Director of Facilities Maintenance (via zoom)
   James E. Krupienski, Town Clerk
   Susan Gibbon, Council Clerk

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY (Via Zoom Application or Phone)
   (3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON ITEMS ON AGENDA ONLY)
   A. Public Comments
      • None
   B. Email Correspondence
      • None

4. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
   • None

5. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS
   A. FY 2022-2023 Proposed Budget Adjustments
      • Mayor DelBuono stated that the majority has no adjustments this evening and will make suggestions for changes the 19th.
      • Councilor Page stated they have no adjustments this evening and will make suggestions for changes on the 19th.
   B. Amendment to Chapter 8, Article VI, Environmental Quality Commission
      a. Introduce Ordinance & Set Public Hearing Date
INTRODUCTION,

I hereby introduce for the Town Council's consideration the proposed ordinance amendment to Chapter 8, Boards, Committees, Commissions and Bureaus, Article VI, Environmental Quality Commission, a copy of which has been filed with the Clerk of the Council.

Introduced by: Deputy Mayor Budrejko

RESOLVED,

That the Newington Town Council hereby schedules a Public Hearing on April 26, 2022, at 6:00 PM, to consider the proposed ordinance amendment, Chapter 8, Boards, Committees, Commissions and Bureaus, Article VI, Environmental Quality Commission, a copy of which is attached to this resolution.

Seconded by Councilor Manke. Motion passed 9-0.

- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated as changes have come with responsibilities to town staff with state and DEEP requirements, etc., town staff has assumed more of the critical environmental issues that the industry representatives were tasked with. The EQC took on a more of a quality of life within the town of Newington in terms of education and engagement with the public and schools. Getting students more environmentally aware. As the commission's mission focus changed, it was time to review the membership and the requirement that two members be industry members and open up those two positions to environmentally focused citizens or residents serve on this commission.

C. FY 2023 State Historic Documents Grant Program Application

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED:

That Keith Chapman, Town Manager, or his designee, is authorized to execute and deliver in the name of and on behalf of this municipality an application and contract acceptance with the Connecticut State Library for the Historic Documents Preservation Grant for Fiscal Year 2023.

Seconded by Councilor Radda. Motion passed 9-0.

D. Annual Fair Housing Month Resolution

Motion by Councilor Nagel

WHEREAS, All persons are afforded a right to full and equal housing opportunities in the neighborhood of their choice; and

WHEREAS, Federal fair housing laws require that all individuals, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, be given equal access to all housing-related opportunities, including rental and homeownership opportunities, and be allowed to make free choices regarding housing location; and

WHEREAS, Connecticut fair housing laws require that all individuals, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, learning disability, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression be given equal access to all housing-related opportunities, including rental and home ownership opportunities, and be allowed to make free choices regarding housing location; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Newington is committed to upholding these laws and realizes that these laws must be supplemented by an Affirmative Statement publicly endorsing the right of all people to full and equal housing opportunities in the neighborhood of their choice;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Newington Town Council hereby endorses a Fair Housing Policy to ensure equal opportunity for all persons to rent, purchase and obtain financing for adequate housing of their choice on a non-discriminatory basis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Manager of the Town of Newington, or their designated representative, is responsible for responding to and assisting any person who alleges to be the victim of any illegal discriminatory housing practices in the Town of Newington and for advising such person of the right to file a complaint with the State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or to seek assistance from the CT Fair Housing Center, legal services, or other fair housing organizations to protect his or her right to equal housing opportunities.

Adopted by the Newington Town Council this 5th day of April 2022.

Seconded by Councilor Camillo. Motion passed 9-0.

- Councilor Page stated he wanted to acknowledge previous and current efforts to increase the stock on affordable housing with statutory requirements of 10% and I believe we are at 8%. At some point I would like to know more about how that number is arrived at.

E. High School Roof Replacement-Phase 1A

- Town Manager Chapman stated that we have an opportunity to work with a contractor who recently did two section of the Newington High School roof and to come back and do the reminder of the roof. Based upon the cost, if this were to go through the state it would be approx. $8 million; but doing it with the bid waiver through Silktown roofing, we are looking at approx. $2.5 million. We need to get moving on this quickly.
- Joe Salamone stated that we have done work with this contractor previously at the high school and they can guarantee the material procurement for this work moving forward. It is something we need to take advantage of.
- Mayor DelBuono asked if the money for this work was in the current CIP budget.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that there is money in the current CIP and money in the proposed budget and we will have adequate funding for the project.
- Councilor Manke agrees that a bid waiver is appropriate; it's important to get the leak repaired before it gets any worse. If they have the supplies and materials I suggest we do it. Is the money coming out of the town CIP or the BOE CIP?
- Janet Murphy stated that the money is coming out of the town CIP Roof Fund.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that the contractor is reliable, they can guarantee the material and the price is acceptable. I am in favor of this.
- Councilor Page stated that when you make the statement of our funds or there funds; all funds are taxpayer funds and we have a couple of different piles. I don't see any difference. The roof is the town's roof and we need to fix it.
- Councilor Manke stated that he agrees, but the funds are separated for budgetary purposes and it's important to know where the money is coming from.

Motion by Councilor Radda

WHEREAS, the Town of Newington, has been approached by the Board of Education regarding roof repairs to Newington High School; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education is interested in repairing at least three (3) sections of the High School roof; and

WHEREAS, the Town has solicited a quote from Silktown Roofing of Manchester, CT to complete several roof areas, with a 30-year NDL Warranty upon final inspection; and
WHEREAS, Silktown Roofing has acquired the necessary roofing materials to complete the repairs to multiple areas, with a 30-year NDL Warranty upon final inspection; and

WHEREAS, Silktown Roofing is working to acquire the necessary roofing materials to complete additional areas, with a 30-year NDL Warranty upon final inspection; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council, under the Newington Town Charter, Section C-814, hereby determines that it is not in the best interest of the Town to require sealed bids, due to the health and wellbeing of the affected employees and students within the School system; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council hereby determines that at least the three (3) roof areas should be completed immediately and that additional areas should be completed once all necessary roofing materials have been acquired; and

WHEREAS, the cost of the outlined roof repairs should be funded through the use of the CIP, Town Buildings Roof Replacement and Repairs account.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the Town Council hereby authorizes Keith Chapman, Town Manager to execute any and all necessary contracts with Silktown Roofing to complete the repairs to the Newington High School roof, as outlined above.

Seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed 9-0.

- Town Manager Chapman stated that they will be coming back to the council in July for the second and third phase of this roofing project and will be seeking bid waivers at that time.
- Councilor Donahue asked if this counted as a bid waiver.
- Mayor DelBuono stated yes, that is covered in paragraph 6.

F. Discussion - Creation of Permanent Municipal Building Commission

- Mayor DelBuono stated that the town council has been deliberating on this for several months now prior to this new council. Looking to create a permanent municipal building commission to manage all projects within the town. Trying to eliminate interested parties being on committee and projects being handled in a way that benefits one group or another versus and objective committee that will be made up of a professionals that have more knowledgeable and we are well represented at the table.
- Councilor Manke stated that at the subcommittee met and we got some suggestions from everybody. Kim is a great editor. We've worked on this a couple of times and I also worked on this with Councilor Anest when she was in office. This excludes any committee that has already been set in referendum; all others will be disbanded and come under this commission. Heard on Facebook that the town manager will be appointing people to this commission. The town manage doesn't appoint anybody, he and his staff will make recommendations and the decision to appoint is that of the council.
- Councilor Radda stated that the draft we have now and have reviewed this against what we currently have in the Charter and what we have been working on is much more detailed, which is to our benefit and the residents benefit. I don't feel comfortable that is the final draft to go to the public; I have a couple of questions and further edits and would like to get the group together again to discuss. One concern I have is the number of members on the committee; feel a committee of five is too few, would like to propose seven. Would like clarification on how the number of library representatives was determined.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she and Councilor Nagel met with Dianne Stamm from the library and they felt they were being under represented on the committee and wanted the same number of people on this committee as they have now. Dianne is in agreement with the representation we have now.
- Councilor Radda asked what the percentage would be if we increased the number to seven.
• Mayor DelBuono stated that would have to be renegotiated, but if it were seven members, they would want three and it would end up being an even number and could have tie votes. We are also hearing from other committee and commissions that they are having trouble getting quorums. Based on that fact, and because this is such a specific committee, five is the threshold. Nothing that we do is permanent, this can be changed again if necessary. I personally believe it will be difficult to fill five positions. Just a reminder that there will be only five voting members, but there will also be other people from the specific project on the committee; town staff, people from the agency requesting the project.
• Councilor Radda stated she is concerned with getting a quorum of people.
• Councilor Manke stated that if it's seven, you still need four. These people will only be allowed to serve on this committee. If you go to seven, not sure the town manager can recommend five; now only needs to recommend three.
• Councilor Radda stated that Mr. Chapman will be recommending people, it will be up to us to approve.
• Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that it's not going to be just a five member committee. There will be staff, people from the department requesting the project. I don't have the expertise to review resumes or even ask the right questions; leaving the search, reviewing and interviews to town staff, the professionals who have been involved in municipal buildings projects, having them make the first cut makes sense and it's up to the town council to make the final vote. We can get his top three, but we may want to see all the resumes. Under composition, it says relevant appointing authority, the town council is the appointing authority.
• Councilor Manke stated we should put relevant appointing source, for example Republican town committee or town manager.
• Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that as well as it would be subject to appointment by the town council. Under Officers; Records, all committees currently have a staff liaison; like the land use boards have the town planner. Should there be a staff member assigned?
• Councilor Radda stated that is listed further in the document.
• Councilor Manke stated that someone will be hired and paid for their time on the position.
• Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated it's not somebody to take minutes. It's a staff liaison, like the town planner on land use committee, Bill DeMaio sits on the parks & rec board. The facilities manager should be the staff liaison.
• Mayor DelBuono stated that is listed under ex-officio members.
• Mr. Chapman stated that he would appoint someone from the staff to serve as a representative on the committee.
• Councilor Page asked about clerk of the works, and commissioning agent. Is that what Councilor Budrejko is referring to?
• Mayor DelBuono stated that Jeff Baron oversaw the town hall building committee, is that what you mean? He was the staff member at every meeting. It would be the town manager or his designee.
• Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that in her opinion it would be Joe Salamone or someone from his staff.
• Councilor Manke stated it would change depending upon the project.
• Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that it's always a facility or a building. You're not going to have a different liaison for each project. They are not a voting member but always there to be the expert.
• Town Manager Chapman stated it should state my designee, it may be a clerk of the works that we may need to hire from outside.
• Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that these five people are not employees and they need a point of contact.
Councilor Manke stated that would be the town manager.
Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that every commission she’s served on has one steady staff person that works with the commission throughout everything. If they are doing five projects, there is one staff person that works with them.
Town Manager Chapman stated we probably won’t be having five projects going on at once, but for example, I would appoint one staff member for Anna Reynolds and one staff member for the town hall.
Councilor Nagel stated that he is in favor of keeping it at five people. The percentage for the library is that case would go up more, then you wind up with an even number of people which provides problems when voting. Committees are better when they are odd numbers as opposed to even numbers. No matter how many you are always going to have problem, but with more you have more problems. Number of committees now in town that cannot get a quorum.
Councilor Page stated thanked Councilor Manke, Donahue and Radda for meeting and taking care of this. My first question is regarding the Owen’s report and what are the top three priorities for us to work on.
Town Manager Chapman stated he’s not prepared to respond to that; not the topic of this agenda item.
Mayor DelBuono stated she is not sure how that correlates to this.
Councilor Page stated the though the Owen’s report listed the priorities.
Mayor DelBuono stated it is volumes and volumes. There is a list of priorities; some have been addressed; some haven’t.
Councilor Manke stated that wouldn’t have anything to do with this committee.
Mayor DelBuono stated that we can add that as an agenda items. Projects from the Owens report could go through this committee or through referendum depending on the size and scope. The Owen’s report gave us a list of project, but we have to determine what needs to be done.
Councilor Page he’d like to know what has been done based on the Owens report and you can say they recommend these project. I asked because one of the proposed solutions in this proposal is to do away with competing interests which has apparently caused problems in the past. To what extent has the Owens report, as explained to the residents could resolve some of the contention.
Mayor DelBuono stated that is cost $100,000.
Councilor Page stated we spend one hundred k on a report and combined with inherent knowledge and empirical knowledge the needs of the town going forward to help reduce any potential conflict of interest or competing interests.
Mayor DelBuono stated that she agrees but that’s a separate agenda item from this discussion. This discussion is the formation of the commission.
Councilor Page stated the thinks it does and would be a mitigating circumstance against forming this commission if in fact we spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on a report to help us determine priorities and that this proposal solving issues between parties should be put to rest.
Mayor DelBuono stated that currently under our town Charter, each project has to have a committee formed for it. People appointed to these from political parties usually have an interest in that particular project. So instated of having separate committee for each project, and they will come forward on need and priority. WE received the Owens report a while ago and some of the projects have already been done, some are ongoing. As projects come forward, the folks on this commission don’t have a vested interest in whatever project comes forward. We want to make sure that people to their best to represent the project.
Councilor Donahue stated that this committee may use the Owens report to get things in line. Just because it’s high on the report, we’re going to have that discussion and maybe move it around. The Owens report is important, but not for the formulation of this committee.

Councilor Nagel stated that the committee is involved in the working of what is being renovated or built so some things may be in flux given the amount of time that’s passed. Something as simplistic as how we handle roads, that we have a plan in terms of when they are going to be done based upon deterioration. The Owens report give detail on every single building the towns and school own. It’s a great reference source, not something set in stone.

Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that the reason for the Owens report was every budget season a department would say the roof is falling; another department would come and say their building is falling apart, then another department would come and say no, we need this money. For us to determine whose sky is really falling, we didn’t have that knowledge. The Owens report was not to set priorities but to get an outside company, who had no vested interest, to give us the real condition of the buildings and give us the real story. From that we could determine where to spend our money and resources.

Town Manager Chapman stated that this committee being formed is not going to replace the role of facilities director. He is going to be working with the Owens report and will determine what is getting done. The committee will get involved after the facilities director meets with the town council and funding is in place. Their role is not to identify the projects; that it the role of the facilities director.

Councilor Page asked where he could obtain a summary of the report.

Town Manager Chapman stated that there is a summary. The report itself is between 3,500 and 4,000 pages. It deals with every building in town. We’ve already started to work off the Owens report and have done projects. The Owens report is a guide as an assistant to the facilities manager.

Councilor Manke stated that the Owens report and this committee are two separate issues. The money spent on the Owen’s report changed how we do our CIP and have done and finished projects it’s referenced.

Mayor DelBuono stated that the committee will take its charge from the town council. They may get information from town staff based on that report if there’s a certain project they’re deliberating, the only projects that go to the committee are from the council.

Councilor Page asked the rationale for each political party having one appointment.

Mayor DelBuono stated that most committees are comprised by members that are brought forward by both parties so the party feels they have representation. We will be looking for the same qualifications from those members.

Councilor Page stated that he would like it so say the same, not similar.

Councilor Manke stated that they don’t want it to be too specific.

Councilor Page stated that why not just have the town manager make all the recommendations and remove party recommendations.

Councilor Nagel stated he thinks it’s the role of the liaisons from both parties to bring information to the town council and get different points of view from people from both sides of the aisle. Going the route you suggested may be a good one, but the public may feel left out in terms of the process.

Councilor Page stated that people talk about the challenges of having stakeholders or user interests in town have a voting member on the commission as if that’s a bad thing. Think that stakeholder membership on the commission needs to be discussed. Whether it’s the superintendent or someone who is elected, they should be fighting for the interests of the project. Under the current design, doesn’t the buck still stop with us? For example, wasn’t the pool project pushed back?
Mayor DelBuono stated that we kind of come in at the end when it's ready to go to referendum. We would be able to speak at the committee meetings as member of the public and often times projects move forward but not what we have envisioned.

Councillor Page stated that currently there is no way for the committee to communicate what the council's wishes are or the town's budget is.

Mayor DelBuono stated that now when the committees are formed, we as a council, can give them a charge which we did with the town hall committee, and we gave them a budget. When Anna Reynolds went out to referendum, we set a cap to that.

Councillor Page thinks having stakeholders who are citizens of our town, have a seat at the table, have a vote, and is not a bad thing. Democracy is messy, but it's an important messy and it's a concern that we want to remove stakeholders votes from the table. I've looked at several different town and the term is user interest votes. Every ordinance I looked at from Berlin to Suffield, the user interests have a vote, or the language is not exclusionary to that. Why not have alternates on the commission as well? Larger number will allow for not just residents, but stakeholders to have a seat at the table. Not just ex-officio.

Mayor DelBuono stated that we expect the membership to be made up of residents with qualifications.

Councillor Donahue stated that we are not suppressing anyone's votes, the citizens of Newington have the ultimate say. When this goes to referendum they say yes or they say no. There are always public hearings as well.

Mayor DelBuono stated that there is public participation at every meeting, even though there are certain voting members, the public has the opportunity to weigh in at every meeting.

Councillor Manke stated it's hard for the council to know what a budget should be for a project, so it's hard for the council to give the charge. Think both parties are responsible enough to put people on this commission who are qualified and it gives them a stake in the process. Can't imagine that the people on this commission won't get input from anyone else. Important to keep this pure without influences, people do have an opportunity to be heard. Like the way it is set up with 5 members.

Councillor Page asked how a quorum is determined.

Town Clerk Krupienski stated that quorum membership is determined by Robert's Rule. 51% determines your quorum.

Councillor Page stated that most towns have a selectman form of government and a building committee is appropriate for towns that are smaller and need that expertise. Some towns have longer terms and staggered terms. We need to look at tenure of membership.

Councillor Nagel stated we seem to be going in circles and discussing extraneous pieces of information that may be important or not. I'm willing to read the proposed ordinance and introduction and resolution with what has been suggested and amended at tonight's meeting if this is the appropriate time.

Mayor DelBuono stated we are currently in discussion; the next item is the creation and ordinance. Think we can wrap up discussion soon. Right now we have one modification to the language under composition, no. 3.

Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that she wants to respond to Councillor Page regarding political appointments: on the fence regarding that. Agree with what you said, but also what Councillor Nagel said that is kind of...political appointees will still have to come before this commission and we will have the authority, it's too important and hopefully how important commissions serving the town. Regarding stakeholder vote, these five members are going be taxed of having a broad overview of everything going on in town. There will be discussion and they will be voting on a variety of things. It's going to be a tough job for them. This is not set in stone; we have to see where it goes.
Councilor Radda stated that we are looking at additional or edited language under composition, number one, first line suggest adding "considered" qualifications as shown above; so it's referring back to those...

Councilor Manke stated "considered" instead of "similar."

Councilor Radda stated yes. It's obvious that we can't list everything. My other question is regarding the public hearing and additional comments. I didn't bring the documents with me tonight, didn't want to take time going item by item, line by line, but do have additional changes. Prefer that this not be the final draft that would go out for public hearing. Maybe the four of us on the subcommittee can get together again and go through some additional points.

Mayor DelBuono stated on our agenda this evening we have the introduction of the ordinance and to set the public hearing date and my understanding is the language we send forward tonight would be the one to be considered.

Town Clerk Krupienski stated that is correct. That doesn't mean that after the public hearing you cannot make additional changes or recommendations based on public comment or discussion at the table.

Councilor Radda stated that for the most part, when we did meet, we went a long way refining and clarifying some of the language; that's more my intent. I'm not striking whole sections, but in my view it further define, substantiate and clarify what's already in here.

Councilor Manke stated that we've been working on this for a while and won't ever get a document that's perfect in all of our minds. I in favor of moving this forward to the public hearing and after comments from the public we have the chance to change it. We need to move forward with this and don't want to keep delaying the process.

Councilor Radda stated she agrees and that something may come up at public hearing that we never thought of.

Councilor Manke stated we need to move this forward tonight.

A discussion was held regarding language in the document.

Councilor Manke moves this go to public hearing on the meeting on the 26th.

Further discussion of the language in the document was held.

Councilor Manke made a motion to accept all of the subcommittee's recommendations as well as the changes made tonight. Seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Camillo left meeting at 8:02 p.m.)

G. Creation of Permanent Municipal Building Commission

a. Introduce Ordinance & Set Public Hearing Date

INTRODUCTION,

I hereby introduce for the Town Council's consideration the proposed ordinance amendment to Chapter 8, Boards, Committees, Commissions and Bureaus, Article XII, Permanent Municipal Building Commission, a copy of which has been filed with the Clerk of the Council.

Introduced by: Councilor Manke

RESOLVED,

That the Newington Town Council hereby schedules a Public Hearing on April 26, 2022 at 6:10 PM to consider the proposed ordinance amendment, Chapter 8, Boards, Committees, Commissions and Bureaus, Article XII, Permanent Municipal Building Commission, a copy of which is attached to this resolution.

Seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed 7-1 (Councilor Camillo absent)
6. REFUNDS (Action Requested)

A. Approval of April 5, 2022 Refunds for an Overpayment of Taxes

Motion by Deputy Mayor Budrejko

RESOLVED:

That property tax refunds in the amount of $96,479.21 are hereby approved in the individual amounts and for those named on the “Requests for Refund of an Overpayment of Taxes,” certified by the Revenue Collector, a list of which is attached to this resolution.

Seconded by Councilor Radda. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Camillo absent).

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion-Budget Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the Board of Education and Town Council for FY 2022-2023

• Mayor DelBuono stated that in reviewing the tentative town council budget, the BOE was recommended at a $1.3 million increase which is not the level they indicted they need in order to maintain staffing level and continue providing services they are currently. The BOE Chairman approached me after receiving the memo indicating that the health benefits account was looking like it would have surplus of $476,000. The health benefits money for the BOE is given a projection now and in September and it’s based on claims and changes. The superintendent indicated in her budget presentation that they are on a spending freeze and my question to Chairman Fletcher was if he could ask if the $476,000, instead of coming from health benefits, be turned over to the town by June 30th in the form of a surplus. Based on statute and town Charter, at the end of the fiscal year, when we reconcile our books if there is a surplus on the board of education’s budget, that money is required to come back to the town general fund. Last year the board of education returned $500,000 and the year before that $1.5 million and I thought it reasonable to ask if those funds might be available through surplus instead of through health benefit. The Chairman and Dr. Brummett stated that they would be willing and agree to return that money through surplus instead of health benefits at the end of the fiscal year. It will count as revenue for the town and offset what the board of education is asking for an additional increase. In addition to the $1.3 million approved by the town manager, the town would increase the board of education budget by $592,113. The language in the MOU was reviewed by the board of education and superintendent of schools and the board of education attorney has reviewed it as well. I requested that the language be amended to add the June 30th date into the agreement. Mayor DelBuono read the MOU into the record. The board of education may take action on this tomorrow at their meeting. Did run this through the town manager and finance director. This is based on an anticipated surplus. If there is a health benefit surplus in September, the board of education will retain that. This is guaranteeing the amount of $476,000, that is a solid number we’ve agreed on, and if there is an additional surplus, the board of education is still bound to return that money to the town.

• Councilor Page stated that this is not related to the health benefits account.

• Mayor DelBuono stated that is correct. This is a credit that they get. This is just a different way of getting the money they need.

• Councilor Page stated that if you look at the history of the mill rate in town, there were some significant increases and think we need to think long term and I appreciate what you are doing. Why don’t we have two separate health accounts, one for the board of ed and one for the town? Wouldn’t that stop the bickering over the dollar amount and overage?

• Mayor DelBuono stated that our plans are together because we get a much better rate. The was a MOU signed in 1996 stating the board of education would keep the overages if there
were any and the town keeps ours and puts our back into the health benefits fund to fund for next year. That is something I will be bringing forward as an agenda item. However, after reviewing it, the language from the original MOU, if either party wants to get out of the arrangement, they have to provide 75 day notice, prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.

- Councilor Page stated that this is a good deal for our taxpayers because it's a larger group.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that agreement has nothing to do with that; that agreement states that the board of education get the credit in September. The idea of getting insurance together was something that the town and board agreed upon, since they get a better rate.
- Councilor Manke stated that having a bigger pool of people we get a better rate; we've also changed the insurance recently to include wellness visits and incentives to be healthier.
- Councilor Donahue stated that board is never on the hook for any shortages. If they have a shortage they don't pay that, the town does.
- Councilor Page stated that the taxpayers provide that money.
- Councilor Donahue stated that once the money gets to the board of education, we don't have any say on how it's allocated.
- Councilor Page asked who or how it's determined how much money goes into the board of ed's health expenditure account.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that the agent of records comes forward with recommendations, but the finance directors bring forward their recommendations.
- Ms. Murphy stated that as per the agreement, the board of education is required to budget what is agreed to with the agent of record (our insurance broker).
- Mayor DelBuono stated that we will take action on this on April 19th. Suggest we do this prior to adopting the budget.

8. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY (Via Zoom Application or Phone)**

   **(3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)**

- Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive glad to see you're discussing the Permanent Municipal Building Committee, have attended many committee meeting and agree with Councilor Budrejko, there has always been some staff person there. If I had a vote, I'd vote Jeff Baron employee of the century because he put up with town hall reno. With all due respect to the people on committee, they are volunteers, political appointments and you have a loyalty to the party that put you on the committee. Think there needs to be a staff person to keep them in line and let them know what they can and cannot do and give them direction. Hope you include language that a staff member always needs to be present.

- Chris Defrancesco, 255 Beacon Street. Would like to speak to the superintendent's budget. Proud graduate of Newington High School, class of '91 and proud parent of a John Wallace Middle School 8th grader and she has thrived. The school system is one of the reasons we live in Newington and grateful that Newington has historically made education a high priority. Support from home is a necessary. The significant growth in special education needs have to be met; it's the right thing to do. Whether it's special ed, free lunches, or counseling service we should not be nickel and diming our educators. The educators had to reinvent their profession the past few years. Please reconsider Dr. Brummett's budget request and not worry about the mill rate going down.

9. **REMARKS BY COUNCILORS**

- Councilor Page stated he continues to be very concerned about our reading scores in our schools; because of the pandemic reading instruction has suffered. Want to make sure we are doing right in our budgeting process to support curriculum instruction and all other supports necessary to help kids catch up. I have significant concern of the mental health of our kids and in response to the pandemic we are seeing more anxiety, depression, thoughts of self-harm, drug use, etc. Want to make sure in our budget we are supporting the mental health needs of our students.
Councilor Radda stated that she is concerned about the behavioral health and social services provided in our schools and they are not negatively impacted by the budget. I would like to propose, or suggest, a resolution coming from the town council in support of the people of Ukraine.

Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that there was a lot of activity yesterday, and captured on Facebook, at the corner of Fenn Road and East Cedar. There were over 100 ATVs and it seemed to get kind of out of hand and dangerous. Normally the media would jump on that and was looking all day and didn't see anything. Can you give us an update?

Town Manager Chapman stated that they were coming through Newington, over 100, and they ended up at the gas station Fenn Road. It got a little out of control, fortunately no one was injured and a couple of people got arrested, they departed quickly and that was the end of it. New Britain and Newington police both responded.

Councilor Radda asked about the fire at Best Market.

Town Manager Chapman stated that it was due to a faulty solar panel electrical wiring and the fire was limited to the roof; no damage to the interior of the building.

Mayor DelBuono stated that we are aware of the needs of the professionals in our schools and are correct that their roles have been redefined over the past couple of years. Know that students are suffering, there were esser funds provided to Newington public schools and they did hire individuals they saw fit in addressing those needs. Want to assure the public there are staffing changes being made based on the availability of those funds for at least two years. Share your concern about where our kids are at and sure that the board of education will continue to move kids forward using our budgetary amounts as well as esser funds. Yes, we need to maintain staff, but money doesn't always equate to performance of students or staff. Very fortunate here in Newington and our schools have done a remarkable job over the years and they will continue to do so.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Councilor Manke. Seconded by Councilor Radda. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Camillo absent). The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Susan Gibbon
Council Clerk