



WAKEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Monday, March 23, 2020

7:00 P.M. (Via call-in conference call)

WCAT Studios, 24 Hemlock Road, Wakefield, MA. 01880

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:
Councilor Edward F. Dombroski, Jr., Chair
Councilor Ann McGonigle Santos, Vice-Chair
Councilor Mehreen N. Butt
Councilor Jonathan P. Chines
Councilor Julie Smith-Galvin

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:
Town Council Clerk Sherri A. Dalton
Town Administrator Stephen P. Maio
Town Counsel Thomas A. Mullen

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:
Councilor Paul R. DiNocco
Councilor Peter J. May

----- TOPICS OF DISCUSSION -----

Call to Order Councilor Dombroski stated that this meeting is certainly a bit of a different meeting understandably give the unprecedented times that we are currently experiencing and called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance Councilor Dombroski asked everyone to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendance Councilor Dombroski noted that Town Administrator Maio was present and five (5) of the Councilors were to be present and participating via telephone conference as well as Madam Clerk Dalton and Town Counsel Mullen. All committees, commissions and boards will be following this format for the foreseeable future. Councilors May and DiNocco were absent.

Approval of Minutes Councilor Chines motioned to approve the March 09, 2020 Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Councilor Smith-Galvin seconded. Motion passed 4-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Councilor Santos joined via telephone conference at 7:05 p.m.

Councilor Chines motioned to approve the March 18, 2020 Emergency Meeting of the Town Council Minutes as presented. Councilor Santos seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Public Engagement Any members of the public wishing to engage the Town Council was asked to submit any comments or concerns to <https://www.wakefield.ma.us/public-participation> or in writing at the secure drop off boxes at Town Hall at least two hours prior to the start of the meeting. Remote public participation will be the

format for the foreseeable future, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Edward Cutting of 5 Myrtle Avenue, Wakefield submitted an electronic request asking that the Board of Health and select board waive the bag ban. Elizabeth Lowry of 86 Green Street asked that temporary signed be installed around the lake directing walkers to walk clockwise or counter-clockwise in order to minimize the number of people whose paths they may cross.

**Matters Not
Anticipated for
Agenda**

Toward the end of February, beginning of March the Town officials started meeting to discuss COVID-19 and the continuity of operations; having protocols in place for first responders; and how a chain of command would be set up. On March 12, 2020 the Town closed the Library, Senior Center, and Civic Center and all organized events on town property were cancelled. On March 18, 2020 the Town Council declared a State of Emergency retroactive to March 16, 2020. On March 17, 2020 Town Hall was closed to the public. Protocols were put into place with some departments working split shifts; making sure staff was keeping social distancing. On March 18, 2020 the Board of Health closed all personal services businesses in Wakefield and all playgrounds and courts were closed and wrapped because people were not following social distancing. Boards, Committees, and Commissions either cancelled their meetings or held them remotely. The Nahant Street Yard Waste Facility "the Pit" has been opened early for all residents, permits not currently required, with requirements in place to adhere to social distancing protocols. The Public Safety Building is open for emergencies only. Non-emergency items, such as applications, can be filled out online and will be processed when possible. Inspections will be done via Face-Time when possible but needless construction has been stopped. There will be legislation coming to move the Town Election and Town Meeting; help people on taxation and waive penalties. Information has been pushed out and is continuing to be pushed out on the town's website and Facebook page. Chairman Dombroski stated that if anyone calls 9-1-1 and it is not an emergency call the operator may ask additional questions that you may not be accustomed to receiving. This is done to allow our operators to better assess the situation as to not put our first responder at risk when they arrive and their new safety protocols include asking you to step outside in many instances.

**Constituent
Issues**

Councilor Smith-Galvin thanked the Town Administrator for his amazing work. She received questions as to what an individual does if they suspect they have the virus but it is not confirmed. Town Administrator Maio stated that they should call their physician or they could call the Board of Health or the Governor's hotline at 2-1-1. Department of Public Health notifies the local Board of Health offices if someone tests positive. She also asked about committee meetings that could proceed. Town Administrator Maio indicated that all immediate hearings have been postponed.

Councilor Santos asked that something be done about the walkers that walk around the lake in tight clusters. Councilor Dombroski noted that the one-mile

loop from Albion down Main Street to the Junction and then back up North Avenue is another route for walkers.

Councilor Chines thanked Town Administrator Maio, the team and every employee for their level of commitment and dedication. Questioned the Stay at Home Order and asked if it will impact town employees in terms of who we expect to work. Town Administrator Maio stated that it is an Advisory and not an Order and went on to say that the majority of non-essential workers are working from home and the essential workers are working split shifts. Councilor Chines also questioned the election and Town Meeting and legislative action and would like this added to the next Town Council agenda.

Superintendent of Schools Doug Lyons stated the schools are practicing "Learn Anywhere," which was a snow day program that has been expanded and adapted to provide lessons while students are out of school. At this point the Governor has closed schools until April 6, 2020 and more information from the Governor is anticipated this week. The last day of school is scheduled for June 17, 2020 and at this point in time the school year will not have to be extended. The Food Service Department has been continuing to feed families that need lunch support.

Emergency Fund

The Emergency Fund is completely set up with contributed or donated funds and it is an opportunity for the Town to provide some limited assistance to someone who may have run into a difficult time or difficult situation. We are incredibly thankful for a \$15,000.00 contribution. Councilor Dombroski stated that anyone interested in contributing to the Emergency Fund is encouraged to send a check to Town Hall made payable to the Town of Wakefield and in the memo indicate "Emergency Fund."

Chairman's Comments

Information is continuing to be pushed out in any number of forms. "Code Red" is the free service available to all residents that have signed up on the Town's website. The news feed on the Town's homepage of the website is up to date with the useful important information and there is also a dedicated box in the lower left corner titled COVID-19 Updates.

Nahant Street Yard Waste Facility

Councilor Dombroski reported that the Nahant Street Yard Waste Facility (the "Pit") is now open temporarily Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. and permits are not needed at this time. Beginning April 4, 2020, the facility will be open on the weekend schedule. Updates will be given when permits are required. Councilor Chines questioned staffing of the facility. At this point in time passes are not needed to enter the facility so there will be no staff checking vehicles.

Fiscal Year 2021 Budgets

Budget #33 School Department – Superintendent Doug Lyons and Business Manager Christine Bufagna presented an overview of the Fiscal Year 2021 proposed School Department budget. The budget supports a staff of 567 employees in 7 bargaining units. The budget is financially responsive to the needs

of the community and to be sustainable year over year. There are five (5) new positions in the budget that are being proposed. Two (2) science specialists at the elementary level in Fiscal Year 2021 and two (2) in Fiscal Year 2022; three (3) special education positions. The total Fiscal Year 2021 recommended School Department budget is \$43,976,659.00. The School Committee will be voting on this proposed budget tomorrow night. Chairman of Finance Committee Daniel Sherman stated that the Finance Committee is having a meeting Thursday night and the Finance Committee School Department Subcommittee will be addressing this budget. Councilor Chines, the School Department liaison, questioned the new positions and what kind of impact the Superintendent expects with those new positions. Mr. Lyons stated that he is anticipating these positions to be a big boost for upper elementary to give them some additional science with a science specialist. As for the Special Education positions, there are some students that need social pragmatic coaching and language-based coaching and this will help them engage in their learning more effectively and they will be able to participate independently at a higher level with some individualized support. Councilor Chines thanked Superintendent Lyons for the presentation and stated that he will support the School Department budget at Town Meeting. Councilor Dombroski questioned the Superintendent with an emphasis on looking at a sustainable budget going forward. He stated that while understanding that he cannot go into the details of the pending contract, he asked Mr. Lyons for a sense of how the end results landed in relation to his objective of a sustainable budget, not for just Fiscal Year 2021, specifically, where there will be a 4.8 percent increase, but projecting out to Fiscal Year 2022, 2023, 2024 etc. Mr. Lyons stated the need to be adaptive and to meet the needs of the town and school system as well. The goal for creating the budget was to really look at personnel cost and to do some forecasting year over year and to grow the growth of the personnel budget and he reported he believed the budget meets the sustainability objective.

Budget #35 Vocational Schools – Town Accountant Kevin Gill stated the total Fiscal Year 2021 request is \$1,574,273.00. The increase for this budget is due to seven additional students at the Northeast Regional next year. Councilor Santos motioned to approve Budget #35 Vocational Schools in the amount of \$1,574,273.00 as presented. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Budget #46 Group Health Insurance – Town Accountant Kevin Gill stated the total Fiscal Year 2021 request is \$13,745,967.00. The increase for this budget is due to the contractual and negotiated increases. Finance Committee Subcommittee Chairman Daniel Sherman stated that he and Finance Committee Subcommittee member Donald Ravanelle met with the Town Account, Town Administrator and Human Resource Director to discuss that some plans were increasing modestly around 3% and other plans went up as much as 7%. Finance Committee Subcommittee is recommending approval of the budget as stated. Councilor Santos motioned to approve Budget #46 Group Health Insurance in the amount

of \$13,745,967.00 as presented. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Budget #47 Cable TV Public Access Enterprise – Town Accountant Kevin Gill stated this is a new budget to be voted on, as required by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. This budget is funded from receipts by the three (3) cable providers – Verizon, Comcast and RCN. The total Fiscal Year 2021 request is \$577,120.00. Paul Norman, Treasurer of WCAT state that WCAT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. It is audited annually and is filed annually with the IRS Form 990. Councilor Santos motioned to approve Budget #47 Cable TV Public Access Enterprise in the amount of \$577,120.00 as presented. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 4-0-1 by a roll call vote with Councilor Smith-Galvin abstaining.

Capital Planning

The Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Planning proposed request is \$2,018,119.00, as presented by Capital Planning Committee Chairman Frank Leone. The Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Planning Sewer Department request is \$112,500.00. The Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Planning Water Department request is \$82,500.00. Mr. Leone outlined a number of the requests including leases that are due as well as new vehicles for the DPW Department and Police Department; new equipment for the DPW Department; new upgrades in town buildings; new boiler for the Fire Station in Greenwood; replacing carpet in the Library; Woodville School is getting a new playground. The Finance Committee Capital Planning Subcommittee Chairman Joe Bertrand stated that the Subcommittee approves the proposed Capital Planning request. Councilor Chines questioned the playground replacements and asked if there is any opportunity for public engagement or communication with the PTO or other parts of the community. Town Administrator Maio noted that the school department is involved and with the Greenwood playground his understanding is that one of Capital Planning Committee member's is a Greenwood parent and had some discussions with the Greenwood people. Councilor Santos asked for an explanation with the cost of some of the Galvin replacements. Mr. Bertrand answered that when the Galvin was built there were certain energy efficient systems that allowed the town to gain more points and therefore get more percentages back from the State. As it turned out some of the equipment turned out to be not very well made and not a very good investment. Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Capital Planning Committee request of \$2,018,119.00 as presented. Councilor Smith-Galvin seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote. Councilor Chines motioned to approve the Capital Planning Committee Sewer Department request of \$112,500.00 as presented. Councilor Santos seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote. Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Capital Planning Committee Water Department request of \$82,500.00 as presented. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Road Repair and

The Road Repaid and Improvement Project was previously presented to the Town Council at their February 24, 2020 meeting. At that meeting there had been some

Improvement Project

questions relative to bonding for this project. The Town's Bond Counsel has put together a package that is sustainable and will work with what the Town is trying to accomplish. The Debt Service Plan & Fund was put in place years ago after a failed override attempt to build 3 elementary schools. Some of the projects that have been funded in this matter, all within proposition 2 ½ were the Dolbear School \$9,000,000.00, Woodville School \$14,000,000.00, Public Safety Building \$10,000,000.00, High School Rec. Improvements \$5,000,000.00, Fire Trucks \$3,000,000.00, Walton School \$6,000,000.00 and the Senior Center \$2,500,000.00. By maintaining a consistent level of funding over the years the Town has been able to add new projects such as the Walton School, Greenwood roof, and potential Public Safety Building renovation and, now, hopefully a comprehensive roads plan. For Fiscal Year 2020 the tax levy debt service fund not including the Galvin School was \$2,201,039.00. At Town Meeting \$750,000.00 was added for road and \$125,000.00 was added for sidewalk for a total of \$3,076,039.00. By putting this amount in to the Fiscal Year 2021 debt service the town will be able to bond that first road bond of \$2,500,000.00. With a goal of \$10,000,000 at Town Meeting, and by taking \$2,500,000.00 every year, this bonding project aims to eliminate the backlog of road repairs and improvements and hopefully gets the town to a point where this can be in the DPW maintenance budget at some point in the future. Looking forward and spacing out the bonding that has been done, working with Bond Counsel to see where other things fall on the schedule, we can make a difference in what happens going forward. In Fiscal Year 2022 the town could ostensibly drop the funding on the debt service to \$2,648,219.00 because some of the items fall off. If the Town keeps to the schedule, Fiscal Year 2021 the debt service balance should be \$823,000.00; for Fiscal Year 2022 \$991,000.00.00; Fiscal Year 2023 \$1,148,009.00; Fiscal Year 2030 \$2,699,736.00. This is based on a few months ago in the bond market and unfortunately the bond market is not as good as it was a few months ago. Going forward new projects can hopefully be added like the DPW Barn or maybe even reduce the appropriation. Councilor Dombroski emphasized that this is a prudent step, as there is a cost to not acting to address this roads issue, given that the costs of repairing further deteriorated roads are exponentially higher. This, ultimately, causes the Town to spend more tax dollars yet making less improvements. Councilor Chines appreciated the effort that has been made to make sure we are talking about spending a significant amount of money wisely and that the town is spending it in areas where we will get the most. He is supportive of the bonding approach because the town has a backlog of road repairs that do really need to be addressed and bonding is the right way to do it. He raised the issue of a fiscal policy on the right amount to be spent on roads and sidewalks every year, after the backlog is addressed. Councilor Santos commented that it is a great plan but the town did not have the money to do this several years ago and it was not out of neglect.

Roadway Improvements Program as presented by DPW Director and Town Engineer is geared to systematically improve the 88-mile road network to an acceptable standard. Funding is to allow for consistent investments so roadway

network does not deteriorate to a point where it would result in more costly repairs. There is currently \$19,600,000.00 of backlog. Assuming the town does not do any work for the next five (5) years the backlog would be \$29,613,564.00. The preliminary plan for Fiscal Year 2021 is for 4.27 miles of road rehabilitation assuming \$2,500,000.00 as an annual investment. For Fiscal Year 2022 5.55 miles of road rehabilitation and Fiscal Year 2023 4.26 miles of road rehabilitation. The Town Engineer also showed the Town wide Map which shows the repair method status for every street in Wakefield.

**Annual Town
Meeting
Warrant
Articles**

Eminent Domain \$1.00. Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Eminent Domain Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article in the amount of \$1.00 as presented. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Refuse/Recycling/Yard Waste \$2,274,241.00. Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Refuse/Recycling/Yard Waste Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article in the amount of \$2,274,241.00 as presented. Councilor Smith-Galvin seconded. Councilor Smith-Galvin questioned whether the Council should discuss bringing in a lower number at the next Town Council meeting. Town Administrator Maio stated that the Council should still vote this amount because we may be getting more fees to offset this. She further asked if this is a contract that is negotiated annually. DPW Director Conway answered that Refuse is one that was just entered into with JRM when the program switched and it is a five (5) year contract. Recycling contract is also with JRM and that is subject to end in 2021. Refuse Disposal, the third component, is also a five (5) year contract that would be beginning in Fiscal Year 2021 and up for re-negotiation five (5) years into that. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Roadway Improvements \$10,000,000.00. Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Roadway Improvements Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article in the amount of \$10,000,000.00 as presented. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Revolving Amounts – Roadways. Councilor Santos motioned to authorize DPW to use up to \$50,000.00 for this Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article as presented. Councilor Chines seconded. Councilor Chines motioned to amend the Warrant Article to allow for a maximum expenditure of \$75,000.00. Councilor Santos seconded. Motion passed as amended 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

New Salem Street Drainage Repairs \$800,000.00. Councilor Santos motioned to approve the New Salem Street Drainage Repairs Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article in the amount of \$800,000.00 as presented. Councilor Smith-Galvin seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Walton Lane Betterment \$91,000.00. Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Walton Lane Betterment Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article in the amount of \$91,000.00 as presented. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Greenwood Elementary School Roof and Repairs \$1,640,163.00. Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Greenwood Elementary School Roof and Repairs Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article in the amount of \$1,640,163.00 as presented. Councilor Smith-Galvin seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Cable TV Public Access WCAT Enterprise. Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Cable TV Public Access WCAT Enterprise Warrant Article as presented. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Daniel Sherman gave an overview on where the town is with the Fiscal Year 2021 budget in total. At this point the town is estimated to be approximately \$875,000.00 short between revenue and spend. This amount will have to be taken out of Free Cash. That is okay for one year but going forward it does not improve where the town is taking about a million dollars out every single year based on where the town is today. Revenues for Fiscal Year 2021 are going to be substantially less than what the town has normally received or might expect. He advised the town to be cautious on where money is being spent and suspects that the town will be forced to make some changes into the future. Councilor Chines questioned the \$875,000.00 gap and asked if it is inclusive of the lowered projections for the Local Option Taxes or the likelihood that the Local Option Taxes will be lower than historically. Mr. Sherman explained that it is not. For Fiscal Year 2019 the town received \$8,250,000.00 in local receipts. For Fiscal Year 2020 that amount was set at level funded. Fiscal Year 2021 it has been lowered to \$7,500,000.00 and went on to say that this amount may be too optimistic.

**Review of
Comment
Period
Submission,
Town/Commu
nity Projects**

Playground Entrance – The Wakefield Center Neighborhood Association generously donated a new proposed entryway to the Spaulding Street playground. Pursuant to the Town Council policy there is an open public comment period, Chairman Dombroski asked Madam Clerk Dalton if any comments have been received. Clerk Dalton replied that she did not receive any comments. Councilor Santos motioned to accept the entryway gift from WCNA with thanks as previously presented. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Community Garden – Town Council received one (1) public comment during the open public comment period for the proposed Community Garden. Mr. Michael Ryan raised a number of different considerations and is respectively requesting the town address expanding the parking area at JJ Round to include paving and designated spaces; designating two (2) hour parking on Main Street along the length of the park; designating Charles Street resident permit parking only Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; providing additional trash receptacles throughout the park area; increasing maintenance of the field and park area. Town Administrator Maio stated that the two (2) hour parking on Main Street and the Charles Street permit parking have been referred to the Traffic Advisory Committee. He went on to say he feels that expanding the parking area is not

going to happen nor does he think that is necessary as there is plenty of parking. The town will certainly provide additional trash receptacles in the garden area as that was already shown on the plan and the town will look to do that in the park as well. Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Community Garden as previously presented. Councilor Smith-Galvin seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Licenses

Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Common Victualler license request for Carol's Café of Wakefield located at 39 Tuttle Street. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Common Victualler license request for Hobbs Brooks Cafes with locations at 101, 201, 401, 500 and 701 Edgewater Place. Councilor Butt seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Entertainment license request for Carol's Café of Wakefield located at 39 Tuttle Street. Councilor Butt seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Announcements & Acknowledgment

Town Administrator Maio thanked the Town Council, WCAT, Sherri Dalton, and Todd Bowden as this was a time that the Town really need to see that the Town Council is still working and moving forward and under not the most ideal situations.

Councilor Dombroski added that this temporary meeting setup is still rather primitive and we do not have through WCAT video capability just yet for these sorts of meetings, so he appreciates all those who participated via telephone. First and foremost, it is important to make sure we get out to residents the information we have about our local response to COVID-19. He stressed that health and safety of our residents is the top priority of the Town Council and the Town. He went on to thank Mr. Maio for his incredible work thus far in dealing with this crisis and noted that it is truly a team effort and that we have assembled a fantastic team. He also thanked Sherri Dalton who has been incredibly helpful in all of this; Jenn McDonald from our communications standpoint; Emergency Management Director Walsh; and Health Director Clay.

Adjournment

At 10:21 p.m. Councilor Santos motioned to adjourn. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Next Council Meeting

The next regular Town Council meeting is April 13, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at WCAT Studios, 24 Hemlock Road, Wakefield.

Respectfully submitted,



Sherri A. Dalton
Town Council Clerk