

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hicks Municipal Center
Council Chambers
Tolland, CT 06084

Meeting is In-Person for those who wish to attend and will also be offered through Zoom for those who wish to attend remotely

VISION STATEMENT

To represent education at its best, preparing each student for an ever-changing society, and becoming a full community of learning where excellence is achieved through each individual's success.

BOE GOALS

- Ensure the completion and implementation of the Portrait of a Graduate Report.
- Foster a culture and climate that supports high levels of learning and engagement, promotes mental and physical wellbeing, and leads to individual student success.
- Assess our district needs and advocate for resources to meet them, while pursuing non-traditional sources of revenue, ensuring a quality education for all students.
- Nurture and support an inclusive community where every person, regardless of their identity, is acknowledged and respected. This will ensure that Tolland students have the necessary resources to thrive at school, in the community, and in our diverse world.

REGULAR MEETING

7:00 PM

AGENDA
August 11, 2021

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86358441213?pwd=dUJPbnVDV3BoZW1MT1ZJZ1F1K21XZz09>
Meeting ID: 863 5844 1213
Passcode: 5FgfFH

Dial by your location
+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)
Meeting ID: 863 5844 1213
Passcode: 582724

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- July 14, 2021
- August 2, 2021 – Special Meeting

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2-minute limit)

The members of the Tolland Board of Education welcome members of the public to share their thoughts and ideas at this time. When appropriate to do so, members of the Board and the administration may respond to comments during “Points of Information”. However, in consideration of those in attendance and in an effort to proceed in a timely manner, follow-up discussion may need to take place outside of the meeting setting.

E. CORRESPONDENCE

F. POINTS OF INFORMATION

G. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES’ REPORT

H. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

- H.1 Policy 3010 (no attachment)
- H.2 Policy 9010
- H.3 2022 BOE Meeting Dates
- H.4 COVID Update (no attachment)
- H.5 ERF Update
- H.6 Advocacy Letter

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

J. CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

K. BOARD ACTION

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2-minute limit)

Comments must be limited to items on this agenda.

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION

- [Town Council](#) – July 13, 2021
- [Town Council](#) – July 27, 2021

N. EXECUTIVE SESSION - Discussion concerning an employee’s contractual request for leave -proposed for executive session

O. EXECUTIVE SESSION: FOR THE PURPOSE OF A DISCUSSION CONCERNING AN ATTORNEY CLIENT COMMUNICATION REGARDING LEGAL STEPS FOR ADDRESSING A PERSONNEL MATTER

P. FUTURE

Q. NEW BUSINESS

R. ADJOURNMENT

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION
ZOOM Meeting

REGULAR MEETING – July 14, 2021

Members Present: Ashley Lundgren, Chair; Christina Plourd, Vice Chair; Secretary; Jacob Marie, Dana Philbin, Madhu Renduchintala, Sophia Shaikh

Members Absent: Christine Griffin, Tony Holt, Renie Besaw

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Lundgren called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – n/a

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- June 23, 2021

Mr. Marie motioned to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2021 meeting.

Ms. Plourd seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Sara Briggs, 157 Anderson Road, commented that she is speaking regarding the masking mandated for the upcoming school year. Parents who say that their child should be masked because they are scared for their child are the same ones masking their children at the grocery store, in restaurants, and sitting next to people who may or may not be vaccinated. Ms. Briggs commented that that is all she should have to say because it makes no sense. She explained that she is a healthcare worker who is vaccinated and believes in vaccines and doing things to save people's lives that are warranted. She commented that unfortunately, the mask mandate for the children is not warranted. Studies and statistics point to no real evidence to keep children muzzled for 6-8 hours a day in schools. The masks and COVID are ruining children's livelihood. Ms. Briggs noted that one of her patients is a behavioral specialist for a local elementary school and she told Ms. Briggs about ongoing mental illness and meltdowns due to the masks and COVID during the last school year. Ms. Briggs added that she contacted the EHHD and the CT DPH numerous times requesting statistics and numbers and she has not received anything from them. She wants to make decisions for her family's health regarding COVID based on research and facts and there are none to justify her son wearing a mask all day at school.

Julie Brennan, 127 Ellington Road, thanked the Board for listening and drafting a letter to send to Governor Lamont requesting that masks be made optional and be at the choice of parents for the upcoming school year. She appreciates everything the Board does for the students and noted that all 3 of her children struggled the entire year with wearing masks. Her son has been in speech therapy for the past 2 years at Birch Grove and his speech has declined tremendously this past year due to the masks and not being able to see his speech therapist's facial expressions and mouth. This is just one item she learned this past year. Ms. Brennan explained

that children have done their part to protect the vulnerable for 15 months she feels it is time to make masks optional in the schools. Ms. Brennan noted that her daughter wrote a letter that she would like to read. Olivia Brennan read her letter that noted that she is 10 years old and going into the 5th grade. Last year they had to wear masks at school and on the bus and it was difficult to hear her teachers and classmates. During the spring and summer her mask became "fuzzy" from perspiration and she was melting. Olivia explained that it was hard to concentrate on her work and she would get headaches from wearing her mask all day. She noted that she has not had any headaches this summer because she has not had to wear a mask all day and these are the reasons they should not make students wear masks in school anymore.

Jeff Ruest, 27 Buff Cap Road, commented that he would like to see masks optional for children in school. He explained that it was 2 weeks to flatten the curve and it is now 18 months later. Things are starting to get back to normal and everything is opening up. If parents are worried about their children, they have the opportunity to make the decision for themselves. Mr. Ruest explained that if he wants to send his children to school wearing masks this is his choice as a parent and if he wants to send his children without masks, this should be his decision as well.

Diana Shaw, 43 Woodhenge Drive, commented that she agrees that they should evaluate the mask mandate but also feels that they need to proceed cautiously. There are still many cases – 8,000 deaths in CT and 600,000 deaths throughout the nation. While she appreciates that everyone as a country, state, and town has struggled, the children are probably the most resilient. Her 5 year old daughter has worn her mask and has not complained. Ms. Shaw explained that she appreciates people's concerns but wants to proceed with caution and wait for more data about the delta variant in terms of the changes in incidents, hospitalizations, and deaths as the school year approaches before making a decision. She added that the steps taken to decrease COVID such as social distancing, masking, and hand hygiene have not only decreased the cases of COVID but have also made the flu nonexistent. Every year people, including children, are lost to the flu and she asked the Board to proceed with caution and look at the science and data before making a decision. She believes it is too soon to unmask children.

Jessica Soucy, 108 Lawlor Road, commented that she believes that everyone should be advocating for the children in the Tolland Public Schools but not all students have the same needs. It should be up to the parents to decide what is best, safest, and the most reasonable solution for their children. She explained that children have different needs and medical conditions and if a parent is concerned about their child returning to school and being around other students who are mask-less, then the parent should connect with the administration and staff to initiate a plan that is comfortable for their family. Ms. Soucy commented that from personal experience having an immunocompromised son that the Tolland Public Schools are extremely supportive in all areas in making accommodations for the children in the schools. Children are the parents' responsibility and they cannot expect other people to wear masks because of their fears. Simple accommodations like social distancing and hand washing are very feasible but there are documented risks from medical professionals, published data in medical journals, reports from scientists and professionals, and reports from the Department of Infectious Disease as well as the CDC and Dr. Fauci who say that masks have serious warnings and there are prolonged dangers from wearing them.

Kate Howard-Bender, 103 Goose Lane asked the Board to reconsider the calendar. Dr. Willett and the administrators asked for extra days so they could respond to the loss of learning and

social emotional needs of students for next year. While it is inconvenient for parents she asked that the Board listen to what the administrators are saying. Ms. Howard-Bender commented that there are 2,300 students in Tolland and approximately 1,300 are under the age of 12 (57%) and are not eligible to be vaccinated. She explained that this is an unacceptable number. One hundred percent of the students at Birch Grove are not vaccinated and cannot be vaccinated. Another 100% at TIS are also ineligible and this is unacceptable. She commented that until they have herd immunity they need to stay safe and wait to see what the CDC and EHHD tell them to do. Based on her experience of 24 years in the public school systems, she knows they will hear that they will wait until mid-August to hear the guidance before making a decision. She commented that they should not spend their political will trying to advocate for something that does not make sense.

E. CORRESPONDENCE

- e-mail (2) asking that the Board add extra half days to the school calendar
- e-mail requesting that masks not be required for the upcoming school year
- e-mail asking that the mask mandate stay in place for the school system
- e-mail from a parent interested in getting involved in the PTO or similar organization
- e-mail asking for a video for her son who has since graduated
- e-mail asking how to get details about the Tolland Public School's curriculum; author urged the district not to teach Critical Race Theory
- e-mail about concerns about the negative effects of mask wearing for children
- e-mail from the Birch Grove Building Committee Chair about the upcoming Grand Opening of the new school
- e-mail urging the Board not mandate masks for the upcoming school year
- e-mail asking surplus school furniture
- e-mail asking to make masks optional for the upcoming school year
- e-mail (3) asking that mask mandates remain in place for the upcoming school year

F. POINTS OF INFORMATION - none

G. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT – Nathalie Mitchell and Emily Pereira - none

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

H.1 Audrey McKown – National Invention Convention Finalist from Tolland
 Dr. Willett introduced Audrey McKown who has been an awesome representative of the Tolland Public Schools and will be doing a presentation that will illustrate her invention. She was Tolland's representative to the national version of the Invention Convention.

Ms. McKown reviewed her presentation which provided details about the Invention Convention and her inventions: Pain Be Gone Pops (6th grade), Calm Noms (7th grade), and Breathe Better Buzz Box (8th grade). She also reviewed some of the skills she learned including self-discovery, problem solving, and risk-taking.

Ms. Lundgren commented on how wonderful Ms. McKown's inventions are and it is awesome that she is starting young. Ms. Plourd thanked Ms. McKown for sharing this with the Board and was impressed with her presentations skills. She added that Ms. McKown will go far. Mr. Marie congratulated Ms. McKown on her success in the

competition – it was very impressive. Mr. Renduchintala commented that he was impressed not only with her inventions but also her presentation skills. Ms. Philbin noted that Ms. McKown has a great opportunity for a wonderful future. Ms. Shaikh commented that she too is impressed and that Ms. McKown is truly smart.

H.2 Celebrations

Dr. Willett reviewed attachment H.2.

Tolland High School students participated in the Technology Student Association national competition for the first time. Daniel Duff, Will Glaser, and Eric Eckblom placed third in the regional competition. Dr. Willett explained that this is an example of the programming at TMS and THS that illustrates what teachers are doing with the students – giving them the opportunity to compete and win on a national level. He noted that students are creative and innovative and he thanked them and their teachers for the amazing work they are doing.

Ms. Lundgren congratulated everyone and looks forward to seeing what they created.

H.3 COVID update

Dr. Willett reviewed attachment H.3.

Dr. Willett explained that the district is currently in a holding pattern awaiting guidance but received information from the EHHD. The current concerns are regarding the unvaccinated populations and the delta variant. Recently the executive order was extended including some of the Governor's powers with respect to COVID-19 through September 30th and Dr. Willett believes the DPH will soon provide guidance for schools that will need to be incorporated. He included some information and data about COVID in the attachment including how it can impact the brain and possible residual effects. Further, the delta variant, which is stated to be more contagious, is a reason for concern especially for unvaccinated populations.

H.4 Mask Draft Letter

Ms. Lundgren noted that the draft letter came out of the Communications Committee.

Ms. Plourd explained that the Board received many e-mails and heard some comments at the Board meeting so they felt it was important to put it on the Board's agenda. The letter is not a decision on behalf of the Board. The state and the DPH will provide the direction and guidelines that the district must follow so the letter is more of an advocacy piece. The letter is focused on advocacy for students to take off the masks if the data presents the opportunity to do so as well as for safety. Everyone has individual circumstances and Ms. Plourd noted that she may send her son with a mask if they are optional and he is in a crowded classroom. The letter advocates for giving parents the choice.

Ms. Lundgren noted that she spoke with legal and was advised that the Board not vote on a back to school plan letter because they could be out of compliance with the state. They must follow the guidance of the DPH. She does not believe the letter takes a stance. She asked if fully vaccinated staff can choose not to wear a mask in school. Dr. Willett responded that staff, even if vaccinated, must wear masks when in the presence

of students. At the moment, this is through July 20th and he believes it will be extended through September 30th.

Mr. Marie commented that he would not have felt comfortable writing the letter if it were not for COVID being much more deadly among the elderly population than among children and CT has done a great job with vaccinations and currently has a low number of cases. He recommended that the Board wait to vote on this item since 3 Board members are not in attendance this evening. Ms. Lundgren noted that she spoke to Dr. Willett and the letter does not have to come from the whole Board – it may just be from those members who choose to sign it.

Mr. Renduchintala asked if at some point masks may be required in some of the schools but not others. Dr. Willett responded that he has heard that perhaps masks would be required in schools where populations cannot be vaccinated but he does not have any information at the moment. They have also heard of the possibility of masks for only those who are not vaccinated. Mr. Renduchintala asked if what is in the letter specifically is in regard to the delta variant. Is minimal risk to children still accurate given the data? Dr. Willett suggested waiting until they have official information from the DPH. Mr. Renduchintala believes it would be prudent to wait until guidance is available. He added that the data regarding growth being driven by younger age groups jumped out at him.

Ms. Philbin requested that the letter be read aloud. Ms. Shaikh read the letter.

Ms. Shaikh commented that she believes this item should be tabled until more Board members are present and it would be prudent to wait for the EHHD guidelines. There is not an imminent timeline and it should be reworked to reflect the current CDC guidelines. Dr. Willett noted that while the next meeting of the DPH is on July 20th, information may not be available until after the August 3rd meeting.

Mr. Marie commented that he does not have a problem holding off on the letter as long as it is addressed before school starts. Regarding the delta variant, if it is as deadly to children as it was to the elderly, or close to that, he rescinds what was stated in the letter. He stated that statistics from the CDC website indicate 300 children under the age of 17 have died from COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic while over 300,000 people over the age of 75 have died.

Ms. Plourd commented that in terms of advocacy sooner is better than later but agrees that they should have all 9 Board members present for the discussion. In terms of the different variants, she believes there will always be something new emerging and that the virus will never go away. The priority is keeping schools open and kids safe but in terms of advocacy she wants students to be able to have a normal school life. Every family is different and giving them a choice is the advocacy piece of the letter.

Mr. Renduchintala explained that he understands wanting to get the letter out as well as the advocacy component but they only have one chance to do this and need to have all the information and data. He would like to see guidance before the letter is sent.

Ms. Philbin commented that she hears what is being said about advocacy. The Board is supposed to be advocating for the students and staff of Tolland Public Schools in regard to items such as safety and a good and equitable education for all students. She understands people's desire not to have kids wear masks but they need to rely on the advice of experts including the CDC. Ms. Philbin commented that at this time she does not have enough information to act on this matter and declined to participate because the letter does not reflect the entire community. Once information is available, she believes it is important to discuss this item again. This is a health issue that should be left with the experts. Ms. Philbin explained that there is no one letter that they could co-write that could possibly represent the entire school community or the town as a whole. While they want to advocate for those who want no masks, they need to also advocate for those who are requesting masks and she encouraged people to reach out to their state representatives with their feeling on the issue. She added that the Board represents the entire community so advocating for one side or the other would not be in its best interest. Further, if 300 children passed away from COVID-19 then that is 300 too many.

Ms. Lundgren recommended having the Communications Committee revamp the letter based on the information provided by the CDC or the DPH so an informed decision may be made. It is not in the Board's purview to say masks or no masks.

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

- Communications – see item H.4
- Negotiations – see item K.4
- Curriculum – meeting upcoming
- Finance and Facilities – next meeting August
- Mental Health Task Force – will meet next Monday

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - none

K. BOARD ACTION

- K.1 BGP Swing Set
Dr. Willett reviewed attachment K.1.

In terms of the plan, it has been reviewed by a civil engineer, the optimal location has been placed, playground vendors have provided information on new equipment, a professional cost estimate is being compiled, and the Committee has seen it. JCJ Architecture is working with the construction company for the final pricing.

Ms. Murray explained that this is a procedure required by the state. The district has expressed the need for a swing set and due to an unforeseen series of events the old swing set is no longer available so they are looking to see if a new swing set would be eligible for reimbursement.

Mr. Marie asked about the cost. Ms. Murray noted that the cost estimate is \$80-90K due to the site work required due to a drainage issue. If included in the project and approved, it would be reimbursed at 89% which would save the town money.

Ms. Philbin asked Dr. Willett to speak about the swing set. Dr. Willett explained that there was always a feeling that a swing set would be available. He explained that some students have developmental needs, and the swing set is an optimal way of helping them not only socialize but also get physical activity. In turn, a population of students need a swing set in a play scape arrangement. It provides sensory and motor benefits among other items including socialization aspects. Some students with certain exceptionalities can use it when they cannot use some of the other things. Thus, it is an important part of a play scape so all populations of students can be served.

Mr. Marie motioned to approve the final Birch Grove Primary School Swing Set Plans and Project Manuals, as prepared for bidding and dated June 28, 2021, including the professional cost estimate, which is within the \$46 Million total project cost, for the State Office of School Construction Grants and Review Project Number 142-0083N. This motion authorizes the Chair of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools to sign State Forms SCG-042: Request for Review of Final Plans.

Ms. Plourd seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

K.2 Meeting format

Dr. Willett reviewed attachment K.2.

The Board can select 1 of 3 options:

1. Fully In-Person
2. Fully Remote
3. Hybrid

Dr. Willett noted that he is prepared and has the technology set aside to move forward on whichever option the Board selects.

Ms. Lundgren noted that the Council Chambers is set up and most of the main boards have selected the hybrid option. She noted that if they go with the fully remote option and a request for accommodation is made within 24 hours a room with equipment and staff would need to be provided. In terms of the hybrid option, they Board did this for the goal setting session. She noted that it was difficult to hear everyone but perhaps with the new technology it will be a bit better.

Mr. Marie commented that he is not in favor of the remote option and this meeting has been a good example of why they should not go with this selection. Ideally, he would like to see the meetings be fully in-person but knows that many are interested in the hybrid option. His concern with the latter is technical difficulties and that staff may be distracted due to having to run the technology. He wants to ensure that meetings are a productive use of time.

Ms. Shaikh noted that she prefers the hybrid option. The remote meetings have been more accessible to the community and there have been more participants and observers.

Mr. Renduchintala commented that he is inclined to select the hybrid option. With the remote meetings engagement has been at the next level. He asked if the Board selects one option if they can later select another option. He asked if this pertains to the executive order and if this will push it out. Dr. Willett responded that he believes the format can change if there is sufficient notice. He does not believe it pertains to the executive order which goes through September 30th. The implementer bill goes through April 30th.

Ms. Plourd commented that she is leaning toward the hybrid option given that Dr. Willett has the equipment and can make it work. It makes things more flexible. If technology becomes an issue, she would like to see them go to the fully in-person option.

Ms. Philbin noted that the Birch Grove Building Committee opted to stay fully remote. She noted that she attended the PZC meeting via Zoom which was done in the hybrid model. If the Board does go hybrid the members should take advice from others. She found there to be difficulty with the Owl camera and it was difficult to hear speakers. Ms. Philbin explained that the hybrid option would allow people to participate remotely. While there will be tech issues, she does not believe it is something they cannot overcome and is the best way to keep the community involved. She added that if the Board is meeting in the library or Council Chambers it would behoove them to ensure they are all on the screen.

Ms. Plourd noted that perhaps some of the Committees could hold their meetings in the hybrid format to test the technology.

Mr. Renduchintala motioned to, in accordance with State Senate Bill 1202, the Tolland Board of Education will practice the Hybrid meeting method for the period of July 2021 through April 30, 2022.

Ms. Plourd seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Nay</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
<i>Lundgren</i>	x		
<i>Marie</i>		x	
<i>Philbin</i>	x		
<i>Plourd</i>	x		
<i>Renduchintala</i>	x		
<i>Shaikh</i>	x		

Motion passed.

K.3. Calendar – ER Day Additions
Dr. Willett reviewed attachment K.3.

Mr. Renduchintala motioned to approve the addition of October 6, January 12, June 8 Early Release days to the 2021-2022 Tolland Public School Calendar.

Ms. Shaikh seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken.

	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Nay</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
<i>Lundgren</i>	x		
<i>Marie</i>		x	
<i>Philbin</i>	x		
<i>Plourd</i>		x	
<i>Renduchintala</i>	x		
<i>Shaikh</i>	x		

Motion passed.

- K.4. Secretary Contract
Dr. Willett reviewed attachment K.4.

Ms. Philbin motioned to accept the bargaining unit agreement between the Board of Education and the Tolland Clerical Employees (United Public Service Employees Union) extending from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2025.

Ms. Plourd seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Sara Briggs, 157 Anderson Road, commented in regard to the Board not voting on the letter this evening and saying that it does not speak for the entire community. She disagrees. She believes making masks optional technically makes everyone happy. The talk about possibly segregating students depending on vaccination status brings a set of different problems and she does not agree with doing this. Ms. Briggs explained that there will always be variants. If there is a high vaccine rate and a low positive rate there is no justification for masking kids all day. If there is an increase in cases, then the district can adjust accordingly. She believes they should let students have a normal school year and focus on their education instead of fear of becoming sick. The flu and RSV have caused many more deaths in young children every year and she is more worried about those. There has never been masking for either virus or a vaccine mandate.

Jeff Ruest, 27 Buff Cap Road, commented that believes the hybrid model for meetings is excellent. He suggested looking into some of the tech students to help the Board through the process. There are some great people at the Board's immediate disposal who he is sure would be willing to help. Mr. Ruest asked about the Birch Grove playground and where the old one went. He would like to know the status of this. Mr. Ruest commented on the vaccines. Children 12 and older are supposed to get it but they do not yet know the long term side effects for the younger population. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine recipients are running into neurological problems and blood clots. He explained that he thinks he would like to have grandkids at some point and hopefully the Board is not going to tell his child what they need to wear for a floaty in a pool but somehow do it with a mask when they go to school to try to learn. He hopes the Board makes a good decision.

Julie Kleinberg, 35 Stephanie Lane, commented on masks. She explained that one item mentioned was advocacy and the best advocates for children are their parents. To have that that freedom taken away is becoming unbearable. Whether children are masked or vaccinated is a parent's choice and it is concerning to her how they will be treated in school if not vaccinated. This is obvious by requiring those children to wear masks. She commented that she does not understand the need to operate this coming year the same way they did last year now that COVID numbers are so low and the vaccination rates are so high. She explained the thought of students returning to school for hours wearing masks is not normal. Her son told her that last year students were punished and lost recess time if anybody pulled their mask down. The situation in CT is good. The CDC does not provide guidance by state – it up to local officials and the conditions in the state which are awesome. All of the neighboring states have relaxed the mandates.

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION

- Town Council – Special Meeting, June 30, 2021
- Mr. Renduchintala noted that in regard to masks, it is not a decision the Board makes. It is made at the state level by the Department of Public Health and the Eastern Highland Health District.
- Mr. Marie commented that he understands the concerns of the parents and people who spoke. He wishes they could have done something tonight but there are other members and hopefully they will have discussions about this. He believes they need to treat students differently than they treat the more vulnerable populations. He believes that they are at a point where they can get the mandate to be an option rather than a requirement.
- Ms. Plourd commented that she will continue to work on the letter so they can get an advocacy letter that hopefully all 9 Board members can stand behind. She asked that whatever one's beliefs are to advocate for them. The decision is not up to the Board. It has to adhere to the laws and implement them. The Board listens and appreciates the e-mails and public comment.
- Ms. Philbin commented that she is appreciative of everybody who attends meetings and is involved in public participation so the Board can hear from the community. People need to reach out to their state representatives and advocate for themselves and their families. The Board cannot make the decision. In regard to the Birch Grove play scape, the original swing set was supposed to remain on the premises and had to be moved. Once moved it could no longer be safely installed and utilized. Dr. Willett noted that parts of the play scape were moved to other town property but the swing set was destroyed in the process. Ms. Philbin noted that the Birch Grove Building Committee meets on Tuesdays at 6:30PM via Zoom.

N. ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION

Ms. Philbin motioned for the Board to go enter executive session at 9:10 PM for the purpose of the Superintendent's evaluation and invited Dr. Willett to attend.

Mr. Marie seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board exited executive session at 10:02PM.

O. FUTURE

P. NEW BUSINESS – none

Q. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Plourd motioned to adjourn at 10:03PM.

Mr. Renduchintala seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Pascuzzi
Clerk

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION
ZOOM Meeting

SPECIAL MEETING – August 2, 2021

Members Present: Ashley Lundgren, Chair; Christina Plourd, Vice Chair; Tony Holt, Secretary; Renie Besaw, Christine Griffin, Madhu Renduchintala, Dana Philbin

Absent: Jacob Marie; Sophia Shaikh

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools, Jessica Ritter, Attorney

A. CALL TO ORDER

Ashley Lundgren called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

B. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ashley Lundgren motioned to go into executive session at 6:06 pm for the purpose of a discussion concerning an attorney client communication regarding legal steps for addressing a personnel matter. Madhu Renduchintala seconded the motion. Superintendent, Walter Willett and Attorney Jessica Ritter were invited to join.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:00 pm.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Madhu Renduchintala motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. Renie Besaw seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter Willett
Superintendent

SUPERINTENDENT’S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND

ITEM: Policy 9010
ITEM SUBMITTED BY: Walter Willett, Ph.D., Superintendent
For BOE meeting: August 11, 2021

ITEM SUMMARY:

Proposed amendments as follows:

~~C. To consider and adopt an annual budget prepared and recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.~~

C. To consider and adopt an annual budget, prepared by the Superintendent of Schools.

~~E. To establish policy for employment, promotion and dismissal of personnel in accordance with the state statutes and employment contracts.~~

E. To establish policy for employment, promotion and dismissal of personnel in accordance with the state statutes.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

N/A

BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:

- Shipman and Goodwin Policy Template referenced
- Other Legal References:
 - Connecticut General Statutes
 - 1-200 Definitions (public agency)
 - 10-4a Educational interest of the State identified
 - 10-4b Failure of local or regional board to implement educational interests
 - 10-220 Duties of Boards of Education
 - 10-221 Board of education to prescribe rules
 - 10-241 Powers of school district

BOE ACTION DESIRED:

First read.

Proposed Motion:

Motion to accept the changes to Policy 9010 as outlined in agenda item H.2. of the August 11, 2021, Board of Education Meeting.

Second. Discussion. Vote.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:

TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Tolland, Connecticut

BOARD POLICY

REGARDING: Role of Board and Members

Number: 9010
Bylaws

Approved: 2/28/01
Revised: 10/10/12
Revised: 8-11-2021

1. General Duties

- A. The Board of Education represents the residents of the Town in carrying out the mandates of the General Statutes pertaining to education.
- B. The Board of Education shall determine all questions of general policy to be employed in the conduct of the schools.
- C. In determining school policy it shall:
 - (1) hear and consider facts and recommendations,
 - (2) adopt a plan, policy or course of action, and
 - (3) authorize the Superintendent of Schools, its chief executive officer, to carry out its policy.

2. Specific Powers and Duties

The Board of Education after being sworn in shall have authority to take all action necessary or advisable to meet its responsibilities under state statutes and Town Charter including but not limited to the following:

- A. Create, abolish, modify and maintain such positions, schools, divisions and classifications as may be necessary for the efficient administration of the educational enterprise.
- B. To elect a Superintendent of Schools in accordance with state statutes.
- ~~C. To consider and adopt an annual budget prepared and recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.~~
- C. To consider and adopt an annual budget, prepared by the Superintendent of Schools.
- D. To determine the number, classification, duties and remuneration of employees.

~~E. To establish policy for employment, promotion and dismissal of personnel in accordance with the state statutes and employment contracts.~~

E. To establish policy for employment, promotion and dismissal of personnel in accordance with the state statutes.

- F. To provide for the appraisal of the efficiency of personnel.
- G. To initiate and approve the acquisition and disposition of school sites, to initiate and approve plans for school buildings.
- H. To consider any specific recommendations made by the Superintendent of Schools.
- I. To keep the citizenry informed of purposes, values, conditions and needs of public education in the Town.
- J. To consider, revise and adopt any changes in the curriculum.
- K. To take any other actions required or permitted by law.
- L. To make reasonable provision to implement the educational interests of the State, as defined by law, so that
 - (1) each child shall have for the period prescribed in the General Statutes equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences;
 - (2) the school district shall finance at a reasonable level an educational program designed to achieve this end;
 - (3) the school district shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds;
 - (4) the mandates in the General Statutes pertaining to education within the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education shall be implemented.

Legal References:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-18a Definitions (public agency)
- 10-4a Educational interest of the State Defined
- 10-4b Failure of local or regional board to implement educational interests
- 10-220 Duties of Boards of Education
- 10-221 Board of Education to prescribe rules
- 10-241 Powers of school district

SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND

ITEM: Board of Education 2021 Meeting Dates

ITEM SUBMITTED BY: Walter Willett, Ph.D., Superintendent

FOR BOE MEETING: August 11, 2021

ITEM SUMMARY:

January 12, 2022
January 26, 2022
February 9, 2022
February 23, 2022
March 9, 2022
March 23, 2022
April 13, 2022
April 27, 2022
May 11, 2022
May 25, 2022
June 8, 2022
June 22, 2022
July 13, 2022
July 27, 2022*
August 10, 2022
August 24, 2022
September 14, 2022
September 28, 2022
October 12, 2022
October 26, 2022
November 9, 2022
November 30, 2022 (moved due to Thanksgiving break)
December 14, 2021
December 21, 2021 (moved due to winter Break)

***Meetings followed by an asterisk have typically been cancelled**

- **Meetings will be held at Hicks Municipal Center, Council Chambers @ 7:00 pm unless otherwise specified**
- **Meetings are held In Person and through Zoom (hybrid meeting style) unless otherwise specified**

FINANCIAL SUMMARY: N/A

BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:

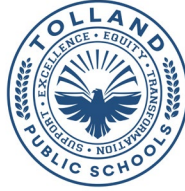
BOE ACTION DESIRED:

Review dates. Potential Motions:

Motion to approve the Board of Education 2022 Meeting dates. Second. Discussion. Vote

SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:

2022 - BOE Proposed Meeting dates



**TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION
2022 MEETING DATES**

**Meetings will be held at Hicks Municipal Center, Council Chambers
7:00 pm**

In Person or Zoom

January 12, 2022

January 26, 2022

February 9, 2022

February 23, 2022

March 9, 2022

March 23, 2022

April 13, 2022

April 27, 2022

May 11, 2022

May 25, 2022

June 8, 2022

June 22, 2022

July 13, 2022

July 27, 2022*

August 10, 2022

August 24, 2022

September 14, 2022

September 28, 2022

October 12, 2022

October 26, 2022

November 9, 2022

November 30, 2022 (moved due to Thanksgiving break)

December 14, 2021

December 21, 2021 (moved due to winter Break)

**The November 24 meeting was moved to November 17 due to *Meetings followed by an asterisk have typically been cancelled

SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND

ITEM: ERF Update

ITEM SUBMITTED BY: Walter Willett, Ph.D., Superintendent

For BOE meeting: August 11, 2021

ITEM SUMMARY:

The Educational Reserve Fund was discussed by the Board of Education officially in August of 2013. The Town Council of Tolland adopted Ordinance 86 on August 27, 2013. Chapter 8 of Ordinance 86.

Sec. 10-248a. Unexpended education funds account.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011, and each fiscal year thereafter, notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes or any special act, municipal charter, home rule ordinance or other ordinance, the board of finance in each town having a board of finance, the board of selectman in each town having no board of finance or the authority making appropriations for the school district for each town may deposit into a nonlapsing account any unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year from the budgeted appropriation for education for the town, provided such amount does not exceed one per cent of the total budgeted appropriation for education for such prior fiscal year. (P.A. 10-108, S. 32).

Town of Tolland - Ordinance 86 – Chapter 8: Education Reserve Fund

There is hereby created a Board of Education Reserve Fund pursuant to Connecticut State Statute Section 10-248a to provide funding resources solely for future Board of Education capital, technology, and/or unanticipated special education expenditure funding needs.

This ordinance also superseded former Ch. 8, Education Reserve Fund, adopted 8-27-2013 by Ord. No. 86.

The processes outlined within the sections of this chapter shall be reviewed by the Town Council and Board of Education at least every three years as needed or requested from the date of revision.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

Balance as of 8/5/2021: **\$503,014**

BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW: N/A

BOE ACTION DESIRED:

- Review & advise
 - Town Council Reviewed 8/10/2021

SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:

Current in Force Ordinance 86 - Chapter 8 - ERF

Town of Tolland, CT
Thursday, December 12, 2019

Chapter 8. Education Reserve Fund

[HISTORY: Adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Tolland 11-13-2018 by Ord. No. 86.^[1] Amendments noted where applicable.]

[1] *Editor's Note: This ordinance also superseded former Ch. 8, Education Reserve Fund, adopted 8-27-2013 by Ord. No. 86.*

§ 8-1. Purpose.

There is hereby created a Board of Education Reserve Fund pursuant to Connecticut State Statute Section 10-248a to provide funding resources solely for future Board of Education capital, technology, and/or unanticipated special education expenditure funding needs.

§ 8-2. Contributions to Fund.

- A. Subject to audit confirmation of the Board of Education's available year-end balance and the status of the unassigned General Fund balance, the Town Council shall, except as provided below, deposit into a nonlapsing account any unexpended funds of the prior fiscal year from the budgeted appropriation for education. This amount may not exceed 1% of the total budgeted appropriation for education for such fiscal year. The Board of Education shall provide a written request for such funds to the Town Council after they have approved the funding request at their Board meeting. The appropriation shall not be considered until the end of the third quarter of the fiscal year. If, prior to the appropriation being made, the State of Connecticut reduces and/or withholds ECS revenue in an amount greater than provided for in the Town budget, the appropriation request of the BOE may be denied in part or in whole.
- B. The fund shall be accounted for on the Town's general ledger and will be solely used for Board of Education capital, technology and/or unanticipated special education funding needs.

§ 8-3. Custody of Fund and Investments.

The Board of Education Reserve Fund shall be part of the Town's pooled cash account or a separate cash account in the custody of the Town Finance Director or Town Treasurer. The Town Treasurer or Town Finance Director may, from time to time, invest all or any part of the monies in said Fund in any securities in which public funds may lawfully be invested. All income derived from such investments shall be paid into the Town's General Fund and become a part thereof. The Town's Finance Director shall exercise control and administration of the Board of Education Reserve Fund on the Town's general ledger. Purchases will be made in accordance with Board of Education Policies. The Board of Education Business Manager shall also maintain a ledger of the deposits and withdrawals of the fund within their records.

§ 8-4. Use of monies from Committed Fund Balance Account.

Monies deposited into the Board of Education Reserve Fund shall be used solely by the Board of Education pursuant to the following:

- A. The Board of Education shall approve requests for purchases or other uses made from this fund pursuant to § 8-2 above.
- B. Once the Board of Education approves the requested use of the funds, the designated Board of Education employee(s) will provide a copy of the resolution authorizing the purchase to the Town's Finance staff and request the issuance of a purchase order. The Board of Education employee shall place the orders for the items once the purchase order has been processed. The purchasing process shall be pursuant to the Board of Education's purchasing policies.
- C. At the end of each fiscal year, the Town Finance Director, after reconciliation with the Board of Education Superintendent and/or designee, will provide the Town Council and Board of Education with financial reports to identify the use of the fund and any remaining balance.

§ 8-5. Continuity of Account.

Any unexpended funds which may remain at the close of each fiscal year in the Board of Education Reserve Fund shall be nonlapsing and remain within the fund for use by the Board of Education.

§ 8-6. Review of this chapter.

The processes outlined within the sections of this chapter shall be reviewed by the Town Council and Board of Education at least every three years as needed or requested from the date of revision.

SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND

ITEM: Advocacy Letter
ITEM SUBMITTED BY: Walter Willett, Ph.D., Superintendent on behalf of BOE
FOR BOE MEETING: **8-11-2021** (modified from original Draft 7-14-2021)
ITEM SUMMARY:

Draft letter to DPH / State of Connecticut as authored by the Tolland Board of Education:
To Whom It May Concern:

The Tolland Board of Education respectfully requests that the State of Connecticut make mask-wearing optional for all students and school staff for the 2021-2022 school year, provided that Covid-19 cases remain at low levels and the virus does not mutate in such a way that it poses a serious risk to unvaccinated children.

Mask wearing, like all public health measures have their time and place, but each measure also comes with costs. During the heat of the pandemic, those costs were justified. Many years from now Americans will look back at this time and have respect for the great sacrifices students, parents, and teachers made to protect the vulnerable by quarantining, social distancing, and mask wearing. The Board does not want to understate this point, and believes that countless lives were saved by these measures.

Luckily, vaccines have turned the tide of the pandemic, and deaths and case-counts have plummeted in the past few months. This is something to be celebrated, but with each passing day the costs of many public health measures, particularly mask wearing, become greater relative to the benefits they provide.

The costs of wearing a mask are not trivial. Besides the discomfort experienced by the wearer, masks conceal the face, which is the focal point of human interaction. After the mask mandate was lifted for vaccinated individuals outside of school, many felt that the end of a dark era had arrived, that the most visible symbol of the pandemic that had caused so much death and pain was gone. For young students who have lived through a pandemic that has lasted more than a year (that is 20% of a kindergartner's life), the joy of seeing their friend's faces, of being back to normal, will be of enormous benefit to their mental health.

Furthermore, even though the youngest students cannot be vaccinated as of the writing of this letter, it should be noted that Connecticut still has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country, and this protects everyone. Additionally, it is known that young children are the least likely to be severely affected by Covid-19, whereas the age group most affected, the elderly, are mostly vaccinated. Per CDC data, 331 people aged 0-17 have died from Covid-19, whereas 340,853 people aged 75 and older have died of the virus. Every death is tragic, but there is a clear risk and vulnerability differential that needs to be considered. These factors are incredibly important in determining the Board's view on this subject. Safety will always be our top priority, but we believe that with the vastly improved outlook, we are ready to help our students' mental health recover by taking this step towards normalcy.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY: N / A

BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW: N / A

BOE ACTION DESIRED:

Review of draft letter

SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:

None

MINUTES

TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL ZOOM REMOTE MEETING July 13, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tammy Nuccio, Chair; Steve Jones, Vice Chair; Brenda Falusi, Lou Luba, John Reagan, Kurt Schenher

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Rosen, Town Manager; Beverly Bellody, Director, Human Services; Lisa Hancock, Director, Finance & Records/Treasurer; Scott Lappen, Director, Department of Public Works

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Nuccio called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Observed
4. **PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS:** none
5. **PUBLIC PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (*on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council*) (*2-minute limit*) - none
6. **PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:**
 - 6.1 Consideration of a resolution appropriating \$140,000 for certain school patio entrance and bus parking lot pavement improvements, appropriating \$151,800 for certain parking lot pavement improvements, and appropriating \$434,029 for heavy machinery and equipment acquisition, and authorizing the issuance of up to \$725,829 bonds and notes to finance the appropriations.

Mr. Rosen provided background information.

Mr. Jones motioned to open the public hearing.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion: none

Mr. Jones motioned to close the public hearing.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Luba commented that in looking through past information and the capital and expense budget, this is something that they prepared for and proposed several months ago. He believes they planned and budgeted for this, and it should be approved.

Mr. Jones *motioned*

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby appropriates as follows:

A resolution appropriating \$140,000 for certain school patio entrance and bus parking lot pavement improvements, appropriating \$151,800 for certain parking lot pavement improvements, and appropriating \$434,029 for heavy machinery and equipment acquisition, and authorizing the issuance of up to \$725,829 bonds and notes to finance the appropriations. A copy of the full text of the resolution is recorded following these meeting minutes.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

7a. REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE TO THE COUNCIL

Tourism – Ms. Falusi reviewed the Central Region Tourism Commission report and noted that people are excited to recreate again. Tolland Tourism continues to build a following on social media. Ms. Falusi encouraged people to like and share the posts. It is a great way to partner with and promote local businesses.

Sustainable CT – Ms. Falusi noted that they are having biweekly meetings with the fellows. She is currently working on mapping cultural, tourism, and shopping experiences in Tolland. They are also working on a poet laureate. Further, Ms. Falusi is working on some equity items.

7b. REPORTS OF TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS

- Historic District Commission- no meeting
- Blight Committee – Ms. Falusi noted that an in-person meeting will be held on July 22nd.
- Planning & Zoning Commission – Ms. Falusi provided an update.
- Conservation Commission – Mr. Jones provided an update of the July 8th meeting. The next meeting will be on July 22nd.
- Water Commission – Mr. Jones noted that the next meeting is July 19th.
- Birch Grove Building Committee – Mr. Luba provided an update.
- WPCA – Mr. Reagan provided an update of the June 15th meeting.
- EDC – Mr. Schenher provided an update of the July 7th meeting.

8. NEW BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):

8.1 Consideration of a resolution to approve a revised banking institution list.

Mr. Rosen provided background information on this item.

He explained that it has been several years since the banking list has been updated and there have been some changes such as mergers. They would like to bring the list to present day. Further, they are requesting in the investment policy to identify that the town manager or designee be able to keep the list updated as long as it is permissible under the investment policy and state statutes. The new list updates the banking changes and adds 2 other options for allowance to invest in certificates of deposit (CDs) permitted under state statutes with out of state banks up to the FDIC insurance limit.

Ms. Hancock noted that 2 other agencies will allow the town to invest in CDs with out of state banks, but this would only be up to the FDIC limit and the banks would also have to be strong institutions. There are companies that can broker these so the town can ladder CDs to get the best return. Ms. Hancock noted that they are looking for the safest ways to move forward with investments. The order of priority is safety, liquidity, and yield.

Ms. Falusi asked if the town can use credit unions. Ms. Hancock responded that she would need to double check the statute but believes that if it is a banking institution that also has FDIC backing, they would be able to do so; however, she is unsure if credit unions can service municipalities and provide good rates.

Ms. Nuccio asked how the list was developed. Ms. Hancock explained that this is the same list they have had for years but some banks have merged and changed names. They updated the list with the appropriate names. Further, the other 2 agencies were available but not used and they wanted to provide a current list for staff.

Mr. Jones motioned:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves as follows:

A resolution approving the revised banking list as presented and to authorize the Town Manager or designee to revise the list in the future as necessary for changes in banking or investment institutions so long as they are in accordance with the Town's investment policy and State Statutes pertaining to public fund deposits.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.2 Consideration and action on authorizing the renewal of a contract with the State of Connecticut for Resident State Trooper services for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023

Mr. Rosen provided background information on this item.

Mr. Rosen explained the agreement needs to be renewed every 2 years. It is an opportunity for new language to be included due to changes in the contract. They are looking to renew services with the Troopers – 4 Resident State Troopers and a part time Resident State Trooper Secretary. Additionally, there are new details from the State Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection regarding the Police Accountability Bill, language addressing mutual aid operations, and language under Reports and Records regarding the town being responsible for purchasing, maintaining, and ensuring body cameras and dashboard cameras for the constables of the town – the SRO and the Animal Control Officers. The projections in the packet are based on current staffing.

Mr. Luba confirmed that outfitting the SRO would come from the Board of Education's budget. Mr. Rosen added that this goes into effect next year. He explained they need to get on the same system so the SRO and Animal Control Officers can share a server or IT resources with South Windsor. It was noted that the SRO has a dedicated car.

Ms. Nuccio asked about the increase year over year from a financial perspective. Ms. Hancock responded that they factored in the first year based on the contracts in place with the unions for the State Police and an estimated fringe benefit. She would need to get back to the Council with the amount. Ms. Nuccio asked if the town has or will need to purchase the body cams and dashboard cameras and if this has been built into the budget. Mr. Rosen responded that the equipment will need to be purchased and it was not included in the budget. Ms. Nuccio asked about the \$1M insurance policy for combined single limit police professional liability or law enforcement liability. She asked if this number has been reviewed with the Police Accountability Law and the ability for people to bring suit against the town if they perceive that someone has done something unprofessional. Mr. Rosen responded that he does not believe this was changed from previous iterations of the contract. He noted that the contract was reviewed by the Town Attorney. If it needs to be modified, it could be put back on an agenda, but any amendments would need to be run by the state. Ms. Nuccio explained that she wants to ensure the town is covered. She is unsure if with Resident State Troopers if a case is brought forward if it would go against the state contract or the town and would like to know more about this.

Mr. Luba explained that the Police Accountability Act is aimed toward towns that run their own police departments and does not specify Resident State Troopers. They need to look at the issue of subrogation and liability for the town regarding the Resident State Troopers. Ms. Nuccio added that she would like to know if the Animal Control Officers and the SRO are being looped under the Police Accountability Bill if the \$1M coverage is adequate. Mr. Rosen noted that he will get more information.

This item was tabled.

- 8.3 Consideration of a resolution to declare various equipment as surplus property within the Board of Education.

Mr. Rosen provided background information on this item.

Town Policy A 176-4 addresses disposal of surplus personal public property. The Council may declare the listed items as surplus and then they may be disposed of by any of the following means: auctioning, recycling, or disposal by the Board of Education (BOE). Mr. Rosen noted that as per his discussions with the Superintendent, the BOE will take care of any costs related to the items' disposal; however, any value garnered from sale of the

items is slated to go into the Capital Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund used for capital projects by both the town and the schools.

Ms. Nuccio asked about the Birch Grove surplus items that include many desks and chairs and if this is due to the new furniture going into Birch Grove. She asked if these could be auctioned. Ms. Bellody explained that it is a part of a requirement of the state that new equipment be put in the new school. She noted that much of the old equipment is outdated. Mr. Rosen added that they may be able to get some money for items that do have life left in them.

Mr. Jones asked if residents have access to the auctions or if other town departments have access to the materials if they are suitable for them to use. Mr. Rosen recommended asking the BOE but noted that specialized equipment needs to go to a specialized auction house. Mr. Jones asked if the town makes more money than the cost of auction. Ms. Hancock explained that for this year's auction, the auction company only received a couple hundred dollars from the town, but the town received over \$5K which made up any cost of auction. Mr. Rosen explained that the Council would determine if the items are surplus and the BOE would address auctioning the items. Ms. Hancock noted that items that can be used by other town departments could be reallocated.

Mr. Jones motioned:

BE IT RESOLVED that the attached items are hereby declared surplus and may be disposed of in accordance with Policy A176-4, Policy Concerning Disposal of Surplus Personal Public Property. Disposal and any costs for disposal of these items, or cost to auction them, will be the responsibility of the Board of Education.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

8.4 Discussion of American Rescue Plan potential money usage.

Mr. Rosen provided background information about the American Rescue Plan (ARP).

Tolland, over the course of 2 years, has been granted \$4,326,206.00; of this, \$2,163,102.81 has been received and the rest will be received next year. Mr. Rosen noted that there are strict guidelines on how the funding may be used: COVID-19 expenditures that were not otherwise reimbursed by FEMA or CARES; if the town had revenue gaps due to COVID-19; premium pay for essential workers; infrastructure improvements (limited to water, sewer, broadband). An interim report with expenditure summary by category is due by August 31st. Mr. Rosen noted that this has been discussed with the staff.

They came up with 5 options and the funds may be divided among the items:

- a. Eastern Highlands Health District has requested a pandemic response expense reimbursement from the Town of \$5,470.00.
- b. Revenue reimbursement for general revenue losses (including taxes, current charges and miscellaneous general revenue losses) due to COVID-19.
- c. Improve and expand Broadband service to both residents and businesses.
- d. Expansion of the sewer service and/or pump station improvements.
- e. Expansion of the water line to Fire Station 140, 64 Crystal Lake Road.

Mr. Rosen explained that item a. was not reimbursed. In terms of item b, he does not believe the town will be eligible. In regard to item c, he believes they would pick up 1,500 households which would be eligible to have a broadband service which would be a competitor to their current service. They spoke with the vendor (sertex) that provides the town's municipal fiber and a quote was provided. For \$4.3M the town would pick up 1/3rd of households and all of the business districts in town. It would be up to the individual businesses and households to determine if they would like to opt into the service. The vendor was clear that they could provide a faster internet speed at a similar or lower cost than some of the large technology companies. Mr. Rosen noted that this could turn a profit for the town as it would become a utility of the community. In regard to item d, they spoke with Mr. Lappen. One idea was to expand sewer service toward the Old Post Village area. Lastly, for item e they discussed expanding the water line to Fire Station 140.

Ms. Nuccio asked for the revenue numbers and if this option (b) would be applicable to Tolland. Ms. Hancock explained that the fiscal year's final revenue numbers will not be available until mid-September due to accruals, but she can provide an estimate; however, while the town had a loss in investment income and funds in recreation and other departments, she would not be able to provide final numbers.

Ms. Nuccio asked if sections of the broadband could be done. Mr. Rosen directed her to the breakdown listed under the budget estimate for a partial build and noted that perhaps it could be scaled to reach a certain number. Ms. Nuccio noted that a bill was passed for a statewide broadband program to expand service and asked if there would be overlap. Further, in terms of the water, she asked if it could be extended to the Vineyards where there are problems with potable drinking water. Mr. Rosen responded that he believes this would cost the full \$4.3M but will double check. Ms. Nuccio asked if they need a plan by August 31st for the entire amount. Mr. Rosen responded that they believe a plan is needed for the full amount.

Mr. Schenher confirmed that portions of each item presented could be done. Mr. Rosen explained that the only downside to doing so would be that there would need to be a lot of bids and oversight.

Ms. Nuccio asked if expanding the sewer would reduce the rate per household. Mr. Lappen explained what would be needed to run the sewer line and estimated the cost to be \$2M to go to Old Post Village.

Mr. Luba commented that his greatest support would be running water lines to homes with tainted wells and potable drinking water. He asked if the loss of revenues due to crumbling foundations could be tied in for reimbursement through the ARP fund. Further, in regard to broadband and earning revenue, if a projection is available. Mr. Rosen noted that with a 50% take rate, they estimated a profit of \$600K although the administration and ISP costs would need to be subtracted. Mr. Luba noted that he would like greater granularity on the possible revenue. Ms. Hancock explained that she will research regarding the revenue loss due to the crumbling foundations, but this did not have anything to do with loss of revenue due to COVID-19. Although the grand list was reduced, the mill rate increased so actual dollars were not lost.

Mr. Jones asked if broadband expansion would be delayed due to the firehouse project and station 440 and if the Chief provided input. Mr. Rosen responded that he did not have information from the Chief and explained that the vendor reviewed a map of the town to identify where the maximum number of households would be able to access the proposed service. The cost to cover the entire town would be \$24M. While the cost is 1/6th geographically, it is 1/3rd of the households. Mr. Jones asked if the funds could be used for the project that is needed on Route 74 near Torry Road. Ms. Bellody noted that this is being covered by the DOT. Mr. Jones noted that he is in support of the allocation to the EHHD.

Mr. Reagan asked about the residential connection fee for tie-in to the water lines and if it would be covered by the ARP. Mr. Lappen explained that the residents would need to cover the cost of the connection fees and contractor which averages \$5-6K per house. Mr. Reagan asked about revenues and if a strong estimate could be used and then have solid numbers included by October 31st. Ms. Hancock explained that they can try to get a close estimate by early August.

Ms. Falusi asked if they have received any findings from DEEP about the wells. Further, she would like to know the cost to run water to the Vineyards and if it would be viable if only a handful of houses hook up to the water line. She supports providing funds to the EHHD. In regard to premium pay for essential workers, she asked if this includes first responders. Mr. Rosen responded that it does. Ms. Falusi asked if they discussed helping essential workers who likely incurred personal expenses, stress, and overtime. She does not believe this would preclude them from doing other options and is something worthwhile looking at. Mr. Rosen asked for guidance on a model for this. Ms. Falusi commented that there was likely more wear/tear on uniforms and personal expenses for cleaning and PPE since individuals were taking extra care when going home so as not to impact their families. Mr. Rosen invited guidance and ideas.

Ms. Nuccio asked if they know of other towns that have instituted a broadband plan such as this and their experience. Ms. Hancock noted that Block Island is currently doing such a project and South Windsor is looking into this as well. Mr. Rosen added that the vendor's pricing is competitive. Ms. Nuccio asked if there are areas of town where there is no or problematic internet access or if this is only being considered from a revenue

perspective. Mr. Rosen responded that the only fiber available in town is municipal. People are currently using private sector vendors. Ms. Hancock explained that the speed with a fiber network cannot be compared to what is currently being provided. There are some areas of town with connectivity issues, but the fiber line would not run near those areas. They considered value when discussing expanding the existing fiber network. She noted that it would be very costly to run fiber to areas with underground utilities. Ms. Nuccio asked for more information on the numbers related to broadband. She confirmed that this would have to go out for an RFP.

A brief review of options for sewer expansion took place. Ms. Nuccio is interested in alternatives where there could be more "bang for the buck". Further, she would like to know more about expanding water to the Vineyards and possibly other areas. In terms of equipment, she would like to look at anything that was not reimbursed as well as overtime or other items.

Mr. Jones requested a one pager from the Chief about if he has any preference on water expansion or broadband. Further, if any other communities have provided bonus pay for first responders and others.

This item will be on the next agenda.

8.5 Appointments to vacancies on various municipal boards/commissions.

8.5.a. Reappointments to Tolland Non-Profit Housing Corporation

8.5.b. Reappointment to Agriculture Commission

Mr. Jones motioned to approve the reappointments to the Tolland Non-Profit Housing Corporation: John Beck, 464 South River Road, term 7/1/21 – 7/1/26 and Roland Cardin, 24 Elgin Drive, term 7/1/21 – 7/1/26 and approve the reappointment of Arden (Archie) S. Tanner, 693 Buff Cap Road 7/9/21 – 7/9/24 to the Agriculture Commission.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

9. **OLD BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**

9.1 Consideration of a resolution for Town Council to conduct hybrid public meetings until April 30, 2022

Mr. Rosen provided background information on this item.

Mr. Rosen reviewed the responses he received thus far from boards/commissions: Birch Grove Building Committee, remote; Conservation Commission, remote; Economic Development Commission, hybrid; Planning and Zoning Commission, hybrid; Zoning Board of Appeals, hybrid.

Ms. Nuccio asked if the Council goes with the hybrid model if a sign up is needed in terms of who will be in person and remote in terms of Council members and staff. Mr. Rosen explained that he recalled seeing a provision regarding having a quorum of members in person. Ms. Nuccio noted that for Public Participation someone will need to maintain merging public comment in person and on Zoom so someone will need to control the Zoom including admitting people in the room. She explained that she is planning on bringing a device as she does not want the expense of paying someone to admit people into the meeting and related tasks. Mr. Rosen explained that he believes it would take a 2-person team so someone can speak while the other is looking at the screen. It was noted that one cannot see people's lips when they speak.

Ms. Falusi commented that the in-person people at the PZC meeting had name plates but they could not be read by those participating remotely and expressed concern that people would not know who is speaking.

Mr. Jones commented that if the Council selected the hybrid option, he would bring a laptop and hook up via Zoom and monitor this. He asked if they select the hybrid format, and they need an executive session if that

would be hybrid as well. Mr. Rosen noted that executive sessions are excluded (line 7035) from having to make accommodations for the public. Mr. Jones noted that he is in favor of the hybrid option.

Mr. Luba expressed concerns about the Council and Town Manager trying to have an effective meeting while trying to look at the agenda, notes, and follow discussions as well as monitoring the remote aspect. He believes the only true option is to have a staff member who they would pay OT, or someone dedicated to meetings full time, to cover everything. They need someone who is assigned. It would be an additional burden on a staff member. Mr. Luba noted that he can support the hybrid option.

Ms. Falusi asked if there is a list of boards/commissions that would have conflicts with in-person or hybrid meetings given that only 1 room is set up and 2 additional rooms will be set up in the future. Further, if there are multiple meetings, they will need multiple people to address the duties of monitoring the remote aspect. She believes they can find a way to distribute the responsibilities in a way that is fair to the public and the Councilors. Lastly, she wants the resolution to be in such a way that they can change the option selection later. Ms. Nuccio noted that they can change the selection. It is not locked in. Mr. Rosen confirmed that they can as long as a formal vote is taken. Based on the Charter, the town needs to post an annual calendar of meetings with their location. Ms. Falusi is in support of the hybrid model and noted that she would participate remotely.

Mr. Schenher noted that he is in favor of the hybrid model. Given his experience at the PZC meeting he sees the Town Manager addressing the Zoom aspect of the meeting.

Mr. Reagan noted that he is in favor of the hybrid model as there seems to be more participation. Fully remote would be his last option.

Ms. Nuccio asked if it is allowable to have an elected official be fully remote all the time as she believed the main point of the hybrid model was to have the public be able to participate remotely. Mr. Rosen responded that they would need to look at the Charter or what the role is of an elected official in town. He believes the legislation allows people to participate remotely. The bill allows for accommodation.

Ms. Nuccio asked Mr. Rosen if he could confirm if they need a quorum for in-person and about recordings. She asked if the videographer would record the meeting for CVC. Given that the Zoom meeting is recorded, will both recordings need to be maintained. Mr. Rosen responded that he does not believe it makes sense to record with the camcorder any longer. The CVC representative is recording everything going on via Zoom and in the room. Further, the videographer would not be able to pick up those speaking on Zoom.

Mr. Jones motioned:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves conducting hybrid public meetings until April 30, 2022.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

10. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

- Performance Reviews for direct reports to the Town Manager are ongoing
- Mr. Rosen will move on from Tolland to an opportunity in MA. His last day is August 5th.
- Mr. Rosen noted that it has been a pleasure working for Tolland and getting the town through COVID and the myriad of projects and staff changes. He thanked the staff for all of their time, attention, and dedication.

Mr. Jones extended well wishes for Mr. Rosen's future endeavors and thanked him for his time and service.

11. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

June 22, 2021 Remote Special Meeting Minutes

June 22, 2021 Remote Regular Meeting Minutes

June 30, 2021 Remote Special Meeting Minutes

Mr. Jones motioned to approve the minutes as laid out for June 22nd Remote Special Meeting, June 22nd Remote Regular Meeting, and June 30th Remote Special Meeting Minutes.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

12. CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL

- E-mail requesting information on what COVID funds have been spent; answered by the Town Manager
- E-mail on town politics and the appropriateness of the political party mascot on Town Hall property
- E-mail with a recommendation on how to conduct the town manager search

13. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - none

14. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILPERSONS

- Ms. Falusi thanked the town for opening Crandall Lake 10am-6pm daily. She noted that the signage may be missing information given the new law regarding recreational use of marijuana. The current signage prohibits alcohol and smoking, and she does not know if this covers vaping and recreational use of marijuana. Legislation notes that it cannot be used at state parks but does not address municipal parks. She would like the Council to address this since the park is used by sports teams with school-aged children. Ms. Falusi commented that she believes it is worthwhile to discuss having a mascot on town property.
- Mr. Luba extended his best wishes to Mr. Rosen. Having worked with him in the Emergency Operations Center and during a good portion of the pandemic, his leadership was outstanding. It was Mr. Luba's privilege to work with him there and he wished him well. Regarding the e-mail about the topiary, Mr. Luba noted that he responded and that the topiary is on the TRTC Adopt-A-Spot area and is a memorial to Sue Errickson who was a solid member of the community. She was not only a member and officer of the TRTC but also a member of the PZC for over 30 years and involved in the community and the Congregational Church. The response to his e-mail that he sent the writer was that they should consider restricting political speech. Mr. Luba explained that they cannot do so. Political speech is one of the protected speeches. What one may see as acceptable may be seen as political speech by another and vice versa. They cannot look at making restrictions based upon someone's interpretation – these are then First Amendment issues. He cautioned considering something like this.
- Mr. Jones noted that the Conservation Commission received a grant from AARP for the Wanat Project. Further, the Conservation Corp is looking for individuals to assist with some projects on Saturdays and Wednesdays in July and August. Those interested should reach out to the Conservation Commission.
- Ms. Nuccio noted that on an upcoming agenda they need to review SB 1201. In that language, a town has the option to opt-out of allowing recreational marijuana to be sold in their town. She is unsure if this falls under the Council or the PZC but there should be a discussion about if Tolland will allow recreational marijuana to be distributed, grown, sold, etc.

15. PUBLIC LISTED PARTICIPATION *(on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council)*
(3 minute limit) - none

16. ADJOURNMENT

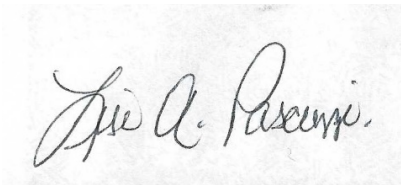
Mr. Jones motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 PM

Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Lisa A. Pascuzzi".

Lisa Pascuzzi
Town Council Clerk

Town Council Chair

MEETING MINUTES

**TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL
HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
6TH FLOOR COUNCIL ROOM
July 27, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tammy Nuccio, Chair; Steve Jones, Vice Chair; Brenda Falusi (attended virtually), Lou Luba, John Reagan, Kurt Schenher (attended virtually)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Rosen, Town Manager; Beverly Bellody, Director, Human Services; Lisa Hancock, Director, Finance & Records; Scott Lappen, Director, Department of Public Works; John Littell, Fire Chief/Director of Public Safety; Carl Dojan, Assistant Fire Chief; Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services, Bob Lincoln, member Veterans Recognition Commission; Perne Maynard, member Veterans Recognition Commission, Michael Solitro, Sertex Broadband Solutions; Andy Powell, Chair, Technology Advisory Board; public

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Nuccio called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Observed
4. **PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS:** None
5. **PUBLIC PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council) (2-minute limit)

Andy Powell of 21 Clearbrook Drive (speaking as a private citizen) thanked the Council for the proclamation recognizing the seven Eagle Scouts that reached the highest rank in Scouting during this challenging pandemic year. That their service was recognized meant a big difference for the kids. He said the Scouts of Troop 2 will be happy to help with the Veterans Memorial enhancements and that, in fact, the two troops in town are ready to help. Ms. Nuccio said it was a pleasure. These are great young men and their thoughtfulness to the community is second to none.

6. **PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:** None

7a. REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES TO THE COUNCIL

Tourism – Ms. Falusi reported no updates
Sustainable-CT – Ms. Falusi reported no updates

7b. REPORTS OF TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS

- Blight Committee – Ms. Falusi said no meeting was held due to lack of a quorum.
- Planning & Zoning Commission – Ms. Falusi said the PZC held an informative meeting July 19 where they addressed small animal stock and home occupations
- Water Commission – Mr. Jones said the Commission discussed leak detection on Torry Road. The Commission also approved the contract with Tata & Howard. Mr. Jones noted later that repairs to Well #1 have been completed and a claim has been submitted. Ms. Bellody said they are doing another capital evaluation analysis. CT Water brought water out to UConn. They are identifying where our wells are and looking at the whole system.
- Conservation Commission – Mr. Jones said a site walk was held at the Campbell property where several American chestnut trees were pointed out.
- Tolland WPCA – Mr. Reagan said the WPCA has elected to hold in-person meetings only. Repair work was completed to a transformer, due to an auto vs. utility pole incident previously reported. He said Rob Grasis, Director of the Vernon WPCF provided a report on the Vernon plant upgrade which they are treating for phosphorous. Inspections of seven new sewer connections are being completed for Woodside Drive. Applications have been submitted for sewer connections for Papa T's and the Subway restaurant. The connection for Dunkin Donuts has not yet been done but it is expected that will happen when it shuts down to install the new drive-thru. Work has begun on fixing the reverse pitch situation at College View.
- Birch Grove Committee – Mr. Luba said they worked with the Finance Director and found additional funds of about \$50,000 that could be moved into the owner's contingency. This will bring the contingency balance to \$143,794. They discussed the change order dealing with site work prep for the future swing playground. The prep work will cost over \$42,000. The groundwork is laid, the drainage and pitch set to install the playground. Exit and building signage will be added at the school. With the three change orders approved, the owner's contingency is now \$97,381. Mr. Luba said there is still a lot of concern about things that might come up, but the main goal is to get the Certificate of Occupancy. They are still on track and a discussion on having a celebration and dedication is in the beginning planning stage.
- Tolland Mental Health & Substance Use Advisory Task Force – Mr. Schenher said the wrap up of interviews has been completed. They discussed ideas on how to address issues for child/adolescent prevention and interventions.

8. NEW BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):

- 8.1 Consideration of a resolution to approve a Bid Waiver for the purchase of the new ambulance as well as labor and materials associated with the replacement of Ambulance 640.

Mr. Rosen reported that Ambulance 640 is to be funded from the Ambulance Reserve Fund at an amount not to exceed \$285,000. This was approved as part of the Capital Improvement Plan budget. A bid waiver is being requested so the replacement can come from the same vendor which has served their community well.

Chief Littell explained that they started the process in January of 2021 and that their vendor, Eastford Fire and Rescue Sales has been a great asset to the town and other neighboring communities. They want to strive for consistency and have standardized equipment. There is also a concern that they make the purchase as soon as possible as there are concerns of

potential industry delays and price gouging. It is still uncertain if they will be able to get a 2021 chassis or if it would be delayed and be a 2022 chassis, which the prices are not out on yet. Therefore, it is important to get their town on a document to get an order in as soon as possible. Chief Littell said they are at the point where they need to replace both the box and chassis of their ambulances. He also noted they spoke to five other vendors and the prices from Eastford Fire and Rescue Sales are all in line with other competitors.

Mr. Jones motioned:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby waives the requirements for bidding for the purchase of Ambulance 640 in accordance with Town Policy A-126 11D(7) and the Tolland Town Council hereby authorizes Michael Rosen or his designee to execute an agreement with Eastford Fire and Rescue Sales, Inc., for the purchase of a new ambulance; Ford chassis, box, labor and materials not to exceed \$285,000. This agreement shall be executed upon approval of this item by the Town Council.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

A roll call was taken.

The motion was approved unanimously.

8.2 Appointments to vacancies on various municipal boards/commissions.

8.2a Appointment to Tolland Mental Health and Substance Use Advisory Task Force.

Mr. Rosen noted that Catharine McDonald who currently serves on the Task Force as an alternate will now be filling a vacancy as a member. This will leave two vacancies for alternates on the Task Force. Ms. McDonald attended the meeting virtually and expressed her enthusiasm for the opportunity to take the new position.

Mr. Rosen also noted that Sophia Johnson had sent a letter of resignation from the Town Council and he thanked her for her time serving.

Mr. Jones made a motion to appoint Catharine McDonald as a member of the Tolland Mental Health and Substance Use Advisory Task Force.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

A roll call was taken.

The motion was approved unanimously.

9. OLD BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS)

9.1 Consideration and action on authorizing the renewal of a contract with the State of Connecticut for Resident State Trooper services for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023.

Mr. Rosen said the contract renewal with the State of Connecticut for Resident State Trooper services will be for a two year period. Currently they have four troopers and one part-time secretary. The town's liability insurance policy combined with the umbrella policy provides adequate coverage. The Town of Tolland has a limit of \$1 million in Law Enforcement liability

covering both the Town and the Board of Education. There is also \$10 million in coverage in excess liability in an umbrella policy.

Ms. Hancock reviewed the expected costs of police services for the 21-22 and 22-23 fiscal year. The 21-22 fiscal year represents an increase of about 1.05 percent or about \$7,000. Next year, they estimate an increase of 2.97 percent or about \$20,000. This is based on the current level of officers, which is subject to change.

Mr. Jones made a motion to authorize the renewal of the contract with the State of Connecticut for Resident State Trooper services for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

A roll call was taken.

The motion was approved unanimously.

9.2 Discussion on Veterans Wall of Honor and consideration of a resolution to amend Chapter 47A of the Town Code, Ordinance Number 77 – Veterans Recognition Commission and the setting of a Public Hearing thereon for August 10, 2021.

Mr. Rosen noted that some draft revisions were made to amend Chapter 47A of the Town Code, Ordinance Number 77. The main changes include increasing the number of Commission members from five to a suggested seven, and to allow not only residents who are serving or who have served in any branch of the armed forces, but also their immediate family members.

Mr. Schenher asked if under this proposed change if family members as well as those who are serving or who served in the military would all need to be town residents. Mr. Luba said they would need to be. Ms. Falusi asked if the Veterans Recognition Commission (VRC) had the opportunity to review and provide input on the proposed changes. Mr. Rosen said they had been invited to the meeting this evening.

Mr. Luba said that as a veteran himself he supports this proposal. He said it is good to be inclusive and that it expands the definition to include members of the merchant marines who had been previously left out. He said the tasks of the VRC do not require that they be alone on an island. They are there to make recommendations and provide guidance to the community. He recommended this proposal be moved forward.

Ms. Nuccio asked if the reference to “immediate family” might be too vague and if relationships should be spelled out more specifically. Mr. Luba suggested that a person’s relationship to a person who is serving or who has served can be considered by the selection committee before they make a recommendation to the Town Council. Mr. Jones said they usually encourage people interested in joining a Board or Commission to attend meetings beforehand if they wish to be considered. Mr. Wilkinson reviewed the list of family relationships that are recognized for bereavement leave with the Town of Tolland.

Ms. Falusi said that as a member of a military family she would not want the Town Council to take control of the VRC to suit their needs. She said while she likes the idea of including family members, she would really prefer that the VRC provide input on any proposed changes. She would prefer changes be driven by the VRC.

Bob Lincoln of 24 Barstow Lane said he is a member of the VRC, serving his second term. He said they have always functioned as a five-member group and did not know the reason why there is a proposal to expand it to seven members. He said their meetings are always published and posted and anyone can attend. In addition, their projects include participation from community members. He said this seemed to come up simultaneously with the discussion about a veterans' memorial for service people from Tolland who were killed in action.

Perne Maynard of 113 Williams Way, said he is also a member of the VRC and other veterans' organizations. They have only one other member presently, Greg Forbush, who could not be here this evening. Ms. Nuccio asked Mr. Maynard if he was in agreement with increasing the number of members on the Commission to seven. Mr. Maynard questioned how they would vet the other two members. He said in order to qualify, they would need to have received paperwork signifying an honorable discharge. He had no objection to opening membership to those who served in any and all branches of the military.

Mr. Luba said this increase in the number of members came up as part of the discussion about whether immediate family members could become members. The two proposals went hand in hand.

Ms. Falusi recommended holding off on any vote to allow the full membership of the VRC to discuss this and come back with their recommendations. Mr. Luba noted the VRC will not be holding another meeting until September. He suggested their concerns and comments could be addressed during the public hearing process. Ms. Falusi said she felt that would be setting a precedent that the Town Council could make changes to a Commission/Board without their input.

Ms. Nuccio asked Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Maynard if they had a chance to review the proposed changes. Mr. Maynard said he read the seven pages that pertain to this discussion but he didn't take away much. He noted they do not have a budget. Mr. Luba said they are discussing two different things. He said one is a discussion about putting forward a more formal wall of recognition and this would be discussed at the appropriate time. Right now, however, they are only discussing the composition of the Commission. He said immediate family members have asked that they be allowed the opportunity to become voting members.

Ms. Nuccio reviewed the proposed changes. The VRC would include members of all branches of the military. The Commission would increase from five to seven members, and immediate family members would also be allowed to serve on the Commission. The VRC would work in conjunction with the town clerk to create and maintain an honor roll.

Mr. Jones asked that if this proposal went to public hearing if VRC members could speak at the public hearing. He asked if they could amend the proposal based on comments made during the public hearing. Mr. Rosen said they could.

Mr. Maynard said the VRC's next scheduled meeting is in September. He said they would want to hold a special meeting beforehand to discuss the matter further. He would like to have as many people as possible to be involved with the group. One issue is that they no longer have a Chair. He noted his name will be put forward for that, but it hasn't been formalized. Mr. Luba said he understood their quorum issue. He suggested that if the Commission opened up

membership to family members, they could possibly require the makeup of the Commission to be either three service people and two family members or some other type of set makeup that designated a certain number of service people and a certain number of family members. He suggested the VRC hold a special meeting or informal discussion before the public hearing and send their recommendations to the Town Council email address.

Ms. Falusi recommended postponing setting a public hearing until they know the VRC has had a meeting. This would give other veterans the opportunity to attend it and discuss the matter. She said she did not see the urgency to get it done before August 10th.

Kathy Bach of Tolland Stage Road said she wrote the original ordinance to establish the VRC and could provide some background. Ms. Nuccio asked for her input. Ms. Bach said the original ordinance was written in 2007 and was written with a group of veterans, six men and one woman. At that time, they did not want family members to be members of the commission, but only those who served active duty. She said every branch of the military was supposed to be represented. They were making some recommendations to the VA and other agencies that were beyond their scope, some dealing with mental health issues of those who served and so it was important to them that they have people on the Commission who had firsthand experience with war.

Ms. Bach said the monument on the Green is in remembrance of service members and if the Council would allow it, the VRC might be able to take over some of the maintenance of it and involve family members. She said part of the wall of honor has up to date news stories and this is an area where family members can get involved. She said it would be good to have a conversation with both current and past VRC members before they make any changes.

Mr. Luba said the proposed changes were promulgated by his discussion with veterans in town, veterans who were previous residents and their family members. He said family members also deal with issues on the impacts of war. He said this was not done haphazardly and without thought. It is an attempt to keep up with the needs and desires of the community.

Ms. Falusi thanked Ms. Bach for the historical background. She reiterated that she felt they should postpone further discussion until a conversation like the one Ms. Bach proposed could be held.

Mr. Maynard said the August 10 date was a red flag for him. He said he did not understand why a public hearing would be held on the matter before the VRC met. Mr. Rosen said he was asked to put it on the agenda and in doing so, it is customary to set the public hearing for the next meeting. Ms. Nuccio noted this matter has been discussed twice before and that the former VRC chair was at the other meetings.

Ms. Nuccio asked members how they felt about moving forward. Mr. Jones said he would find it acceptable if they postponed the public hearing to August 24. Mr. Schenher agreed. Mr. Luba said he would also be open to postponing the public hearing to August 24. Mr. Reagan agreed also. Ms. Falusi said she felt the best option would be to let the members of the VRC and anyone else who attends their meeting to get together first and review the proposed changes and come back to them with recommendations. She said the public hearing should be set after that happens and could then be based on their recommendations.

Ms. Nuccio said she was also good with postponing the public hearing to August 24. She asked the two members of the VRC if they could try to meet before then and provide them with their input. She said they were also welcome to attend the August 10 meeting. She said as a Commission responsible to the Town Council, they could provide input during 7A of the agenda at both the August 10 and August 24 meetings.

Mr. Jones made a motion that the draft resolution to amend Chapter 47A of the Town Code, Ordinance Number 77 – Veterans Recognition Commission - be introduced and set down for a Public Hearing on August 24, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Zoom Remote Conference Room and/or 6th floor Council Chambers.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

A roll call was taken. Mr. Jones, Mr. Luba, Mr. Reagan, Mr. Schenher and Ms. Nuccio voted in favor. Ms. Falusi was opposed. Motion carried.

9.3 Continued discussion of American Rescue Plan potential money usage.

Mr. Rosen noted that Tolland has been granted \$4,326,206 in total funds from the American Rescue Plan and that \$2,163,102.81 has already been received. He reviewed how this money can be used and discussed potential options identified by the Town. He noted that originally it was thought they needed to decide how to use the money by August or by October but they have since learned they have until 2024 to decide. This provides them with plenty of extra time.

A memo was included in packets on water and sewer line expansions, refurbishing or replacing a water tank and bolstering their drainage systems. There was also a memo and quote on improving and expanding Broadband service to both residents and businesses.

Ms. Hancock provided an overview of the ARP funds. In her July 22 memo she noted The National GFOA developed a spreadsheet to calculate the revenue loss for the ARPA grant, which they utilized to calculate the first year loss of revenue. They are also required to make calculations to get an estimated growth rate. The process is complicated and additional information is needed from the treasury for clarification. She said she expects that as she learns more the calculations may change.

Ms. Hancock said they cannot put the money in the fund balance or use it to pay off debts and they cannot use it to offset future tax rates. The money can be used for protection of critical infrastructure and modernization of cybersecurity. She noted these are just some examples of how the money can be used and are not recommendations.

Ms. Nuccio asked if the Town Council decided to go forward and look at things from a loss/revenue perspective, and in trying to stay true to the intent of the funds, would it be incumbent on them to write regulations around it with a sunset policy? She said she would not want anyone coming forward with recurring expenses.

Mr. Rosen said towns can decide this locally, and that he would expect the Town Council could set parameters as long as they follow the guidelines for revenue expenditures. He said, for

example, a project driven expense like sewer and water would be subject to federal guidelines. She said the projects should be tied to losses due to Covid. He suggested they may want to limit the number of projects as each require a good deal of staff oversight. He further clarified that it is not so much a staff limitation issue as the value they would get for their money. Construction projects can run into high costs. Ms. Nuccio noted it was good timing they will be having a project manager starting with the Town in January.

Mr. Schenher said because there isn't any urgency to spend the money, he suggested a couple of Council members look into this to formulate ideas that could later be brought before the full Council.

Ms. Falusi recommended the Technology Task Force look at the Broadband proposal. She said it would be advantageous to use their expertise. She also asked if they could still go forward with giving the Eastern Highlands Health District the moneys the Council previously agreed to grant them. Ms. Hancock said the Council could take action on the Health District monies this evening if they wanted to. It is not an issue at all.

Ms. Falusi said she would also like to see what other towns are doing to help small businesses and nonprofits recover. She suggested they might want to create some small \$5,000 and \$10,000 grants. Ms. Nuccio said she talked recently with the Chamber of Commerce and they are looking at ways to help businesses and non-profits that did not qualify for the PPP forgiveness loans. She will share information with the whole Council when she gets more information.

Mr. Reagan said he agreed with Mr. Schenher that they form a subcommittee to look at how to use the funds and to work with staff on it. It would be a more efficient approach. Mr. Jones said he would be amenable to that as well. Mr. Rosen said this would need to be posted to the public and have published minutes.

Andy Powell, Chair of the Technology Advisory Board, discussed past efforts to get Broadband into town. He said resident access using town supplied fiber would be problematic. His group would be open to working with Sertex on expanding Broadband services in town.

Michael Solitro of Sertex Broadband Solutions provided a presentation. He looked at the Town's existing Broadband network creating a graph with areas he suggested for expansion. With more people working from home as a result of Covid-19, these services would put Tolland in a desirable position. He noted the model they looked at would bring in an internet service provider, while the town would own the asset.

Ms. Nuccio recommended the Technology group meet with his people from Sertex to look at the proposal and benefits. She asked Mr. Rosen to broker a meeting between both parties. Mr. Powell noted that everyone in the Technology group works in the industry so can bring some expertise to the table.

Mr. Solitro walked the Council through the financial aspects of the proposal. He noted the areas in the existing network would be less expensive to build out. The proposal recommends adding in the Industrial Park and an area along Old Stafford Road so they could build out to the Fire

Station. They would have to license poles. They also looked at and added some of the denser neighborhoods in town. These would all be new builds.

Ms. Hancock noted that one thing they learned about Broadband is that to comply with the grant they have to address unserved or underserved locations. She said a recommendation was made to survey the public about their internet services. Ms. Nuccio asked if internet providers could provide that information instead. Ms. Hancock said it would be unlikely that providers would want to share that. Mr. Solitro said they could set up a survey/speed test online for six months for residents to respond to. Ms. Nuccio suggested they first try the service providers before spending money on a survey. Ms. Falusi suggested they may be able to glean some information from the Board of Education to find out what neighborhoods of students experienced connectivity issues when attending school as remote learners.

Mr. Solitro reviewed estimated operating costs. Many items, such as website and marketing, and administration costs were fixed items. He also reviewed subscription costs. This would require no capital expenditure because it would be paid for through the grant.

The Council reviewed the proposal for the expansion of the water line to Fire Station 140, about 1/3 of a mile and estimated at \$900,000. Mr. Rosen said this came up in the meetings on the Firehouse improvement project. Assistant Fire Chief Carl Dojan said fire sprinklers are required in some parts of the buildings. He said the Plains Road and Gehring Road stations need a standalone 13R system. He said by extending the waterline to Station 140, it will allow them to add a standard sprinkler system in the building. It would be more cost effective. Mr. Lappen said they will be putting in a truck washing bay in that station and a well would not keep up with the water demand.

Chief Littell said there are both electrical and water issues at the station. They keep their apparatus outside 24/7, 365 days a year. They are putting a catch basin inside so they can rinse the salt and different chemicals from the trucks. They will also be adding pump filtration. He noted the town has spent a lot of money on the heating plant system. Ms. Nuccio asked how much they expected to spend on the filtration system and if they could suspend it. Mr. Lappen said they would have to talk to Banner Water to see how long it would last. Ms. Bellody said they should reach out to Connecticut Water Company to do a good analysis. She said she could talk to them about it.

The Council discussed Attachment D, which looks at extending the sewer line on Route 74 out to Exit 69. Mr. Lappen said there is a parcel across the street from the State Police barracks and it has three significant elevation changes. This would require three pump stations. Mr. Rosen said this would cost about \$9.45 million plus engineering and design costs. The Council also discussed water service extension to the Vineyards. The estimated length of water line from the end of Charter Road to and including the Vineyards is approximately 4.5 miles. The Council also discussed a proposed water tank replacement on Summit Drive at about \$2.5 million. Mr. Lappen said he inventoried the number of catch basins at about 3,000+ in town and about 250+ culverts, both public and private.

Ms. Falusi noted that extreme weather seems to be increasing, a result of climate change. She said they may need to ask what they can do to use the money to relieve stress on our

infrastructure. Ms. Nuccio said she agreed that weather patterns are changing and these issues need to be addressed.

Mr. Luba asked how they would address culvert problems on private property. Mr. Lappen said a lot of the pipes in these culverts are smaller than they should be, but they would have to get easements to work on them.

Mr. Jones said considering the costs for cleaning up on dirt roads, he asked if there would be any cost benefit to paving dirt roads. Mr. Lappen said when roads are paved the water will run off the sides and create a need for adding drainage.

Mr. Jones made a motion to grant a pandemic response expense reimbursement of \$5,470 to Eastern Highlands Health District to recoup Tolland's portion of costs for the Mansfield Community Center Room Fees for Public COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

A roll call was taken.

The motion was approved unanimously.

10. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Mr. Rosen noted that this is his last Council meeting before he moves on to another job and he wished the Council the best as they work to determine how to use the ARP money. He has been working on wrapping things up in his last few days. He reported that he received an email from Eversource and that they had looked at extending the gas line to Tolland but that they are declining to do so at this time as it remains too costly.

Ms. Hancock said they put their new budget book software online on the Tolland website. It is interactive and includes a tutorial video. She noted that Council and staff copies are at the printer now and will be coming soon. The budget book includes a new five-year forecast with multiple categories and with estimated expenditures.

11. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mr. Jones made a motion to adopt the July 8 and July 13, 2021 meeting minutes.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Luba.

A roll call was taken.

The motion was unanimously approved.

12. CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL

Ms. Falusi reported she received several emails. One was an informative email on the Energize CT grant. Another was about including residents in the Town Manager search. There was an email about water sampling at wells, one that asked about help with a well, one with a suggestion about ARP money, one about electric vehicle charging stations, and one asking to require masks for children in school.

13. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ms. Nuccio thanked Mr. Rosen for his time with the Town and for helping them through the difficult Covid-19 year. She said she appreciated having him here and wished him luck moving forward. She noted she will be holding a Chair hour next Thursday.

14. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCIL PERSONS

Mr. Jones said he also appreciated all Mr. Rosen's efforts during his time with Tolland and he wished him well.

15. PUBLIC LISTED PARTICIPATION (on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council) (3 minute limit)

Claudette Morehouse of 89 Merlot Way said she lives in the Vineyards and was disappointed that little was discussed about the water situation. She said they have had no potable drinking water there now for four years and this results in a lower quality of life. She said it is believed the potability issue is due to road salt contamination. She said she lost her furnace in 2012 from this, and now DEEP is going to begin checking for cyanide in the water.

Chief Littell said he needs to make sure the Health Department is aware of this problem, and he said he will send a note to them tonight and follow up with them. This is no different than any other emergency in town and needs to be addressed.

Chief Littell discussed the Covid situation at length, explaining how it has heavily taxed their department with more and more expenses and demands on staff. They are struggling to find places to store PPC and they are already maxed out on the number of calls they have had to go to this year. Their people are under pressure and burned out. He said he is very nervous about what the CDC has put forth and hopes money will be used in the right places.

Assistant Fire Chief Carl Dojan, 297 Metcalf Road, reiterated Chief Littell's concerns. He said their department got hit very hard this year and their people are tired and scared. He is hopeful that their first responders will be on the forefront in getting help. They have problems with staffing and are overwhelmed and volunteerism is down.

Robert DeRoy of 92 Merlot Way, reiterated Ms. Morehouse's concerns. He also does not have potable water. He said they are working with DEEP. He said the water systems and filtration to deal with harsh water are not affordable. The water is ruining their furnaces. He said the people in the Vineyards should get a tax break. He also asked if they could look into whether CT Water could offset the costs of bringing public water up to the Vineyards. He suggested that type of construction might be combined with Broadband.

Captain Don Corne of the Tolland Fire Department, 37 Mountain Laurel Drive, echoed the concerns of the Chief and Assistant Chief. He said they are stretched thin.

Andy Powell of 21 Clearbrook Drive recommended that if new people are added to the VRC that they be given staggered terms so they don't lose continuity. He also said if the town lost revenue from not being able to rent out the high school field, he asked if they might be able to recoup those

fees through the ARP. The fees that would have been collected were to go to the replacement fund so this would be an infrastructure expense. Mr. Powell added that the work of their public safety people speaks volumes for the Tolland community. He recommended having that waterline for Station 140 as it would protect their investment in infrastructure. He said public safety should be recognized with additional funding.

Lastly, as PZC Chair, Mr. Powell invited the Town Council to have a strategic discussion about the ramifications of the recent legalization of cannabis in Connecticut. Ms. Nuccio said she expected this might involve more than one meeting and she will look into getting this on an upcoming agenda.

Kelly Euliano of 19 Sugar Hill Road said she is an EMT/Public Safety Office Assistant. She said the Covid grant monies should be used for Covid related items. She reiterated that their department is overtaxed and overstressed. She begged the Council to look at spending money in the way in was designed.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:47 p.m.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Luba.

A roll call was taken.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile
Substitute Clerk