

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 3 PRIMROSE STREET, NEWTOWN, CT
WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2024**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Jordana Bloom, Laura Miller, Keith Alexander, Tom Long, Ben Ruben, Derek Pisani, Jennifer Nicoletti, John Zachos, Chris Gardner, Heather Dean, Eric Paradis, Jill Soderholm, Chris Gardner

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman Jeff Capeci, Finance Director Glenys Salas

CALL TO ORDER: K. Alexander called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:30pm.

VOTER COMMENT: None

MINUTES: J. Bloom moved to approve the minutes from the 4/17/24 regular meeting and the 4/29/24 special meeting. H. Dean seconded, all in favor.

COMMUNICATIONS: Four email in favor of the BOE budget and one regarding 6 Commerce Road were received (att.).

COMMITTEE REPORTS: J. Bloom reported that the Ordinance committee met prior to this meeting and they are going to see if the Sustainable Energy Commission will be able to include it in their charge.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT: First Selectman Capeci had no report. K. Alexander inquired about 6 Commerce Road. First Selectman Capeci responded that they have the appraisal but have several questions for the appraiser that have not been answered. Once the questions are answered they can go to the developer. When an agreement has been made, it will go to the Board of Selectman and end with the LC.

NEW BUSINESS

Transfer – J. Bloom moved to transfer \$19,900 from Police Salaries Regular, \$23,266 from Contingency to Police Salaries Overtime \$43,166 (att.). C. Gardner seconded, all in favor

Appropriation – J. Bloom moved the appropriation of \$23,398 from surplus interest earnings to Park & Rec Lawn Care & Maintenance (att.). L. Miller seconded. First Selectman Capeci explained the bid for lawn care came back much larger than anticipated. This is for this current fiscal year and they will be looking for additional funds in the next budget. All in favor

Resolution – J. Bloom moved the resolution for \$100,000 for motor vehicle tax recovery relating to out of state license plates. H. Dean seconded. First Selectman Capeci explained that this is the second time around. CTR withdrew their proposal before the LC was able to vote on it the first time. The new proposal is identical except the percentage of the first collection went from 40% to 45%. Brookfield and Danbury said that the program is working well and they have had no complaints from residents. There was discussion regarding surveillance and concern about residents being wrongly accused and feeling

harassed. First Selectman Capeci will manage the contract and report back when it has been executed.
Motion passes 9 YES to 3 NO (Alexander, Dean, Bloom).

Set details for 2nd Referendum on the 2024-2025 BOE Budget – J. Bloom moved to have the Town referendum for the 2024-2025 BOE Budget to be held on May 14, 2024, B. Ruben seconded, all in favor.

J. Bloom moved to pass the 24/25 BOE budget at \$ 87,409,066 for a total town budget of \$136,243,572.
C. Gardner seconded, all in favor.

Voter Comment – None

Announcements – None

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:16pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Arlene Miles, Clerk

Attachment: Communications



Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>

RE: BoE budget [Form submission from: Contact the Newtown Legislative Council]

1 message

Keith Alexander <lc.alexanderk@gmail.com>
To: Lynn Edwards <lebedwards@charter.net>
Cc: Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>

Mon, Apr 29, 2024 at 5:23 PM

Hello Lynn,

Thank you for bringing your comments about the budget to the Legislative Council. As we discuss the budget this evening, we will keep your thoughts in mind.

Your submission will be added to the correspondence of the next Legislative Council meeting.

--Keith

CC: LC Clerk

BCC: LC

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Respectfully,

Keith Alexander

Chair, Newtown Legislative Council

From: newtownct via newtownct <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>
Sent: Monday, April 29, 2024 11:59 AM
To: lc.alexanderk@gmail.com
Subject: Form submission from: Contact the Newtown Legislative Council

Submitted on Monday, April 29, 2024 - 11:58am
Submitted by anonymous user: 172.71.223.135
Submitted values are:

Your name: Lynn Edwards
Your e-mail address: lebedwards@charter.net
Subject: BoE budget
Message:

To the members of the Legislative Council,
First, thank you very much for your service to our town.

I urge you to minimize any reductions in the Education budget before putting it to voters again. Since so much of the proposed increase is from contractual obligations, fixed costs, and increased costs of necessities due to inflation, I am very concerned that large cuts will significantly negatively impact students, staff, or services. Inflation has affected all of us

this year, and will next year - we need to accept that it affects our Education budget too, and that maintaining the same level of service will simply cost more in part because of inflation.

In addition, just about everyone I know with children chose to live in Newtown because of the high quality education here - this is an asset that must be protected, and therefore funded adequately. This must be prioritized to continue to encourage families to want to live and move here, and to prevent valuable staff and administrators from choosing to work elsewhere, where they are paid better or where they and the education of students are valued more.

Sincerely,

Lynn Edwards

3 Sand Hill Rd, Sandy Hook

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

<https://www.newtown-ct.gov/node/86983/submission/175046>



Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>

RE: Town Budget [Form submission from: Contact the Newtown Legislative Council]

1 message

Keith Alexander <lc.alexanderk@gmail.com>
To: Jessica Galterio <jessica.galterio@gmail.com>
Cc: Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>

Mon, Apr 29, 2024 at 5:19 PM

Hello Jessica,

Thank you for bringing your comments about the budget to the Legislative Council. As we discuss the budget this evening, we will keep your thoughts in mind.

Your submission will be added to the correspondence of the next Legislative Council meeting.

--Keith

CC: LC Clerk

BCC: LC

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Respectfully,

Keith Alexander

Chair, Newtown Legislative Council

From: newtownct via newtownct <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>

Sent: Monday, April 29, 2024 11:50 AM

To: lc.alexanderk@gmail.com

Subject: Form submission from: Contact the Newtown Legislative Council

Submitted on Monday, April 29, 2024 - 11:50am

Submitted by anonymous user: 172.70.39.186

Submitted values are:

Your name: Jessica Galterio

Your e-mail address: jessica.galterio@gmail.com

Subject: Town Budget

Message:

I'm here to encourage the board to make minimal adjustments to the 2023-2024 Education Budget set for Newtown. In recent years, every property owner in

Newtown has enjoyed the spoils of sharp increases to their property values, which resulted in higher tax receipts paid each year. In the nearly 8 years that I have lived in Newtown, my tax assessment is up 89.2%. I have attended many BOE & PTA

meetings since Mr. Melillo was hired, & I've listened to him explain the budgets - the budgetary restrictions he was under, the difficulty he has with being competitive with teacher salary, admitting that he knows people have to tighten their belts over the past few years, as if the tax money wasn't already collected. While I appreciate Mr. Melillo's concerns about our individual bottom line, I don't want him having to trim & cut the education budget's bottom line. It's crazy to hear that competitive teacher salary steps increases are part of what have to be reconsidered most budget years, so we are relying on intrinsic values to keep teachers in our town. I saw a Facebook post last summer advertising the need for paraeducators within our system & the starting pay was frankly, embarrassing. I understand that we also have trouble hiring substitute teachers, again because of what we pay, which means teachers & administrators are always having to double-up to cover absences. Newtown already gets great value on the dollar - we rank 73/166 districts in cost per pupil while ranking much, much higher in academic value, however I can only imagine what we could accomplish with more. I also ask the board to consider the main reason people move to a town like Newtown. Sure, we have a great community center, nice restaurants, but people move here for the schools. Period. I know my husband & I certainly did 8 years ago. Every available dollar & then some should be viewed as an investment in the town & it's people. As a new(ish) person in town, I feel like every other parent I meet grew up here & returned to raise their families & see their kids benefit from the schools like they did, which is wonderful to see. But, I wonder if my kids will feel the same, if the education budget is continuously reduced despite higher tax receipts, if better teacher candidates continuously pass our district by, if paraeducators realize Target has better pay & benefits. I have heard several members of the Legislative Council admit that our strong school system is why they chose Newtown to raise a family, however, they seem happy to slam the door shut behind them & deny similar opportunities to younger families. They also seem to have forgotten that special education has expanded and improved tremendously in the decades since they sent their children to school, and that simply costs more than it used to. I am disgusted by the board members that share this sentiment, they have no place on any such board if they are unable to put their own outdated views to the side & make decisions for the greater good of Newtown, the children who live here, and the many, many dual income families who are working their tails off to give their kids a bright future. Please consider the education budget as an investment in this town, as an investment in the potential of each student, as an investment in the future of Newtown.

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

<https://www.newtown-ct.gov/node/86983/submission/175041>



Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>

RE: BOE Budget [Form submission from: Contact the Newtown Legislative Council]

1 message

Keith Alexander <lc.alexanderk@gmail.com>
To: Kathryn Burke <kburke0905@gmail.com>
Cc: Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>

Mon, Apr 29, 2024 at 5:24 PM

Hello Kathryn,

Thank you for bringing your comments about the budget to the Legislative Council. As we discuss the budget this evening, we will keep your thoughts in mind.

Your submission will be added to the correspondence of the next Legislative Council meeting.

--Keith

CC: LC Clerk

BCC: LC

Respectfully,

Keith Alexander

Chair, Newtown Legislative Council

From: newtownct via newtownct <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>
Sent: Monday, April 29, 2024 1:59 PM
To: lc.alexanderk@gmail.com
Subject: Form submission from: Contact the Newtown Legislative Council

Submitted on Monday, April 29, 2024 - 1:59pm
Submitted by anonymous user: 172.70.43.72
Submitted values are:

Your name: Kathryn Burke
Your e-mail address: kburke0905@gmail.com
Subject: BOE Budget
Message:
Dear Members of the LC,

I have three children in the Newtown school system. What an amazing school system it is! Our town should be so proud.

Please do not blindly cut the BOE budget at tonight's meeting. Please do your homework. Please read it line by line and make cuts that are educated. I know the budget process. So I can't ask you to take zero from the budget but I am asking

you to be smart about it.

Most of the time when cuts happen and programs are cut, they are never returned to the school. So please be careful. Please don't just go in blindly proposing dollar amount cuts that just seem to be appropriate because it sounds good. Read the budget; find the areas you think are over and make proposals.

Our town needs to continue supporting our strong school system so the town continues to thrive and attract people to move here.

Please be cautious when making cuts tonight.

Thank you,
Kathryn Burke

The results of this submission may be viewed at:
<https://www.newtown-ct.gov/node/86983/submission/175066>



Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>

RE: Support the BOE Budget [Form submission from: Contact the Newtown Legislative Council]

1 message

Keith Alexander <lc.alexanderk@gmail.com>
To: Heather Symes <hsymes82@gmail.com>
Cc: Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>

Mon, Apr 29, 2024 at 5:25 PM

Hi Heather,

Thank you for attending our deliberations and sending your comments about the budget to the Legislative Council. As we discuss the budget this evening, we will keep your thoughts in mind.

Your submission will be added to the correspondence of the next Legislative Council meeting.

--Keith

CC: LC Clerk

BCC: LC

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Respectfully,

Keith Alexander

Chair, Newtown Legislative Council

From: newtownct via newtownct <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>

Sent: Monday, April 29, 2024 3:19 PM

To: lc.alexanderk@gmail.com

Subject: Form submission from: Contact the Newtown Legislative Council

Submitted on Monday, April 29, 2024 - 3:18pm

Submitted by anonymous user: 172.70.38.176

Submitted values are:

Your name: Heather Symes

Your e-mail address: hsymes82@gmail.com

Subject: Support the BOE Budget

Message:

I am writing to you in support of the BOE budget. With the budget failing at referendum, I know that there will have to be cuts made to the budget. I am asking for the reductions to be minimal. I believe that most expected the budget to pass and have gotten complacent.

While I know you do not have line item authority, giving guidance to the BOE would be helpful. It will show the community that there was a lot of thought and homework done instead of just throwing out numbers and percentages.

I still support the BOE budget as presented by Mr. Melillo and do not wish to see any cuts.

Thank you,

Heather Symes
6 Lake Rd, Newtown

The results of this submission may be viewed at:
<https://www.newtown-ct.gov/node/86983/submission/175071>



Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>

RE: 6 Commerce Rd. [Form submission from: Contact the Newtown Legislative Council]

1 message

Keith Alexander <lc.alexanderk@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 28, 2024 at 10:50 PM

To: Suzan Hurtuk <suzanhurtuk@gmail.com>

Cc: Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>, Jeff Capeci <jeff.capeci@newtown-ct.gov>, "Dan Cruson Jr." <dancruson.newtown@gmail.com>, Michelle Embree Ku <michelleku.newtown@gmail.com>

Hello Suzan,

Thank you for bringing your concerns about this issue to the Legislative Council. While there is no business before the Council on this subject at the moment, the project is being considered at the Board of Selectmen level. The LC will keep your thoughts in mind as things move forward.

Your submission will be added to the correspondence of the next Legislative Council meeting.

--Keith

CC: LC Clerk, BOS

BCC: LC

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Respectfully,

Keith Alexander

Chair, Newtown Legislative Council

From: newtownct via newtownct <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 25, 2024 8:43 AM

To: lc.alexanderk@gmail.com

Subject: Form submission from: Contact the Newtown Legislative Council

Submitted on Thursday, April 25, 2024 - 8:43am

Submitted by anonymous user: 172.71.222.117

Submitted values are:

Your name: Suzan Hurtuk, 29 Will's Rd.

Your e-mail address: suzanhurtuk@gmail.com

Subject: 6 Commerce Rd.

Message:

Good morning members of the Legislative Council and thank you so much for your time and service!!

I've sent this email to the BOD, but have not gotten any response so I'm sending this to you in hopes that you can help...

I'm very troubled to learn that the First Selectman is continuing to market 6 Commerce Rd. to developers after it has finally been understood by he and the EDC, they no longer have the authority to market the property without following Newton's town Charter.

Proof of this is on the recording from the last EDC meeting on 3/18/24.

Timestamp 42:50-46:00

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sp5a39FxCa5NgljwbCgfmHfp_Wh3EIB1/view

I'm sure at this point you all know the history of the Meadow and Deep Brook and of course our sole source aquifer located on this property.

The negative environmental impact, and the public outrage to developing this property is the reason the proposed Tech Park failed in 2008.

I'm very confused as to why instead of learning from that failed experiment, the First Selectman Jeffrey Capeci is continuing to push for more of the same, haven't we learned anything??

This property is VERY important to the residents of Newtown, not a small group of fanatics, but the town as a whole. (Think truck warehouse at exit 9!!)

It didn't take long to acquire 1,800 signatures for a petition to save the property from development back when Teton Capital was interested in developing the land.

I feel it is pointless to waste our time, your time, and the time and money of MORE developers, trying to sell them a piece of property that is never going to be developed because of the environmental implications and because of how important this property is to so MANY Newtown residents.

Your jobs are to represent the will of the people of Newtown.
Our will on the topic of 6 Commerce Rd. is well documented!!
Keep it as protected open space!!

Please engage with your community, talk to us work, with us!!!

I for one am not anti-development but there is no reason to develop the LAST of our natural resources!! That is not smart development!

We have SO many other places that need our attention, especially Fairfield Hills!!!
It's just an absolute outrage that Fairfield Hills Campus is not the focus of the EDC and First Selectman's attention!!

Bulldozing 6 Commerce Rd. would be a travesty, the shortsighted greed of a few people would destroy the future of this town, as development would compromise our water, the Deep Brook and one of the last remaining reasons people actually even live in this town, to live in Peace!!

I beg of you, please develop the areas of town crying out for attention, like Fairfield Hills, the toxic waste dump on Swamp Rd., the countless empty storefronts lining route 25, and leave 6 Commerce Rd. as it is!!
It should remain open space as it has been for decades!

Our legislators at the state capital Rep. Mitch Bolinsky, State Senator Tony Hwang and State Representative Martin Fongello are all on record saying they are willing to change the language of the deed to represent the will of the residents of Newtown, so won't you as well?

Thank you so much for doing the right thing by your constituents!!

Respectfully,
Suzan Hurtuk

The results of this submission may be viewed at:
<https://www.newtown-ct.gov/node/86983/submission/174591>

[illegible]

Police overtime has been running ahead of budget and we anticipate \$9000/payroll through the last payroll of the year.

☒ (5) LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

04/11/2024

>>>>(1), (2), (3), (5) & (6)

AFTER 335 DAYS

**TOWN OF NEWTOWN
SPECIAL APPROPRIATION FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT
(Per Town Charter 6-100)**

REQUESTING DEPARTMENT: Parks & Recreation

FISCAL YEAR: 2024

PROJECT: Lawn Care & Maintenance Bid

PROPOSED SPECIAL APPROPRIATION AMOUNT:

\$ 23,398.00

PROPOSED FUNDING:

BONDING

GRANT

CONTINGENCY

OTHER: INTEREST EARNINGS

| |
|--------------|
| |
| |
| |
| \$ 23,398.00 |
| \$ 23,398.00 |

ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT ON OPERATING BUDGET (GENERAL FUND):

List any financial impact your request will have on the Town's annual operating budget.
Attach spreadsheet(s) showing your calculation of the estimated impact.

EXPENDITURE CATEGORY:

**FOR BRACKETS USE NEGATIVE SIGN
BEFORE NUMBER**

**(POSITIVE IMPACT) /
NEGATIVE IMPACT**

**Attachment
#**

SALARIES & BENEFITS

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

CONTRACTED SERVICES

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

UTILITIES

OTHER

DEBT SERVICE (1st year)

TOTAL IMPACT ON EXPENDITURES

| |
|------------|
| |
| |
| 188248 |
| |
| |
| |
| \$ 188,248 |

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REVENUE CATEGORY:

**POSITIVE IMPACT /
(NEGATIVE IMPACT)**

**Attachment
#**

PROPERTY TAXES

CHARGES FOR SERVICES (FEES)

OTHER

TOTAL IMPACT ON REVENUES

| |
|------|
| |
| |
| \$ - |

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| |
| |

TOTAL FINANCIAL IMPACT ON OPERATING BUDGET

\$ (188,248)

EQUIVALENT MILL RATE OF TOTAL IMPACT

(using current year's information)

(0.0489) mills

COMMENTS:

The Town of Newtown had \$151,515 budgeted for contracted lawn maintenance from Parks & Recreation and Fairfield Hills Authority budgets for FY2025. There was an existing funding gap versus the 2019 contract of roughly \$32,000. This funding gap has been accelerated by the new lawn care maintenance winning bid which came in \$155,997 over the previous lawn care maintenance contract. In 2024, there is a smaller impact because only special appropriation is only required for April through June at the higher rate and the cost is partially offset by available funds in wages in the Parks & Rec budget. This special appropriation is offset by surplus interest earnings.