



Keith Chapman  
Town Manager

# TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET  
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

**MAYOR BETH DELBUONO**

## NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

### SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 30, 2020

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Town Clerk

*This meeting was presented as a Zoom Webinar/Meeting.*

Mayor DelBuono called the special meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL CALL

- Councilor Anest
- Councilor Braverman
- Councilor Budrejko
- Councilor Camillo
- Councilor Donahue
- Councilor Manke
- Councilor Miner
- Councilor Nagel
- Mayor DelBuono

Also present:

- Keith Chapman, Town Manager
- Janet Murphy, Finance Director
- James Krupinski, Town Clerk
- Susan Gibbon, Council Clerk

Also present:

- Dr. Maureen Brummett, Superintendent of Schools

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – ON AGENDA ONLY (**Via Zoom or Telephone: 888-788-0099 or 877-853-5247**) (4 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON ANY ITEM)

- None

IV. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- None

V. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS (Action May Be Taken)

A. Discussion of End of Year Department Budget Surpluses

- Town Manager Chapman presented a list of department budget surpluses that will be returned at the end of the year. Approx. \$1.2 million.
- Councilor Manke asked if that was being returned to the general fund.
- Town Manager Chapman stated yes, it was. Some surpluses are due to COVID-19, others are due to the mild winter. The highway department has \$180,000 coming back

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due to the mild winter and not much overtime. Employee benefits of \$100,000 is a combination of several things - employees coming and going, good results of medical benefits.

- Councilor Donahue asked what percentage of the budget this is.
- Councilor Manke asked how much was returned to the general fund last year.
- Janet Murphy stated that last year \$5-6 hundred thousand was returned.
- Town Manager Chapman asked Ms. Murphy what the percentage was.
- Ms. Murphy stated that with a \$50 million budget, this is about 2.3%.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that for elections, that was because the primaries were delayed and that money will be spent in August.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that money is being returned because it wasn't spent. The new budget has a similar expenditure in it.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that she is being cautionary because Solid Waste and MDC are going to substantially increase. Solid Waste because of the whole MIRA thing and reports that CT is going to have to start trucking trash out of state our expenses are going to be going up more than anticipated. We know that MDC is going up, just cautionary. Probably not going to be this way next year. Curious about the \$130,000 from Police, do we know why.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that there have been a couple of breaks in service, some positions are vacant right now and there was a reduction in the amount of overtime for the year.
- Ms. Murphy stated that is was staffing primarily, patrol and investigative and support services and the overtime is down because some of it is for training which they haven't been doing.
- Councilor Nagel asked the town manager what percentage of these surplus monies was directly or indirectly due to COVID-19.
- Town Manager Chapman asked Ms. Murphy to provide an answer to that.
- Ms. Murphy stated that it is mixed in. Reduced positions, could that be tied to COVID, yes. The library was primarily due to COVID. Looking at grounds, that was seasonal workers, that was due to COVID. Highway, was due to a mild winter and good fuel prices. Elections, that was due to COVID. It is a mixture of both. Would say it is 60/40, with 60 due to COVID and 40 due to some good circumstances we had this budget year.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she wanted to applaud the town departments, we have all recognized...I'm sorry Councilor Anest has her hand up.
- Councilor Anest if the list could be sent to the councilors via email. It's difficult to read on the screen as shown because you can't see the whole thing.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he could provide it via email.
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that he will take care of that, and it is available in your town council folder on your laptop.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that even throughout budget deliberations we acknowledged that not only are times tight in general, but with the COVID crisis, not knowing how it's going to go or end up we have all be very conscious of spending and concerned with what next year may hold. Very pleased to see that, while mostly COVID driven, and some was departments choosing not to spend and making sure that what was left was able to be returned to the general fund. So I am grateful to all of our staff members, as well as Mr. Chapman at the helm, for making sure that we had some surplus left this year to rely on, quite frankly, for next year when we need it more. So that being said, Mr. Chapman, you can continue on.
- Town Manager Chapman presented the BOE report. This was submitted to the council the other day and as of May 26<sup>th</sup> there was a balance of \$5.5 million. There is a list of

areas that plan to be expended or have been expended already. Is anyone from the BOE on tonight?

- Mayor DelBuono stated that she sees Paul Vassella, BOE chair. Dr. Brummett is on as an attendee.
- Dr. Maureen Brummett. Good evening.
- Town Manager Chapman asked Dr. Brummett to go over the report.
- Dr. Brummett stated that this was discussed at one of the last BOE meetings. There was a balance of \$5.5 million as of May 26<sup>th</sup>. One of the things we did in order to reduce our budget was to do some buy-aheads. All of these are part of projects we are working on. The monies here are not what we are actually returning to the town, I send over an updated accounting last night. The excess cost was reanalyzed. Money being returned to the town is \$2.2 million - \$1.5 million, \$590,000 was money that was agreed upon for a non-lapsing fund and the \$200,000 in Excess Cost overpayment, for the good of the order, we billed excess money and we received too much money from the state and they did not want it back, they said they would take it out of the town's ECS money and that would create a shortfall. So, we have been tracking that and estimating on what the shortfall would be and we estimated approx. \$200,000 - so that will make you whole on ECS. What is not listed here is that we also put another 1% in non-lapsing, because at the time when we were developing our budgets, we did not know COVID was around the corner and we just received guidelines from the state and they are pretty heavy on PPE, cleanliness and bringing all the students back. So we are going to be investing additional monies on PPEs and protocols allowing students to come to come back if the parents choose to do so.
- Town Manager Chapman asked Dr. Brummett to review the line items on the remainder of the slide.
- Dr. Brummett stated that it's difficult to read because the numbers are truncated on the right hand side. Not sure, can generally talk about them. Already talked about COVID supplies. NHS Security - it's a man trap at the high school, right now the only thing stopping a bad guy from coming in is a hall monitor, upgrading that. District wide security, all are badly in need of upgrades and starting to fail and linked into that is Sonitrol. Teaching supplies was needed to replenish some Chromebooks and upgrade online platforms to get through the end of the year. Tech & HVAC modification need to be modernized because when they break no one can fix them. The other items are all over the place. We had to do floor tile abatement at NHS and John Paterson for safety reasons. LED lighting was part of overall lighting improvement through capital; good opportunity to get lower costs and energy rates. Upgraded PA system was needed for graduation. The Bus Replacement Plan, we did not have any money in capital for bus replacement next year and Keith and have spoken about money for future bus garage location and we've used some of those funds for bus purchasing. Other, I really can't delineate. We did have to pay expenses for Colliers for the Anna Reynolds project. Do not have a complete breakdown on that.
- Mayor DelBuono asked if the "other" were already out there or are they new expenses anticipated because of end of year because I wasn't sure about that.
- Dr. Brummett stated that is a good question and she doesn't want to speak out of turn. There are so many close outs on purchase orders as the year rolls along. We've incurred legal fees because we were doing some negotiations, lots of consultation on COVID, imagine there are legal fees there, Colliers expenses. Cannot articulate remaining monies - closing out bills, subscriptions to certain products, online platforms. The purchasing is what you saw - the PA system, LED lighting, floor abatement, security upgrades, lighting programs, technology, Didn't get allocation from CIP this year, but did have need to purchase Chromebook for the fall, especially needed for levels K-2 and we needed to

make sure all grade levels were covered in case we shut down again in the fall. We have been doing COVID prep for the fall - putting Plexiglas barricades in all the offices for the safety of the secretaries, cleaning products, gloves, masks. I ordered masks for every student at every grade level.

- Councilor Budrejko stated she is glad to see preparation for COVID come the fall. Just want to be clear, at May 26 there was just over \$5 million in realized savings, so most of these items were not planned - it was like we have the money, let's do it. Correct?
- Dr. Brummett stated that the technology was planned. But didn't have any money for it because it was removed from CIP. But you are right, because we had no knowledge of COVID, and the way our budget was planned for next year, I would call the security at the high school yes, the screening was planned. It is important to clarify that we still had a balance of \$5.5 million at May 26, but still had another month and a half of the school year remaining. Since May 26 we have been convening writing committees; we have a reopening task for with over 100 people on it, which has a cost attached to it. It wasn't like there would have been \$5.5 million at the end of the year, that didn't account for several payrolls, a lot of teachers get a balloon payment at the end of the year, our last payroll is pretty substantial. I would say Sonitrol we had to do because our systems were failing. Lighting was an add on but we got a really good deal from a local vendor and it is a very minimal output, a lot of that is going to be rebated. The PA system was an add on because of graduation. The bus replacement was an add on because we didn't get the allocation for the second year in a row. We have several busses that are beyond what is considered its lifecycle age. That has since been dialed back. The rest were planned, expect for what is just indicated.
- Councilor Budrejko asked if Dr. Brummett had a ballpark idea on how the governor's plan will effect next year's budget.
- Dr. Brummett stated that if we can keep kids coming in and we don't get into a hybrid model and once we have that output of PPEs and cleaning supplies we should be ok. What will get tricky is if we have to bring some kids in and keep some kids at home, but even with that we have done some leg work on that to not worry about it. They did initially say we needed to have many bus runs because only 10 kids per bus, but now everyone is on the bus. Will provide bus monitors to ensure kids are keeping on their masks and cleaning protocols. We were doing some of that before shutdown. Biggest expenses will be PPEs and cleaning protocols. Not anticipating hiring additional staff at this time, except maybe bus monitors. Hoping can use existing paras. Not adding additional teachers. Did get about \$225,000 in CARES money a couple of weeks ago which we can use towards staffing for kids that fell behind during shutdown. I am cautiously optimistic that we planned well enough with the non-lapsing monies that we can cover COVID expenses.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that is good to hear.
- Councilor Donahue asked Dr. Brummett if she didn't have these realized savings, where would the money have come from to do this stuff.
- Dr. Brummett stated that nothing would have happened. Would not have been able to purchase busses, we wouldn't have cut our budget and we certainly wouldn't be able to send any money back to the town. We did try to cover budget shortfalls with the savings and earmark money for the town because of the current status.
- Councilor Donahue asked where he can view the guidelines for when busses need to be replaced.
- Dr. Brummett stated that she has an articulated bus replacement schedule, which was submitted during CIP deliberations, but can resubmit that tomorrow. That is something

that Dean Barnes maintains and updates annually and the busses he earmarked were 12 years old or older.

- Mayor DelBuono (holding up a piece of paper) asked Dr. Brummett if this was the schedule she was talking about.
- Dr. Brummett stated that is part of it, but there may be more. She is happy to provide that to the town.
- Councilor Donahue stated thank you, that would be awesome.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she was at the CIP meeting and when the busses came up there were a couple of things that led to the busses being removed this year. One of them was a \$600,000 balance which you spoke to in the reserve fund which you spoke to, but the other thing that was brought up on the spreadsheet the age of the busses was listed as 9 years, and correct me if I am wrong, it was recommended for replacement at 11 years. The committee thought we could maintain for another year before replacing those. In terms of the Chromebooks, I cannot agree more that needs to be a priority and making sure that every student has a device in case we do need to go into a hybrid or shut down model and those were removed because they didn't meet the specifications for CIP, but they should be planned for in the operating budget which was the recommendation of the committee. I think the original amount for \$188,000 and the expenditure was \$675,000, so I am assuming that was to cover the extra grade levels.
- Dr. Brummett stated that the request would have covered two grade levels, which is the normal replacement schedule. But then with COVID we had it to institute a K-2, one to one so that is where that expense came in. We also found that during COVID, some of our teachers and paras needed to have access to Chromebooks in order to assist students and a lot of them didn't have their own devices. There is one other thing. There was a system upgrade, a connectivity upgrade; because of the potential to go full online next year, we wanted to increase the broadband and that was part of it as well.
- Councilor Miner stated that the state initially wanted smaller classroom sizes, have they changed that now?
- Dr. Brummett stated yes, substantially. Initially they only wanted 10 to a classroom, not any more.
- Councilor Miner stated that he is happy to hear that because he was very concerned about what would happen if you needed to have smaller class sizes - how to staff them and where to put them.
- Councilor Nagel stated that he wanted to back up what Mayor DelBuono said about Chromebooks. The CIP committee didn't feel that they were not important, but it was not the place to fund them per our charge through the Charter. The CIP committee got the chart on the busses, not sure if the council got that chart.
- Dr. Brummett stated that she will provide that chart to the council and it will show the age of the busses in question.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that one thing that stuck her about the list provided is that several of those could have been qualifying expenditures for CIP monies. I did look back to see if they came through at all at any point because I couldn't remember if the previous town manager cut before coming to deliberations in terms of requests from the Board of Ed. For example, the man trap at the high school, something that is very needed, no doubt, didn't see a request for that in CIP, but wondering if there is any history behind some of the requests. A few look like they could belong in CIP, but I could be wrong. The mantrap was one, the district wide security because it's window screening could possibly have fallen under CIP, the HVAC modifications, the floor tile abatement, the bus replacement - it seems like there are several that should have really gone through CIP and I was wonder if those were in the pipeline or if they had ever been requested.

- Dr. Brummett stated that they had been talked about, cannot definitely state whether or not they were ever in a CIP request. There is a security line in there. Don't know if that was ever in a line. Frankly after coming to the district and noting that concern, it was always my goal to have that as an improvement, but I don't believe that was an inherent request. HVAC was, tech was, Sonitrol was, again, there is a line for security, and normally we would have planned for that, but that was an unexpected, the system was starting to wear down and we had numerous camera failures at the high school this year and we were told that our system was going to be ineffective. I would say that the man trap was not specifically mentioned, but that might be the only one. The PA system, I already mentioned that. COVID prep, we wouldn't have been able to plan for that. I would say the man trap is the one that sticks out.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that she is curious and that the governor has changed directions and that all students will be returning to school. What happens if more parents say they don't want to send their kids back and they decide to do homeschooling; is the onus on the parents to do homeschooling or the school system?
- Dr. Brummett stated that it is on the school system. The governor stated that parents have the right to say your protocols are great but I'm not sending my child back until you have a vaccine. I am meeting with a parent group tomorrow who volunteered to be on the task force. So, they will hear from me firsthand what the safety protocols will be. We will also have a cadre of teachers not coming back as well due to their own health issues. My vision for that, is that we get fortunate enough to have enough teachers that need to not come back because of their own reasons and health issues that can then be assigned to the children that are being kept home by parent request. But, yes, ultimately those children are our responsibility, unless a parent goes full out and says I am going to homeschool my child which is a whole different thing and they will be responsible for the education.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that being new back in town after many years, this can't become the practice and if we don't have the budget surpluses being returned to the town. It seems to me that the budgeting process is failing, because either we're over budgeting and that's not fair, or we're not budgeting professionally, which is what we're all supposed to be doing. And you know I make it a point to make sure that we don't spend any money that's not approved and allocated properly and I just have concerns that, you know, that \$5 million or \$2 million or whatever it ends up to be at the end of the year, beyond what was already promised sure to come back to the town, you know, would help offset some of the expenses that we're going to have facing this year, and if not if COVID goes away and everything's good. Okay, then it certainly could apply to some of the bonding that we have out there and reduce down the, the cost of that. So I you know I understand what the superintendent is saying, but I just have concerns that there has to be some checks and balances here. You know, I could do the same thing on our side of the budget and I don't think you guys would appreciate that. So, I think it has to be a fair and equitable situation for both parties.
- Dr. Brummett stated that she believes this is the first time that the board has ever turned money back to the town that she is made aware of but, equally to the point, all of those expenses that you're reading about now were authorized by the board finance subcommittee and voted on by the full board. So they were not done with any lack of clarity on the board side, I will also say we were in the same boat as the town, we had a lot of realized savings this year due to the COVID shutdown. Busses weren't running, subs weren't being used for many of the same reasons that the town had that and I would say, with the exception of the man trap and the money that we turn back the town because that 5 million continues to be a little bit of a deceptive positioning there because that was a month and a half ago. You know we are sending a substantial amount back to the town and we've already started to get some of the COVID prep done over the summer so that it's not hitting us in the fall. I've heard what folks are saying and will continue to discuss

those issues collaboratively and I still hope that the town is at least feeling that the money that was sent back was a first time thing, and that it was a good thing.

- Councilor Miner stated for Dr. Brummett and Keith that this is first level on both the town side and the BOE side and both have had significant returns in excess of 3% or thereabout of the overall budget. It is important to note that it is the first time probably on the town side with specific issues that allowed for it and the BOE with their issues that allowed for it. This is the first time that I can remember in recent history that there's been a collaborative effort between the town manager and the Board of Ed superintendent to work collaboratively and invest be on behalf of the taxpayers at large and I appreciate the efforts of everybody that's involved at this point and hopefully we can continue to be, you know, fiscally responsible moving forward to allow for the opportunities that present themselves when they do. So thank you again for both.
- Councilor Camillo stated that back in February during a CIP meeting, we discussed extending the life of the busses for one to two years. If we did that, you wouldn't be ready for new busses and you would have \$684,000 set aside for new busses this coming year and you had \$188,000 for Chromebooks kept out of CIP. You could have put that \$684,000 next year for busses or security vehicles; don't know if you did security vehicles or not.
- Dr. Brummett stated that they didn't do security vehicles.
- Councilor Camillo stated that the \$684,000 you had set aside, came from the state for reimbursement for the oil spill and of one million you had taken from Wallace for security and a man trap at Wallace. Did that ever get done?
- Dr. Brummett stated that she is not aware of any money earmarked for security at Wallace.
- Councilor Camillo stated that it was there and it was taken for the oil spill and at the same time you needed one at Anna Reynolds and they will get one. My main concern is that you got too much money over the past year, are the figures correct for Anna Reynolds. Are they really \$35 million? Maybe we should go back and look at that before it goes to referendum. You had about \$4 million extra after you reimbursed the town and if we had \$5 million that could have lowered the mill rate or it could have paid down a bond, which would have looked better to go to referendum for Anna Reynolds. So, did we really need to spend all of this, even though it is COVID and you are looking to protect the kids. Some of this is reimbursement from the state and FEMA. Do we have all of that is order to see if we can get reimbursement from the state and FEMA?
- Dr. Brummett stated yes, although limited ability to do that because we received CARES money and the Anna Reynolds numbers continue to be vetted by the architect and Colliers and they are confident with the numbers.
- Mayor DelBuono apologized to Dr. Brummett, I asked you if you wanted to attend to make a comment here and I didn't mean for it to end up being us grilling you and the council certainly can discuss further, I think you had a time constraint, certainly
- Dr. Brummett stated that she does. She will send over the bussing list and can have Dean present at some point if there needs to be clarification.
- Mayor DelBuono stated she has just one more thought for the Council, and that is that I think we need to consider moving forward, how we're doing our capital improvement plan program and funding. In terms of right now there are several different sources. So on the town side we have the overall CIP the Capital Improvement Plan. There's also a Parks and Rec separate CIP and we have the public schools CIP. So there's lots of different pots of money that in my estimation allow for things to go a little unchecked, I guess is the way I would say it. So my concern is that, maybe as a council moving forward, we consider looking at how the IP is handled, how we can better allocate funds to make sure that we have a plan in place that actually gets accomplished. Right now we

have this plan, but then it changes every year and we don't have a true five year plan that delineates what our priorities are and we've talked about this as a council, but in addition to that, there's these other pieces to the pie. So the Board of Ed public schools CIP, the town funds \$125,000 a year, and then the Board of Ed uses revenues to help fund that and so public schools CIP can go there, but it can also go into the overall town one, and you know, we saw that some expenditures were used from operational budget for CIP at the end of the year, given the surplus. So I just think there's a lot of loose ends here for CIP that maybe the council wants to consider moving forward, how to tighten that up and figure out how we can better fund both sides of government and whether that falls on us, or if the Board of Ed wants to do something differently or how we do it. But you know, I see Dr. Brummett still here, but perhaps we could work together on looking at that moving ahead. Because I think there's some room for improvement in that.

- Dr. Brummett stated that she is happy too, absolutely.
- Councilor Camillo stated that you're right, we have a finance department and the Board of Ed. We have one for the town. Maybe we should go back and look at our Charter and a revision in the future and combine the two. Same thing with facilities, we wouldn't have to worry are the schools being take care of, are the town facilities being taken care of, we'd have one department to handle all that. You have too many of the same thing. In the future, maybe we could do that even transportation. We already have a highway department, taking care of fire trucks, dump trucks, police cars, adding busses to their job may not be a big deal if they're going to get a new facility, one day, but we'd have to start with Charter revision. It's just something to think about. It could open a can of worms and then again it could save the town. So thank you.
- Councilor Manke stated that he agrees with the set up and process of CIP. If we are going to look at it we should do that now, before budget season, so that next year we have a better understanding of what it is and how it works. We need to do if we are going to do it; we just can't say we are going to work in it. It needs to be done before budget season, maybe start in August.
- Councilor Miner stated that a lot of this comes back to conversations that have been started now with the Shared Services Committee for a year, year and a half, that it's existed, and it's a continued conversation that needs to keep on. I don't believe we've had anything scheduled with the COVID situation that we've had. But I think that is something that needs to continue and again with having multiple CIP accounts and having, what I believe, the original intent of CIP has been changed to more operational expenses versus capital improvement projects as they were originally intended, should be something that we should look at again moving forward and you know something sooner than later.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that Dr. Brummett was instrumental in those committee meetings last time around when I was on that committee, the Combined Shared Services Committee. We had some nice discussions with the Board of Ed and department heads from a couple of different departments and they really presented a lot of information so that really should continue to move forward. I agree.
- Councilor Nagel stated that he agrees with what previous people have said. Having been the chair of the CIP committee I've stated in various different places exactly what people are saying, that something needs to be done to streamline and not have an overlapping and have a clarification for everyone so there aren't these misunderstandings and difficulties even getting to the point of clarifying things without opening the Charter. I believe something should be started in August, or sooner rather than later and then deciding what to do with Charter later on because as we all know, opening the Charter, you can't just open it for one thing it needs to be opened and then there is the discussion that doesn't include people on the council of what is presented, if I'm correct. So I just

wanted to restate that I've long since favored having some restructuring and not having overlapping done. Thank you.

- Janet Murphy stated that the numbers provided by Dr. Brummett don't add up. Wondering if this has been updated or changed.
- Dr. Brummett stated she did mention earlier that it has changed, not up to date, we will actually be returning more to the town than what is stated here. Some of these things did not get spent.
- Ms. Murphy stated that she was concerned because the numbers didn't add up and it was a negative.
- Dr. Brummett stated that she needed to make further adjustments and reductions.
- Councilor Camillo stated that on the list there \$650,000 of other expenses that you don't have line items for. Whatever is left over will get added on to what you are returning to the town?
- Dr. Brummett stated yes, we are finalizing everything as of today and there are no additional expenses. In fact, what you see here, not everything got spent, so...
- Councilor Camillo stated that it could be closer to \$2.5 - 3 million.
- Dr. Brummett stated that she wasn't sure it was going to be that much, but it could increase by \$40-50 thousand dollars, I don't know.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that just so everyone understands, the figure that was up, the 2.29 is not actually going into the general fund as being a true surplus. What really is going to be the true surplus is \$1.5 million because \$590,000 will come back to the town, but we will then be allocating that to the non-lapsing account. So we are just a vendor, so to speak, it is coming to us, but we are just sending it back to the BOE as agreed upon during budget proceedings. The excess cost overpayment is really to make whole because we will be receiving less ECS monies from the state. So the \$1.5 million is the true surplus, just want to clarify that for everyone.

#### B. Discussion – BOE Non-Lapsing Account Modified MOU

- Mayor DelBuono stated that this was originally added just to make sure that we were in line with our original agreement with the Board of Education, part of which was an MOU and part of which was a verbal agreement with the superintendent that the surplus would come back to the town if this money was provided into their non-lapsing account that the surplus would come back because that's not always the case from the Board of Education and it does appear based on the written communication we received today and from what Dr. Brummett said, that this MOU is in good standing right now and the Board of Education will receive that \$590,355 which was their initial budget request. The method of doing it this way was to avoid it utilizing new tax dollars when there was an anticipated surplus, so using that instead of asking more from the taxpayers. Is there any other discussion on this other than my explanation anyone's, you know, able to jump in and let's see any hands up the concern initially was that the one and a half million would not be available for the town surplus and it is now. So that's a good thing.
- Councilor Camillo stated that one of the problems I have is that these problems and the things they needed didn't just pop up. They came up because they had extra money that should have come back to the town and I don't think they did anything wrong, but knowing what's coming down the line and what's going on with the town, it's sort of unethical. You shouldn't do this in the 11th hour because in March, we knew there was going to be a surplus. They could have bought these things over the past eight weeks and got the things they needed, but in 10 days they spent \$3 million. I still don't think it's right and the rest of the town didn't do that. They had extra money, they gave it back and as we go forward into the next budget that money will be there if it's needed. The BOE should have said, we know what's coming in the fall, we have extra money now, will you hold it

for us and they didn't. Hopefully, things get better and we keep a better eye on things and our finger on it.

- Mayor DelBuono stated that she agrees and she did have a conversation with the superintendent around the planning for next year. My biggest concern when I saw the amount of spending that happened, as you mentioned, just in the last couple of weeks my biggest concern is that the governor came out with this plan that indicates that districts may be looking at upwards of \$10 to \$15 million and expenditures, unanticipated expenditures to manage COVID if we have an uptick or resurgence of it. And so if we go back to a hybrid or an online platform, while there are some savings to be seen, trying to get kids into school, which is the governor's current plan, could result in, depending on how this goes more staffing more need for space, you know, certainly a lot of things that would cost millions of dollars or could cost millions of dollars. So my concern was if the Board of Education is spending that money down at the end of the year. Are we going to have enough in our reserves, should they come back to us next year with a big price tag because of these needs. And the superintendent has assured me that she believes that the non-lapsing account would provide them with the funding they need, as she mentioned they did put in their typical 1% which means that at the end of the fiscal year today, they had around about 1% is about \$750,000 in excess that wasn't mentioned earlier. It was briefly mentioned in addition to the \$590,000 and that we allow them to carry over extra so that's 1.3, approximately \$1.3 million that they put into that non lapsing account on top of a one and a half million surplus coming back to us, which is wonderful and I'm grateful for that. And the 3 million approximate dollars that they spent at the end of the year. So when you really look at the amount of money that was left that \$5.5 million figure that was on that slide did not include the \$750,000 that already had gone into that non lapsing account. So that's another three quarters of a million dollars that the Board of Education had extra, so to speak, at the year. So it's significant amount of money that was remaining at the end of the school year and that when you look at the amount and you consider the give back in terms of general fund was one and a half million that's not a big give back, given the bigger picture of things and I think that's what we're losing sight of here. So, next year when COVID becomes an issue, if it does, we're going to be looking for those dollars and they're going to be tied up in busses and some other expenses. I'm concerned more about that CIP piece. I think it's a bad practice, that when there's a surplus, we are doing capital improvement projects out of a surplus instead of giving it back to the general fund, those dollars need to be requested through the proper channels and that process needs to be honored if that's the process that we and the Board of Education are invested in. If the CIP committee made a recommendation and the council voted on it but then the Board of Education chose to spend the money anyway that's a concern for me and that's why I think this council needs to really look at that moving forward.

**VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – ON AGENDA ONLY (Via Zoom or Telephone: 888-788-0099 or 877-853-5247) (3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON ANY ITEM)**

- Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive stated that it would be helpful if the listing of the monies that were being given back were attached to the agenda, as well as the Board of Ed information. But that being said two items near and dear to my heart are CIP and charter revision was mentioned tonight and I totally agree and I've been advocating this for years that everybody looks at the CIP and sees what these monies are supposed to be spent, or were originally intended to be spent for. I don't know how willing Tom Bowen would be to give the town manager his insight as to what the original plan was for the CIP, but it would be interesting, I think for the town manager to speak to him. I can't say that Tom would be available, but I'm sure that knowing Tom he would make himself available for that type of discussion. Councilor Camillo brings up a lot of good points regarding the CIP, earlier this year, the one

or two years extension to the life of a bus is that up to the CIP committee to decide that or is it up to the Board of Ed, once again the point that he brought up about Wallace. The money's being spent there that's a good point as well. But that \$600,000 to my recollection that was sitting for buses was for the bus garage to be rebuilt or whatever you're going to do. So there's a lot of questionable things here that probably should be addressed and I agree with Councilor Manke as well, that should be done not at the CIP this year, but prior to it being the committee meeting. I too see things that are spent at the end of the year, Parks and Rec spent \$300,000 once they found out that Maureen Klett was asking for an accounting of the balances and the accounts, all of it was explainable and whether or not it's ethical or not professional, I won't speak to that. But that's something to that should be addressed in my estimation. Finally with the listing of all the things that were here that are coming back to the town, some of it COVID related some because of the weather. I'm wondering if some of it too like facilities and the EDC are not due to salaries/positions that were not refilled. I just think that we need a little bit more of an explanation, rather than just the list and this is because next year when you look at the budget I hope that you don't think that they should have less money, the departments, because they spent less this year, you have to take into consideration the reasons why this money was given back. Again, stay safe, stay well. Thank you and good night.

#### VII. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

- Councilor Camillo thanked Rose by keeping an eye on CIP and for giving us something to think about. Our busses are probably the best kept busses anywhere in Connecticut and they could go 12 years or even 14 years and we could go without for a while. I mean, they're in great shape. We have great guys taking care of them, but I believe our highway department should start taking care of the maintenance for what is spent with other vendors and other towns. It's a lot of money what they spend with Datco, so it might be time to think about that. That would pay for a new garage, just with the savings there and it would help the highway department in the end, so something to think about later and talk about later on this year.
- Councilor Donahue - just a question, Mike, you and I could probably talk about this later, but if we build them a garage and keep them inside does that increase the time they're available to be on the road because it doesn't make any sense to build a garage and not get any more use out of them.
- Mayor DelBuono stated there have been previous discussions and Councilor Miner you might remember, but I believe they had indicated the lifespan of the bus would increase to about 14 years if they were garaged, don't quote me directly, but I'm pretty sure that was the estimation.
- Councilor Nagel stated that he agrees. What you mentioned before is true and once again, we need to do something concerning clarity with CIP this summer, this fall before we actually get to the point of having to go through the budget process again.

#### VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilor Manke to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Camillo. Motion passed 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Gibbon  
Council Clerk