



**MINUTES
TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING**

May 6, 2024

7:00 PM - Council Chambers

<https://youtube.com/live/uPwQuJ24VJ0>

1. PRAYER - Lori Unghire

The prayer was made by Councilor Unghire.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire

Absent: Douglas Finger. Councilors Cekala, Cressotti, Mangini, and Santanella were a few minutes delayed.

4. FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT

The fire evacuation was announced.

5. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

- Special Meeting - April 15, 2024

MOTION #6931 by: Jim Nasuta seconded: Marie Pyznar to accept the minutes. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared **MOTION #6931** adopted. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: None.

- Regular Meeting - April 15, 2024

MOTION #6932 by: Jim Nasuta seconded: Marie Pyznar to accept the minutes. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared **MOTION #6932** adopted. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: None.

- Special Meeting - April 17, 2024

MOTION #6933 by: Marie Pyznar seconded: John Santanella to accept the minutes. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared **MOTION #6933** adopted. Yes: Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: Gina Cekala.

- Special Meeting - April 22, 2024

MOTION #6934 by: Marie Pyznar seconded: John Santanella to accept the minutes. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared **MOTION #6934** adopted. Yes: Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: Gina Cekala.

- Special Meeting - April 24, 2024

MOTION #6935 by: Marie Pyznar seconded: John Santanella to accept the minutes. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared **MOTION #6935** adopted. Yes: Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: Gina Cekala.

- Special Meeting - April 29, 2024

MOTION #6936 by: Cynthia Mangini seconded: Robert Cressotti to accept the minutes. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared **MOTION #6936** adopted. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: None.

- Public Hearing - April 29, 2024

MOTION #6937 by: Marie Pyznar seconded: Lori Unghire to accept the minutes. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared **MOTION #6937** adopted. Yes: Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: Gina Cekala.

- Special Meeting - May 1, 2024

MOTION #6938 by: Marie Pyznar seconded: Lori Unghire to accept the minutes. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared **MOTION #6938** adopted. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: John Santanella.

6. SPECIAL GUESTS

Town Manager Bromson stated that many years ago the Federal government had given the town seed money to start community gardens and over the years many more have been started around town. Mr. Bromson mentioned that the town is looking to continue to expand the program and locations and is excited by the news the Rotary Club will be sharing.

- Common Grounds Rotary Garden - Julie Cotnoir, President of Rotary and Kathleen Souvigny, Executive Director of Enfield Food Shelf

Julie Cotnoir, President of the Enfield Rotary; along with Kathleen Souvigny, Executive Director of Enfield Food Shelf; and Sarah Bailey, Coordinator of UConn's Master Gardener Program; spoke about the Common Grounds Rotary Garden Project. Ms. Cotnoir said the garden was established back in 2006 by the former director of Enfield Public Libraries and Rotarian, Henry Dutcher. Over the years, the Rotary has supported the gardens by paying

for water usage and other needed supplies. Ms. Cotnoir mentioned the donations from Johnny's Roadside Stand and thanked Pat Bleakney and Allison Saccoccio for their help with the garden over the years, as volunteer numbers have dwindled. The garden is located behind the Senior Center.

Sarah Bailey said she was invited by the town to check on the progress and status of the gardens and reported that they are in great shape. She said they will work with the volunteers to help grow as much produce as possible and offer educational classes to the public over the summer.

Kathleen Souvigny spoke about the large collaboration with the Common Grounds Garden Project and many local establishments.

A copy of the presentation is appended to the minutes.

- Wreaths Across America - Pamela Townsend

Pamela Townsend and Kelly Davis, representatives and location coordinators of Wreaths Across America for Enfield, thanked the Police, EMS, Fire Departments and schools for their support along with Home Depot and the Boy and Girl Scouts of America. The mission of Wreaths Across America is to remember and honor Enfield's 5,000 veterans and to teach the youth. Ms. Townsend and Ms. Davis presented two videos: one produced by Walmart drivers showing the delivery of wreaths to different towns and, ultimately, Arlington National Cemetery, and the other of Enfield's 2023 Wreaths Across America campaign. Ms. Townsend expressed her appreciation for the young people who have been encouraged to join Wreaths Across America.

Kelly Davis said the Enfield Wreaths Across America began in 2008 with only twelve wreaths and as of 2023, they laid 2,035 wreaths at nine Enfield cemeteries. Ms. Davis said their ultimate goal is to lay 5,000 wreaths for all the veterans interred in Enfield.

Ms. Townsend provided information about what is entailed every year. 48 hours prior to the ceremony date, they get information about next year's ceremony and every January they need to get permission from the cemeteries to hold the ceremonies and/or place wreaths. The goal is to honor all 5,000 Enfield veterans, and they reach out to various businesses, groups and individuals asking for wreath sponsorship. For the first time ever, they will have a fundraiser sponsored by Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society on June 1st with 100% of the ticket sales will be donated to Wreaths Across America. She asked the public to save the date and join the fundraiser.

In May and November, American flags are placed on veterans' graves. The biggest

challenge is determining which graves belong to veterans. If the foot marker is not cleared it is difficult for the scouts and volunteers to see it. She asked for volunteers to help in clearing the foot markers. In December, if the town is chosen, a portion of the convoy will pass through Enfield on their way to Arlington National Cemetery. This year they have the approval from headquarters to increase sponsorship so that all 5,000 veterans can be honored in Enfield. They are looking for help increasing wreath sponsorship and placement for all 5,000 wreaths. For anyone looking to help, they may reach out through Facebook at "Wreaths Across America" email enfieldwaa@yahoo.com. The cost for sponsoring a wreath is \$17 and with everyone's help, they can reach their goal. This year's ceremony will be held on December 14th at St. Patrick's Cemetery.

7. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION AND PETITIONS

Lucien LeFevre, 54 Kimberly Drive

Mr. LeFevre, Chairman of Enfield's Veteran's Council, reminded the public of the Veteran's Parade on Sunday, May 26th at 1pm. Mr. LeFevre said there were new additions to the parade this year, and he encouraged the public to come out to see what they are. He said the school's participation has increased, including the Enfield High School Band which marches and provides the music for the ceremony. The Enfield Chamber Choir will be singing the National Anthem. Parkman School grades 3 through 5 will be joining the Chamber Choir to sing "America the Beautiful." He said there is a possibility that the Best Buddies Club from JFK will be there to join in the parade. He encourages any other clubs and groups from the schools to reach out to join. In case of inclement weather, the ceremony will be inside EHS. Mr. LeFevre let the public know if anyone is looking to retire an American flag, they can bring it to the American Legion Post 80 on Enfield Street and place the flag in the dropbox outside. There will be a ceremony on Flag Day, June 14th, at around 6pm, to properly retire flags which will be open to the public.

Colene Ceniglio, 10 Shannon Drive

Ms. Ceniglio stated that her three children received an education from Enfield Schools which set them up for success in their chosen fields. So far, two of her children have bought homes in Enfield because they would like to raise their families here. Ms. Ceniglio does not believe that will be possible with the cuts that the schools will be experiencing. Ms. Ceniglio said that all of her children had different experiences, each requiring support in one way or another. She believed the opportunity to take AP classes, the variety of electives and extracurricular activities, and sports, played a huge role in the success of her children. The needs of children are different now than they were fifteen years ago, or even two years ago. She read four of the last survey results taken by JFK and EHS students for "Youth Substance Use and Related Behaviors". It was noted in the results that students had high levels of anxiety and depression, thoughts of or attempted self-harm, and a concerning

amount having suicidal thoughts. She asked Council members to consider fully funding the education budget.

Callie (?) Zaugg, 67 Belmont Avenue

Ms. Zaugg, a junior at Enfield High, read the school District's Equity Statement. Ms. Zaugg said that she always felt that students were given equal and accessible opportunities despite their living situations, and she feared that it would no longer be the case. The most prevalent of communities in the school are music, arts, and sports. While she understood taxes are high, she believed the money should be going to the schools. Ms. Zaugg plays flute in the student band and is involved in many other musical endeavors. Her goal is to go to college for music. Ms. Zaugg is concerned that with staff being let go, it would cause increased class sizes, reduced individual time, and decreased student performance. She is concerned about college acceptance with the reduction of extracurricular activities. She invited the Council to the Band and Jazz Band Concert on Thursday, May 9.

Maria Griffin, 98 Abbe Road

Ms. Griffin, an EHS student, said it was ironic that the proposed budget cuts were coming at a time when Buzz Robotics, music and sports are getting attention and winning titles. Ms. Griffin stated that if the budget reductions pass, over a hundred teachers will lose their jobs and that will put a strain on the teachers that remain. She said that no one with money will want to move to a town with underfunded and limited opportunities in the schools. Ms. Griffin stated that students deserve more than the bare minimum for education. She said that many students at EHS will be eligible to vote in 2025 and could guarantee that they will not re-elect anyone who sabotages their futures.

Kerry Kearney, 2 Charnley Road

Ms. Kearney reiterated that a presentation from back in April of 2023 showed that the educational needs of students with high needs in Enfield are over 50% of the student body, which has labeled Enfield as an Alliance District. Ms. Kearney said that while the state has not paid the promised Alliance money, the news is not new, and the Council needs to decide how to move forward. She said that in order for students to be safe and successful, the schools need to be funded at the level they are at. Students are successful when they are engaged in school and community and that engagement starts by having connections with caring adults. It is her belief that the school budget has not kept up in past years to properly support the students, and that failure to invest jeopardizes their future.

Tom Walsh, 6 Rosanne Street

Mr. Walsh stated the town has a good police force, and he would like to see a sub-station in each of the schools to reduce the need for armed security guards. Mr. Walsh believed

that it would create a good relationship between officers and students. He said that sub-stations would allow for officers to have a place to do their work, they would have quicker response time in every neighborhood, and they would constantly be in and out of schools for patrol. It would save the town a million and a half dollars and the officers would be trained on a continual basis and already have guns and radios. The savings could go towards the school budget. Mr. Walsh said his concern with building an apartment complex on South Road was that the other residents would be paying more in property taxes to support the additional children.

Alabama Mattoon, 47 Marion Place

Ms. Mattoon, a sophomore at EHS, has had much success thanks to the music program at Enfield schools. Ms. Mattoon said the Enfield High music program provides the students with many opportunities, and if the schools do not get funded, those opportunities will go away. She said that if sports are taken away, the opportunity for scholarships disappears which would create hardships in the future. For students who do not partake in music or sports, after school extracurricular activities are an option. If funding is not given, then another opportunity for scholarships disappears and can affect their acceptance into college. If funding is not provided, many classes that students look forward to will no longer exist. She asked the Council to support the budget to make students' school careers beneficial.

Sheri Spaulding, 11 Cartier Road

Ms. Spaulding, a special education teacher, asked the Council to consider what cuts would do to the special education budget. Ms. Spaulding received a pink slip and was told not to worry because special education wouldn't be impacted. She explained that if the budget was cut to 2%, special education would suffer because it's dependent on a fully funded general education budget. Special education students are integrated with their general education peers when deemed appropriate and with proper support, as legally mandated. A reduction in staff directly impacts individualized support and one-on-one time which are crucial to students with IEPs and 504 plans. An increase in class size and integration would create more paperwork and PPT meetings resulting in less time educating and supporting students. This would contradict legal mandates such as FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) and LRE (Least Restrictive Environment), which are put in place to assist students with disabilities with the supports they need. When schools are not able to meet these requirements, they often pay for outplacement or lawsuits.

Morgan Ugolik, 14 Deepwood Road

Ms. Ugolik, an 8th grade student at JFK, talked about the Best Buddies Club that benefits special education students. The club helps special education students create friendships

and sparks inclusion. If the budget is cut, these students would feel left out and different from other students. Ms. Ugolik noticed that special education students get picked on, and she feared that if the program is removed due to budget cuts, that the bullying would increase.

Luca Bacile, 28 Union Street Ext

Mr. Bacile, a student at EHS, said that the teachers have made a huge impact in his life, and they should be funded.

Student (name unsure) Bezzini, 105 South Road

Student Bezzini of Enfield public schools, said that teachers are not just there to teach an educational curriculum but to teach love, compassion and how to treat others. Enfield teachers aid students in how to be good, working human beings. They believe that students are the future, and as a student with special needs and other social problems, it is important for the school to receive the entire budget. Enfield teachers wear many hats and support the growth of students, and taking away their jobs is not beneficial.

Ritchie Chen, 33 Second Avenue

Mr. Chen, a junior, is also a musician and athlete at EHS. Mr. Chen is concerned about the proposed cuts to the budget. He said that if 2% is accepted, the sports and music programs could be removed, and teaching positions cut. When Mr. Chen took up saxophone, his confidence increased, doors opened, he made friendships. It created the vivacious person he is known to be today. When he took up cross-country running, he gained a supportive network of friends and it helped regulate his mental health. For some students, these programs are what helps them get through the day and gives them a sense of purpose and community. He asked the Council to reconsider their choices and look for other options. He invited the Council to the band concert on May 9th at 6pm in the EHS auditorium.

Chase Menard, 6 Kelly Drive

Mr. Menard, EHS student, stated he has been blessed with amazing teachers during his time in Enfield Public Schools. Mr. Menard said that he is involved in honors classes, clubs, band, and sports as a freshman at EHS. A cut to the school budget would be detrimental to students and teachers, and not having funding causes loss of opportunities. He asked the Council to do what is right for the town.

Evelina Olsen, 7 Circle Drive

Ms. Olsen explained that in her painting class, the students needed to scrape extra paint into their containers and wrap their brushes because there were not enough supplies. Ms. Olsen said that electives are important to the student body, as it gives them something to

look forward to and helps improve mental health. She is currently involved in the Honors Art and Community Class, which is a double block class that occurs on B days. Members of this class create art for the community. It has given purpose to the lives of many students by reigniting passions for art, forging new friendships, and giving students a reason to go to school. She was heartbroken to see the teacher of the class have to explain that the class would not be able to run next year. The need for laid back classes are just as necessary as core classes like Math and English, as well as maintaining electives, extracurriculars and sports.

Jennifer Krasinkiewicz, 209 Abbe Road

Ms. Krasinkiewicz said that the proposed solar farm at 141 Town Farm Road is too close to residential properties. She explained that rotating solar panels would be placed 100 feet from the property line and Lodestar Energy would install seven-foot-tall chain link fences with a five inch ground clearing space on the bottom for small animals. White spruce bushes at a height of four to five feet would be planted but they only reach a height of about eight feet, which still would not rise above the ten-foot-tall solar panels. She is concerned about the view in the summer from her deck and the humming noise they will project. She wanted to let residents know there would be a Public Hearing on Thursday, May 16th at 6:30pm which will allow for public comment, preceded by a presentation. She said that the power generated from the solar panels would not even be used for Enfield but for the City of Hartford. She wanted to find out the public location for the Zoom meeting on the 16th. For anyone looking to contact the Siting Council, they can call 860-827-2935 or visit www.ct.gov/csc

Emily Gourley, 27 Monroe Road

Ms. Gourley, student at JFK, stated that she enjoys the variety of classes and clubs offered at school and takes part in many honors classes and extracurricular activities. Ms. Gourley said that without these classes and activities, her school career would have been a lot more difficult. She is concerned with budget cuts and the impact it will have on the arts and music programs, increased class sizes, and teacher layoffs. She said that children are meant to be in creative environments which improves motor functions, decision making, inventiveness and academic performance. Students taking music classes show better performance in math and science. She urged the Council to do what is in the best interest of the town and the students.

Greg Schoorens, 19 Sam Street

Mr. Schoorens, teacher at Enfield Public Schools, said he shared the opinion of the many students who spoke tonight. Mr. Schoorens said it was demoralizing being one of the 121 teachers who received a non-renewal letter, especially with it being the start of Teacher

Appreciation Week. He said that the best Teacher Appreciation gift he could have received was all the students who'd come out tonight to speak. He stressed that only raising the budget 0-2% was not a good idea for the town and it felt more like being cut off at the knees rather than a compromise. He wanted to know how the schools would be able to function when staff will be reduced by 20%. The class sizes will increase, and the mental health of students will suffer. He emphasized that students would not become competitive enough for college admissions as a result of reduced AP classes. He asked the Council why they are not actively trying to get the funding they are owed for being in the Alliance District and he believed that the \$25 million in the emergency fund should be used for the purpose of increasing the budget.

Maya McCormick, 11 Windmill Road

Ms. McCormick read a letter on behalf of her friend, Sarah. In the letter, she said that over the years at EHS she has played softball and music, which have allowed her to create many opportunities and gain friendships. She said it is hard to hear a plan that will negatively impact students. Having these activities have given her a sense of belonging. She worries about the future of other Enfield children who may not have the same chances. Ms. McCormick spoke for herself and asked the Council to consider how cuts to education will impact students' college admissions when there is nothing to put on college applications. She also said that many students keep their grades up just so they can participate in sports.

MOTION by: John Santanella, seconded: Gina Cekala to extend public communications by thirty minutes. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared the **MOTION** adopted. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: None.

Emily Renaud, 22 Silver Lane

Ms. Renaud said she was concerned that some members of the Council were not giving the students and teachers their full attention this evening because they may have already made up their minds. Ms. Renaud said that she had heard the Board of Education had reached out to the Council to meet and explain what the budget proposal would do to the schools and were refused. She stated that the education budget should not be a partisan issue, and they should work together. She asked why the Council was not willing to invest in the students of Enfield. Many of the opportunities for honors/AP classes and art offerings will not exist with the new proposed budget.

Emily Grenier, 9 Sidor Drive

Ms. Grenier, member of EHS Chamber Choir, stated she has taken music classes since

elementary school and had always admired the high school students who performed in the Chorus Fest and looked forward to the day she could join. Ms. Grenier was saddened to know that the music programs would be one of the first things cut from the budget if passed and younger students wouldn't have the same experience she did. Many students would be lost without the opportunity to be involved in music and the arts, and it would affect college acceptance in the future. She believed that music and art create connections and inspire younger children. She asked the Council to keep the arts and funding.

Max Mattoon, 47 Marion Place

Max, an EHS junior, spoke about the wonderful teachers at Enfield High and how they have shaped their life. They have been an art and a music member since their freshman year. Max shared all the positive attributes they've gained from EHS teachers. Max pleaded with the Council to keep the teachers and resources because they help the students express themselves, work through their emotions, and teach patience and kindness towards themselves.

Hannah Ryan, 116 Sheridan Road

Ms. Ryan, a junior at EHS, has taken ten honors courses and two AP classes during her three years. Ms. Ryan strives to receive good grades and has a GPA of over 4.0 and has been inducted into two National Honor Societies. She said she has had the opportunity to experience all of this due to the current high school system. With the current school schedule, students have the chance for career exploration and learning about the current economic status of the country. There is also the opportunity to schedule one-on-one time with a teacher, attend clubs, or makeup tests during the half hour Eagle Block. A reduction in senior privileges would occur with a budget cut. Many of the student who take advantage of senior privileges use the extra time to work so that they can save for college expenses. She asked the Council to look elsewhere to cut the budget.

Mike Gourley, 27 Monroe Road

Mr. Gourley stressed the importance of funding the schools. He said that the AP classes set students up for success, and the already underfunded arts programs have had a huge impact on the lives of his children. He said that underfunded schools make attracting residents difficult. Mr. Gourley stated that all the students and teachers represent a network of Enfield residents, many who vote.

Ashley Schell, 8 Renee Lane

Ms. Schell, EHS band director, said her success with extracurricular activities and sports allowed her to attend an elite college. She has written a book and performed at the Super Bowl, among many other things. Ms. Schell said that the more teachers learn the best ways

to educate, the more they can implement best practices for teaching. When new knowledge is linked with personal connections like art, music and literature, then new pathways are strengthened by previously established connections. She said maintaining the 8.6% budget allows the schools to explore these connections with students. She provided the Council with forty-five letters written by EHS music students inviting them to attend their concerts on May 9th and 16th at 6:30pm in the auditorium.

Jess Duga, 101 Cottage Road

Ms. Duga, a twenty-nine year resident of Enfield, expressed her amazement at the politization of education in Enfield. She stated that a conservative Republican Board of Education approved the budget and the Council plans to reject it, which she believed was an overreach. She said it was a slap in the face to everyone who had worked on the budget and those who had been elected to oversee the town's education. She said that she does not want armed guards, and that her and her kids take lockdown drills very seriously and don't so much as make a peep or move a muscle. She said students are able to make a connection with the guards that are in the schools now. She would also like normal class sizes, proper paper supplies, and books for every child. She believed that if large corporations in town can get tax abatements, then the town can provide a proper, life enhancing, career and college-ready education. She said education should be a priority and not a line item.

Joe Bernabucci, 67 Foxcroft Road

Mr. Bernabucci said his daughter came home distraught that her favorite teacher would not be returning the next year due to the budget cuts. Mr. Bernabucci provided personal examples of how budget cuts to Enfield's education in prior years have impacted his life, including losing a neighbor to another town when the neighbor's child would not have a properly supported IEP and 504 plan, as well as his daughter's geography teacher leaving the profession to get a job that would pay more. He said that due to budget freezes, teachers in neighboring towns are making tens of thousands of dollars more a year. He urged the Council to pass the board's proposed budget. He said that a mill rate increase of 1.67 would be required to fund the full, proposed budget and for his property, he would only see an increase of \$28 a month. He urged the Council to approve the entire school budget.

Casey Sullivan, 31 Freemont Road

Student Sullivan said that during their time at EPS they have felt bullied and left out. Since joining the music program, they have gained friends and community, and have maintained good grades so they can continue to participate in these programs. If these programs are cut then many students will have no reason to keep good grades.

MOTION by: Gina Cekala, seconded: Cynthia Mangini to suspend the rules and extend public communication. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared **MOTION** failed. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Cynthia Mangini, John Santanella No: Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, Lori Unghire Abstain: None.

Mayor Nelson explained to the public that they would have another opportunity to speak towards the end of the meeting as long as it is prior to 11:00 pm.

8. COUNCILOR COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

Councilor Santanella thanked everyone who came out and spoke, especially the students. Mr. Santanella said that the last few weeks of budget talks have been difficult and frustrating. He learned more this evening than he thought he would. He mentioned that tonight's meeting was a lesson in civics for the students and showed what democracy is all about. 71% of residents stayed home last November, and now they are paying the price. He believed the cuts to the budget are offensive, and every program in the schools is on the line. He would support the budget that was presented by the bipartisan school board in its entirety.

Councilor Cekala said she had the opportunity to see the play "The Little Mermaid" at JFK, and they did a great job. Ms. Cekala thanked all the speakers for coming out tonight and to remember that Councilors Santanella, Cressotti, Mangini and herself are voting in full support of the education budget created by the Republican-led Board of Education, and the sitting Republican Councilors are not in support.

Councilor Cressotti stated that every day and month should be Mental Health Awareness. Mr. Cressotti mentioned the correlation between students' mental health and them finding importance in their classes. He said that these programs are important in the lives of Enfield students, and they must be funded and maintained to enhance student mental health. He is concerned about a reversion to the previous school schedule if there are cuts to the budget, and what a study hall versus Eagle block would do. He commended the students, teachers, and parents who came out to speak. As responsible people, they need to work together and not as one party or another to do what is right for the education budget. He said that with the proposed 1.67 mill rate, there would be an increase of around \$25 a month.

Mr. Cressotti congratulated Autumn, Grand Marshal of Best Buddies Walk, and said that the group has raised close to \$5,000 for the program. Best Buddies has branched out from JFK and EHS and now has Allied partnered with Webster Bank.

Councilor Mangini thanked everyone who came out to speak, especially the students. Ms. Mangini found it heartwarming and important that they came out to speak about what they believe in. She said that not supporting the 8.6% budget would cause the town to go backwards. During her twenty years serving on the Council, there has never been a time that they have not been able to share ideas or be respectful during budget deliberations. She would like to see that continue.

Deputy Mayor Pyznar said that during public communications, she was taking notes and paying attention. Ms. Pyznar stated that she represents the entire 45,000 person population of Enfield and this year is a tight budget. Many residents have reached out to her saying that they cannot afford an increase. They do not want to overtax the seniors so that they remain able to age in their homes. Ms. Pyznar explained that every department at town hall has been asked to give a bottom line number for operation to make it a fair budget to everyone. She said that she supports the arts and music programs and visited the art show and the Mary Poppins production. She stated that she understands the importance of extracurricular activities and AP classes. She hoped that everyone could come together to help come up with a plan, as she understands the importance of cutting back in her own budget at home as well.

Councilor Nasuta thanked the public for coming out to speak, as well as Pam Townsend for all her work with Wreaths Across America.

Councilor Unghire revealed that the position of Councilor is a difficult one and many different sides, scenarios and perspectives needed to be considered. Ms. Unghire said she also attended the Art Show at EHS and it was amazing, likening it to a college performance. She gave kudos to Glenn and Sue Reese for assisting the Lamplighter's with their production of Mary Poppins. She said that Councilor Cekala's comment was out of order and asked she not speak on her behalf.

Councilor Hendrickson explained that this was his first budget process and he takes it seriously, responding to calls and emails from residents every night. Mr. Hendrickson said that having been a volunteer of the Food Shelf and a grocery store manager, he understands that \$25 a month can make an impact in someone's life. He was insulted that people would consider him insensitive and uncaring about Enfield's youth. He mentioned

that he was a coach all his life and he believed there is a right way to educate children about budgets, instead of scaring them into believing programs will be cut. Many great students have graduated from Enfield schools. He planned to continue conversations, listen to both sides, and come up with a financially responsible budget.

Councilor Ludwick let the public know that on May 16th in the Scitico Room there will be a Public Hearing for the proposed solar field on Abbe Road. He said the discussions are important not only for residents of Abbe Road, but for the rest of Enfield as well, as it pertains to prime farmland.

Mayor Nelson said that while \$25 is not a lot to him, there are many buildings and schools that need repairs and improvements, including the pump stations. Mr. Nelson said that there are many projects that have been patched to help get them through to the next year to save money. Unfortunately, there is no money left and they got bad news earlier in the day regarding the Board of Education. He and Councilor Cressotti met with the Board of Education for two hours. Mr. Nelson stated that he has twelve grandchildren in the Enfield schools, and he would love to be able to buy new band uniforms and instruments, and fund the robotics program. He is contacted by elderly residents who are close to being unable to stay in their homes. There needs to be a balance and he understands both sides. He said the Council was elected to make the tough decisions and make the cuts where necessary. He asked the public to help come up with ideas and solutions that are fair and equitable to all sides. He appreciated the rally outside of the town hall prior to the meeting, and said that everyone should be rallying the State of Connecticut to get the funding they have shorted the district. He would like to work beside the Board of Education to get the \$700,000 from the state.

9. TOWN MANAGER REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Town Manager stated that there was no formal town manager's report.

10. TOWN ATTORNEY REPORT

Interim Town Attorney Tyler said that the Town Attorney's office was able to retain Attorney Jeff Mirman from Hinckley, Allen and Snyder LLP, who is familiar with working with the Siting Council. The town recently submitted interrogatories as well, which are questions directed at the applicant to answer. Mr. Tyler mentioned that the specifics of the fence that Ms. Krasinkiewicz brought up earlier was included in the interrogatory. He stated that the applicant was also asked to include documents to back up their claims. The state has granted the town status as a party as well as an intervenor. Being a party gives more access to information, both now and after the hearing. He said that they would submit post-hearing briefs. The hearing will be held May 16th and the submitted interrogatories must be answered by this Thursday, May 9th by Lodestar Energy. This will give the town a week to review the information before the hearing on May 16th, which is set to start at 2pm.

The hearing will start with Lodestar and their testimony. There will be a cross-examination by Jeff Mirman on behalf of the town, and the Siting Council may have questions for the applicant. The town will present evidence to back up its position in opposition to the solar application. Anyone looking to be a witness must submit their questions and answers to the Siting Council by Thursday. The Town Attorney's office is moving forward with the authorizations the Council has given them.

Councilor Cressotti asked Mr. Tyler if Attorney Mirman was on the list of approved attorneys and what the cost is to retain him. Mr. Tyler was unsure about a list of approved attorneys but made sure to hire one that is versed in this type of work. He believed the rate the town was paying was \$350/hour and his normal billing rate is \$700/hour. He mentioned a clause was drafted that the town could replace him if they were unhappy at any point. Mr. Tyler clarified that the public can speak at 6:30pm for three minutes, but when the intervenors give their testimony, there is no time limit, as well as during the cross-examination. He said efforts have been directed at making sure questions and answers have been submitted, and that the Town can build a case that Enfield has a lot of prime farm land and that it will affect abutters and other surrounding neighbors.

11. REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

Councilor Unghire said that Leisure Services met and discussed the Community Gardens, saying some of the beds had been moved from the library to Lafayette Street. She also announced that the Patriot Award Committee recently met and are seeking nominations for the Enfield Patriot Award. Nominations are open to all men and women residing in Enfield for over fifteen years. She encouraged the public to nominate someone who has shown patriotism. They do not have to be a veteran, although they can be. They are also seeking a few more Enfield volunteers to help determine the nominee.

12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

13. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Agenda

MOTION #6939 by: Cynthia Mangini, seconded: Robert Cressotti to adopt the following two consent items. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared **MOTION #6939** adopted. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire
No: None Abstain: None.

1. Resolution Authorizing the Town Manager to sign the CT DOT Municipal Grant Program (MGP) application for FY 2025-2028 in the amount of \$46,840/year

WHEREAS, The Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) provides several grants to the Department of Social Services annually; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Social Services is in the process of preparing the SFY 2025-2028 grant application to the DOT for funds that will be available to the Town of Enfield for Dial-a-Ride operational costs,

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, Christopher W. Bromson, is authorized to sign and submit the grant application, and enter into Agreement with the CT DOT upon award, subject to review and approval by the Town Attorney, in the name and on behalf of the Town of Enfield with the DOT and to affix the Corporate Seal.

2. Resolution Authorizing the Town Manager to Sign the application for, and enter into an Agreement with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) for a Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking (STOP Act) grant in the amount of \$60,000/year for FY 2025-2028

WHEREAS, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) published a NOFO inviting applications for their Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking (STOP Act) grant

WHEREAS, Social Services has prepared a non-binding application to submit by the May 3, 2024 deadline for funds that will be available to the Town in Fiscal Years 2025-2028 to support the work of the Enfield Together Mental Health & Wellness Coalition (ETC MH&W)

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, Christopher W. Bromson, is authorized to sign and submit the grant application and subsequent agreement, subject to review and approval by the Town Attorney, in the name and on behalf of the Town of Enfield with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) and to affix the Corporate Seal.

B. Appointment(s)–Town Council Appointed

1. **Blight Review Committee** - The Term of Office of Mary Ann Turner (R) Expired on 3/31/24. Reappointment Will be Until 3/31/26.

NOMINATION #6940 by: Marie Pyznar

MOTION by: John Santanella, seconded: Gina Cekala to close nominations. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared the **MOTION** adopted. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken

Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: None.

Upon a **ROLL CALL** vote, the Chair declared **NOMINATION #6940** adopted. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire No: Michael Ludwick Abstain: None.

C. Resolution Supporting FY 2025 CDS Requests for Pump Station Replacements

RESOLUTION #6941 by: John Santanella, seconded: Cynthia Mangini.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Enfield Town Council supports the Fiscal Year 2025 Congressionally Directed Spending requests for the replacement of the Grape Brook Force Main Replacement, Simon Road Pump Station Replacement, South Maple Street Pump Station Replacement, South River Street Pump Station/ Force Main Replacement and West Shore Drive Pump Station/ Retaining Wall Replacement.

Upon a **ROLL CALL** vote, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #6941** adopted. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: None.

D. Resolution to Authorize a Reduction of Property Maintenance Fines for 23 Locke Drive

RESOLUTION #6942 by: Cynthia Mangini, seconded: John Santanella.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Enfield Town Council does hereby authorize the reduction of the property maintenance fines on 23 Locke Drive associated with the property maintenance lien recorded in the Enfield Land Records on September 24, 2021 at Volume 2814 Page 627 to \$3,000.

Upon a **ROLL CALL** vote, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #6942** adopted. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: None.

E. Resolution to Set a Public Hearing to Modify the Midtown Enfield Tax Increment Financing Master Plan

RESOLUTION #6943 by: Cynthia Mangini, seconded: John Santanella.

WHEREAS, the Enfield Town Council adopted the Midtown Enfield Tax Increment Financing Master Plan (Master Plan) on June 3, 2019; and

WHEREAS, State statute allows for a TIF to exist for a maximum of 50 years; and

WHEREAS, due to the timing of several major projects, an extension of 10 years will ensure that major projects are able to move forward; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan requires a public hearing for any modifications thereto.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Enfield Town Council will hold a Public Hearing in the Enfield Town Hall Council Chambers, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Monday, May 13, 2024 at 3:50 P.M. to allow interested residents an opportunity to express their opinion regarding the proposed modification of the Midtown Enfield Tax Increment Financing Master Plan's Original Assessed Value.

Upon a **ROLL CALL** vote, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #6943** adopted. Yes: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Bob Hendrickson, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Jim Nasuta, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire No: None Abstain: None.

F. Abbe Road Sidewalks

This item was tabled by the Chair.

14. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- Greys Club

This item was tabled by the Chair.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS PROPER TO COME BEFORE SAID MEETING

None.

16. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS/APPLIES ONLY IF PRIOR TO 11:00 p.m.

Maureen Griffin, 98 Abbe Road

Ms. Griffin said that none of the Councilors have taken the time to visit any Enfield schools to see what the direct impact of a reduced budget would be on them. Ms. Griffin stated that Enfield has a nationally recognized music program, and that Buzz Robotics and the Invention Convention are recognized nationally as well. Enfield's schools have produced many young writers and talented athletes. Many students will graduate with college credits and many get scholarships for academics, sports, culinary and music. She said that the existing programs will wither if funds are cut.

Zach Zannoni, 6 Howard Street

Mr. Zannoni said the three most important resources in local government are education, infrastructure and public safety. Mr. Zannoni stated that Enfield is falling extremely short in regard to education. The fact that Enfield teachers came out to speak when they could go to surrounding towns and make \$10,000 to \$20,000 more, speaks volumes. He works for the Town of Somers, and he said the school system gained three Enfield teachers, and they are a conservative majority Select Board. He does not believe it to be a partisan issue, because Somers will also be raising their taxes. In order to attract residents and retain talent, they need to start with the schools. As a student at UConn where they discuss

education and policy, the headlines they read about Enfield are embarrassing. He said that those headlines influence the decisions of families on whether to move here. Mr. Zannoni stated that the town cannot continue to under fund the future of Enfield schools for short-term gains.

Lynn Kostek, 13 Teach Street

Ms. Kostek expressed her frustration with Council members looking out the window while students and teachers were speaking. Ms. Kostek said that the children are the future of Enfield and that many Councilors are set in their ways. She asked the Council if they were giving the students the option of figuring out their future plans and careers. She was in agreement with the teachers and students that the Council needed to find a way to fund the schools and keep the teachers employed. She further questioned how seniors who may have difficulty maneuvering in their own homes would be able to put in fifty hours of volunteer time to save on their taxes. She believed that seniors who have reached 70-80 years of age have already paid their dues and deserve a break.

Aiden Tetreault, 42 Green Manor Road

Mr. Tetreault read the letter he wrote for Ms. Schell's class, which was given to the Council. Mr. Tetreault's letter stated that music is a force, transcending more than the instrument and more than the whole of people, and works to improve the greater good. He played the introduction to last year's marching band show, which had voiceovers of the students explaining the importance of music in their lives. He invited the Council to attend the band and jazz band concert on May 9th and the choir and orchestra concert on May 16th at 6:30pm in the EHS auditorium.

Tom Cremona, 19 Tyler Road

Mr. Cremona, longtime resident and Enfield graduate, offered the advice he's given teams as an executive officer of a Fortune 100 company. Mr. Cremona stated that he knows the Council does not want to get rid of programs and teachers. The Council is destroying themselves as a team and they need to recognize that the town elected them to work as a team. They need to rally around their leader and put unnecessary comments aside, and find a middle ground. Mr. Cremona stated that the Council needs to realize there needs to be compromise and that they will not get everything that they want.

Micah Burnside, 27 Litchfield Drive

Mr. Burnside said that he did not attend Enfield Public Schools and attended private schools because his family belief is that there is not much benefit to receiving a public education. Mr. Burnside said that neither he nor his mother can afford a \$750 tax increase. He said that while his private school did not offer as many classes as EPS, he still found a way to

teach himself multiple instruments. He believes that anybody who wants something hard enough can achieve that with hard work and dedication. Mr. Burnside further stated that he wrote to each Council member and asked that they remove the Covid-19 emergency messaging displayed on the town's website.

Vinny Mangini, 32 Glendale Road

Mr. Mangini said that he made most of his friends this year playing football. Mr. Mangini said that without his teachers, he wouldn't have been able to figure out who he was.

Christina Tetreault, 42 Green Manor Road

Ms. Tetreault said that many parents will not keep their children in Enfield schools and will be paying to send them elsewhere. The Council needs to take that into account as that scenario would cost the town more in the long run instead of funding what is needed now. She said that her student wants to be a music teacher, and she wanted to know what message the Council is sending by cutting teachers and music programs.

Liz Davis, 201 North Maple Street

Ms. Davis said that she felt as though the Council is pitting seniors against the students. Ms. Davis stated that when she was on the Council, she made the suggestion of freezing taxes for the seniors who meet a certain criteria. She told the Council to do something for both the seniors and the students if they cared about them, because their actions speak louder than words. Ms. Davis stated that the armed guard issue is what got her involved in politics eleven years ago. She thanked the officers for the work they do, but finds it unnecessary for them to spend \$1 million to fund armed guards in schools. She wanted to see the Council pay the security guards that are in there now more money. She asked the Council to find a way to fund the schools, even if they have to take the money from somewhere else.

Greg Schoorens, 19 Sam Street

Mr. Schoorens wanted to respond to comments from earlier. He said he understood having to "tighten their belts" but that an increase of 0-2% is tightening to the point of cutting circulation off. He did not believe it was feasible to keep any teachers with that type of increase. While he appreciated the work of police officers, he noted that many make his salary in overtime alone. He said that if it's the Board of Education's job to find money for the school budget, then it is the job of the Council to find money to help the seniors. He stated that he would like to see the state help out and he hoped that the Council could come together so that Enfield can succeed.

17. COUNCILOR COMMUNICATIONS

Councilor Unghire explained that Patriot Award applicants may get applications at the Town Hall or visit www.enfield-ct.gov or www.enfieldcelebration.org. Councilor Mangini clarified that the end date for Patriot Award applicants is June 9th.

Councilor Santanella asked if a tiered tax structure was legal and feasible, and would it ever be an option or in the realm of possibility. Mr. Tyler said he would look into it but that the Emolument Clause in the Constitution may make it difficult. Mayor Nelson said he would love to freeze taxes for seniors, but the town does not have money to fund things they have currently. Mr. Nelson further stated that his view on armed guards has not changed. He wanted police officers and not armed guards, but needed to make a compromise. He thanked the public for their comments and encouraged emails with suggestions and ideas to help the students, seniors and the town infrastructure.

18. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by: John Santanella, seconded: Cynthia Mangini to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared the **MOTION** adopted unanimously, and the meeting stood adjourned at 10:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila M. Bailey, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council

Lindsay Petrucci, Assistant Town Clerk
Secretary of the Council



Julie Cotnoir, President
Rotary Club of Enfield

Kathleen Souvigney, Executive Director
Enfield Food Shelf, Inc.

Sarah Bailey, Coordinator
UConn Master Gardener Program

1



HISTORY

- ❖ **Established 2006** by Rotary Club of Enfield to provide families in need with fresh vegetables and fruits
- ❖ **Rotary Club of Enfield provides funding** for water and other needed purchases
- ❖ **Plants are donated** by Johnny's Roadside Garden and other local businesses
- ❖ Planning, oversight and volunteer coordination for the garden has been done in the past by a small team, mainly **Pat Bleakney and Alison Saccaccio**
- ❖ **Yielded more than 20,000 pounds of produce**
- ❖ **COVID** impacted garden in many ways including reduction of willing volunteers and the passing of Alison
- ❖ Pat has been doing the herculean task of caring for this very large garden with a very small volunteer contingent through last year when she announced her **retirement from this role.**

2



COMMON GROUNDS

A ROTARY GARDEN PROJECT

STATUS

- ❖ Knowing the impact this garden makes for families in need through Enfield Food Shelf, community partners have stepped up to revitalize this important resource.



3



COMMON GROUNDS

A ROTARY GARDEN PROJECT

GARDEN REVITALIZATION COLLABORATION

- ✓ Rotary Club of Enfield
- ✓ Enfield Senior Center
- ✓ Enfield Food Shelf
- ✓ UCONN Master Gardener Program
- ✓ Allied Community Services
- ✓ Home Depot
- ✓ Garden Club of Enfield
- ✓ Enfield Town Manager's Office
- ✓ Enfield Public Works

4



COMMON GROUNDS
A ROTARY GARDEN PROJECT

Volunteers Needed

ROTARY DAY OF SERVICE
Saturday, May 18
10:00a - 2:00p
299 Elm St
(behind Enfield Senior Center)

Help revitalize the Common Grounds Rotary Garden to get it ready for the growing season

This garden provides Enfield Food Shelf families in need with thousands of pounds of fresh produce each year

Major projects for the day:

- Install irrigation
- Prepare beds for planting
- Repair shed

Sign up below:



*Dress for the weather.
Bring sunscreen and gardening gloves.
All volunteers must sign a waiver.*

Can't sign up online? See Taylor at Enfield Senior Center

**VOLUNTEERS
WELCOME!**

5



COMMON GROUNDS
A ROTARY GARDEN PROJECT

**YOU ARE INVITED TO A
RE-OPENING CEREMONY**

Saturday, May 18th
10:00 am
Behind Enfield Senior Center

All are welcome to attend

*To honor those who brought
life to this garden throughout
the years and to celebrate
hope it brings
to those in need*




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