There was a regular meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 13, 2020 via Zoom Webinar virtual meeting platform.

Present were: Mayor Suzette DeBeatham-Brown, Deputy Mayor David Mann, Councilors Rickford Kirton, Kevin Gough, Joseph Merritt, Patrick DeLorenzo, Danielle Wong and C.F. Politis

Also present were: Robert E. Smith, Town Manager, Sharron Howe, Assistant to the Town Manager, Keri Rowley, Finance Director, Attorney Marc Needelman, Jonathan Thiesse, Town Engineer, Scott Sharlow, Director of Information Technology (Tech Support) and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Absent was: Councilor Stephanie Calhoun

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting began with the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRESENTATIONS

There were no announcements or presentations.

CITIZENS’ STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS

1. Erin Corbett, 443 Park Avenue inquired about complaints with the Animal Control Officer, Christine Sparks.

2. Kenneth McClary, 2 Wedgewood Drive inquired about the Affordable Housing study and detailed grant information.

COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEES

Community Services – Councilor Wong reported on the recent allocation of $2000.00 to the First Congregational Church, in partnership with Social & Youth Services to purchase food from Foodshare for the Backpack Program and local food bank. Social & Youth Services is tracking numbers on the amount of individuals and families utilizing the food bank. Councilor Wong also encouraged residents to be aware of the following: Census 2020 – complete your mailer, CBIA information, support 4 CT organization (provide resources to first responders), East Coast Greenway Trail (suggest wearing a mask on the trail).
Administration & Education – This subcommittee did not meet April. The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2020.

Finance – Councilor Kirton read a brief report from the last meeting held on April 8, 2020. There was discussion regarding the two tax programs being offered by the State of Connecticut and supported with the recent Governor’s Executive Order, the Deferment and Low Interest Rate programs. In addition, there was a brief discussion regarding the current CIP Projects Transfers.

Public Safety – Councilor Gough gave a brief update regarding the last subcommittee meeting held on April 13, 2020.

Land Use & Economic Development – The next scheduled subcommittee meeting will be held on April 21, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the status update regarding the Tax Increment Financing Program.

Golf – The next scheduled subcommittee meeting will be held on April 27, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. Councilor DeLorenzo noted that the Men’s Club made a donation to the Bloomfield Food Bank in the amount of $1053.00.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

FY 19/20-42: Consider and Take Action Regarding Adoption of Resolution – Deferment Program and/or Low Interest Rate Program – Municipal Tax Collections as described in Governor Lamont’s Executive Order 7S issued on April 1, 2020

Councilor Kirton commented on the need for both of these property tax relief programs, Deferment Program and Low Interest Rate Program.

The Deferment Program allows eligible taxpayers, businesses, nonprofits and residents who have suffered a significant adverse economic impact by COVID-19 and those that are providing relief to other significantly affected by COVID-19 pandemic to defer up to 90 days the payment of real property, personal property and motor vehicle taxes.

The Low Interest Rate Program establishes a maximum interest rate of 3 percent for certain delinquent tax payments on real property, personal property or motor vehicles due and payable.

Councilor Gough inquired about the Administrative cost to administer these property tax relief programs. It was noted that there is no extra cost in providing this service to taxpayers.

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown clarified the timeframe for both programs. The Low Interest Rate Program is for current delinquent taxes between April – June and the Deferment Program would be an option beginning July 1st for the new tax bill.

Deputy Mayor Mann asked about the actual process to administer both programs.
Mrs. Keri Rowley, Finance Director indicated that the Town would send out postcards in a mass mailing to every household. The deadline to submit is by July 1, 2020.

Councilor Gough noted that while the Town will lose some revenue, it is also important to consider if the administrative cost of the program would lose the Town much more and it will not.

It was moved Councilor Kirton, seconded by Councilor Merritt and voted unanimously to adopt the resolution for the Deferment Program and Low Interest Rate Program for Municipal Tax Collections. (See Attached)

FY 19/20-43: Consider and Take Action Regarding Adoption of Resolution – Capital Fund Transfers

Deputy Mayor Mann asked if the amounts presented would complete the projects listed.

Councilor Merritt inquired about funding from current and prior years.

Councilor Gough noted that the funding allocated for Filley Park with this transfer will only complete one section and not the entire project.

Councilor DeLorenzo also noted that the allocation of $125,000 for Filley Park is just for the current phase, there are additional phases that need financing.

Councilor Kirton suggested the creation of an additional column to outline the total amount needed to complete each project.

Councilor Merritt asked about the details of the Police Needs Assessment.

Councilor Wong inquired about the necessity for tax security improvements in the tax office. She asked about any incidents that may have occurred to warrant this need for improvements.

Mr. Robert E. Smith, Town Manager will provide a detailed report on how funds would be used to enhance security plans in place. Council requested an updated plan and cost estimates prior to expending funds for this project.

It was moved by Councilor Kirton, seconded by Deputy Mayor Mann and voted unanimously to adopt the resolution for Capital Fund Transfers. (See Attached)

FY 19/20-44: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Affordable Housing Plan Technical Assistance Program

Mr. Smith gave a brief description of the Affordable Housing Plan Technical Assistance Program. It was noted that the Town’s contribution is $5,000 (in kind service – salaries). The cost outline consist of:

- $9,000 – Data Collection – Market Study/Analysis
- $3,500 – Community Engagement – Facility/Lease Fee
- $2,000 – Printing/Publication
- $500.00 – Other Administrative Cost
- $20,000 – Total (including in kind salaries)
Mr. Jose Giner, Director of Planning and Economic Development will be the primary contact for this grant. The Town may engage in the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process for a consultant to conduct the market study.

Councilor Kirton requested that this item be referred to the Administration & Education Subcommittee for further discussion and review. He also requested to invite Mr. Robert Berman, Chair of the Bloomfield Housing Authority to the next subcommittee meeting scheduled in May.

Deputy Mayor Mann commented on the usefulness to consider this grant application for Affordable Housing needs. He also noted that there should be citizen outreach and geared towards ALICE families. There is no funding mechanism in place to address long term housing issues.

Councilor Gough stated that referral to the Community Services Subcommittee is more appropriate.

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Kirton and voted unanimously to authorize Robert E. Smith, Town Manager for the Town of Bloomfield, to submit a grant application to the Connecticut Department of Housing for assistance in formulating an Affordable Housing Plan for the Town of Bloomfield and to designate Mr. Smith as the individual who can sign the application and administer the grant.

**FY 19/20-45: Consider and Take Action Regarding Tax Refunds**

Councilor DeLorenzo inquired about how the Town will handle tax refunds in the future with the status of COVID-19 issues.

Mrs. Rowley noted that all tax appeal hearings conduct by the Board of Assessment Appeals have were postponed for the month of March. Mrs. Rowley will follow up with the Assessor’s Office on a plan moving forward.

Attorney Needelman noted that the current refunds are for payments that were made or are in error. All tax appeal matters have been extended by 30 days.

It was moved by Councilor Kirton, seconded by Deputy Mayor Mann and voted unanimously to approve the tax refunds (per the attached list) be approved in accordance with the memoranda dated April 13, 2020.

**FY 19/20-46: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Cancelling the Annual Town Meeting Scheduled for Monday, May 4, 2020**

Councilor Kirton suggested that the first budget meeting to discuss the newly revised FY 2020/2021 Town Manager’s budget should be scheduled for April 23, 2020.

Councilor Gough mentioned the scheduled date of May 26, 2020 for the Annual Town Meeting. This date is contingent upon creating the updated budget schedule.

Mr. Smith noted an early May date of notification from the Board of Education to determine if an additional appropriation is needed. Councilor Kirton also recommended that the Town Manager to communicate sooner than later regarding this request.
It was moved by Councilor Kirton, seconded by Councilor Gough and voted unanimously to cancel the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for Monday, May 4, 2020 to no more than 30 days due to the Coronavirus per the Governors Executive Order No. 7C #5.

FY 19/20-47: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Amendment of 2020 Public Safety Subcommittee Calendar

It was moved by Councilor Gough, seconded by Councilor Kirton and voted unanimously to amend the 2020 Public Safety Subcommittee Calendar to change all meeting start times from 6:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

FY 19/20-48: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Donation to the Bloomfield Food Bank

Councilor Kirton introduced this agenda item to Council and the need to provide additional monetary support the local Bloomfield Food Bank. The Town is taking a proactive approach to address the basic needs of the Bloomfield community.

Councilor Wong and Deputy Mayor Mann asked for clarification regarding the funding allocation of $2,000 and this proposed request amount of $5,000.

Councilor Merritt noted that he would like for this additional allocation to be solely for the Bloomfield Food Bank and not the local churches Backpack Program.

Councilor Gough clarified the amount of $2,000 to purchase food from Foodshare through the First Congregational Church for the Backpack Program. He disagrees with making a donation to churches from the Town. He would like to see a Matching Program with community involvement and participation to assist those most in need.

Councilor Kirton is reluctant to engage community participation for this Matching Program.

Deputy Mayor Mann mentioned a gift card donation program that Social & Youth Services is coordinating to assist with providing food to individuals and families.

It was moved by Councilor Kirton, seconded by Councilor DeLorenzo and voted unanimously to allocate funding of $5,000 to the Bloomfield Food Bank from the Town Manager’s Contingency Account.

REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown reported and gave the following town status updates on services and activities:

- COVID-19 Status Update: Currently 88 positive confirmed cases in Bloomfield, 13 deaths
  Mayor DeBeatham-Brown asked residents to continue social distancing and dispose of masks and gloves in the trash can.

- The West Hartford Bloomfield Health District is doing a great job of surveillance of the grocery stores and other public venues.
• She thanked Social & Youth Services and Senior Services on providing essential services the Bloomfield community.

• Mayor DeBeatham-Brown commended the IT department on their speedy response in providing technical support to the town staff and Council in the transition to the virtual meeting platform Zoom.

• The FY 2020/2021 Town Manager’s proposed budget document is on the Town website for review. However, a new revised budget will posted soon.

• Mayor DeBeatham-Brown prioritized the following Council subcommittees to meet at this time: Finance, Administration & Education, Committee on Committees and Public Safety.

• There is a current Democratic vacancy on the Board of Education. Please contact Councilor Stephanie Calhoun if you are interested in being considered.

• The order of PPE will be arriving to the Town from the State of Connecticut within the next week.

REPORT FROM TOWN MANAGER

Mr. Robert E. Smith, Town Manager gave the following updates:

• Operational changes within the Town regarding staffing, scheduling, cleaning and sanitizing work areas. In addition, Mr. Smith thanked the IT Department for their promptness to deploy technical support with hardware and software to 65 employees to work from home remotely.

• Maintaining the focus and compliance on all Governor’s Executive Orders that are issued daily

• Thanked Council for their quick action on various items in providing guidance and direction

• Process to revising the Town Budget and looking for guidance from Council

• The Finance Director has working from the Governor’s Executive Order regarding the two property tax relief programs, relative to the logistics and how the Town will administer.

• Planning ahead for an extended stay at home period at least May 20, 2020

• Constant communication from the Health District will be shared with Council in a Manager’s Minute memorandum

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor Gough, seconded by Councilor Wong to approve the special meeting minutes of April 2, 2020.

The motion passes, 7-0-1.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Mann, seconded by Councilor DeLorenzo and voted unanimously to approve the special minutes of March 16, 2020.

It was moved by Councilor Kirton, seconded by Councilor Gough and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of March 9, 2020.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Politis commended Town Administration, Chief Hammick, Mayor DeBeatham-Brown and the Town Manager for leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. He also thanked Social & Youth Services and the various churches committed to providing food and distribution for the Backpack Program. Councilor Politis also thanked Jose Giner, Director of Planning and Economic Development for promoting and advertising the gift card program to support local businesses and restaurants.

Councilor Merritt reminded residents to utilize the delivery and take out options to support local restaurants. He was delighted that the Council approved the $5000.00 allocation to the local Bloomfield Food Bank.

Councilor DeLorenzo noted that the Town cannot do everything for everybody. He encouraged all those who are able to donate to the Food Bank to do so. The Town needs to continue to support one another during this time of need for all. Councilor DeLorenzo asked residents to continue social distancing and encouraged all to adhere to the CDC guidelines.

Councilor Gough commented on developing a giving/matching program for donations from the community. He noted that the CDC should have named “social distancing” – “physical distancing”. Councilor Gough also mentioned the Bike Trail and noted that it is great to see increased activity and usage. He is hopeful that residents will continue to appreciate the community’s natural resources.

Councilor Kirton emphasized the “realness” of this pandemic and highlighted the disparities in the healthcare system regarding the minority population. There is a need to focus on services to identify gaps. He asked residents to take the warnings and health advisements very seriously. Councilor Kirton asked to ensure the safety of residents residing in senior housing sites. He commended the Board of Education for providing the necessary resources to students with the introduction of Distance Learning from home.

Councilor Wong commended staff and town leadership for their hard work and committed during this time. She referenced several areas of concerns to be aware of such as: Domestic Violence statistics and specific resources, Health Disparities and overall health education for minority population that have been magnified with this pandemic. Councilor Wong recited one of her quotes: “The best defense is a good defense”.


Deputy Mayor Mann is hopeful that residents are managing through this emergency public health crisis. He noted that the Town is functioning well in practicing social distancing efforts. Deputy Mayor noted that it is not sure when this emergency will end, but bracing for significant economic changes for months or possibly years to come. The town budgetary process is already taking note of these changes and will continue to plan priority needs for the upcoming fiscal year. The goal is to minimize taxpayer exposure as much as possible.

Deputy Mayor also mentioned maintaining focus on short term and long term needs of the community while managing through this crisis. He suggested that the Town should identify shovel ready projects when the appropriate time is near. He expressed his excitement in the increase use of the bike trail, attracting neighborhood residents as well as others from town and surrounding areas.

He is also greatly and appreciative of all of the first responders, Social and Youth Services, Leisure Services, Senior Services departments for partnering with faith communities to deliver food to those in need. Social & Youth Services is requesting that donations to the Food Bank be in the form of monetary support to purchase gift cards to local grocery stores, Stop & Shop and Geissler’s.

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown commented on the last few months of incidents that have occurred in town such as: Double Homicide at Elizabeth’s and the COVID-19 pandemic. During these trying and unprecedented times, the Town has shown that it has “good fabric” being stretched but has kept its shape and form to be caring and loving. The Town Council and Town staff are doing the best that they can while leading the Bloomfield community to being the best Town it can be.

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown encouraged all to send their comments and concerns via the Town website. She mentioned a quote: “We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.” – Maya Angelou.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Councilor Kirton, seconded by Deputy Mayor Mann to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.
RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, there exists a global pandemic of Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19"); and

WHEREAS, the pandemic has resulted in the rapid spread of infections throughout the State of Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, the Governor declared a public health emergency and civil preparedness emergency throughout the State pursuant to sections 19a-131a and 28-9 of the General Statutes; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency pursuant to section 501 (b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121-5207 (the “Stafford Act”); and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020, the Town Manager declared that a state of emergency exists in the Town of Bloomfield as a result of the global pandemic of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, many residents and taxpayers are suffering financial hardship due to illness, business operations being suspended or ceased, layoffs and other complications due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on April 1, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order No. 7S which requires municipalities to implement, by action of its legislative body, one or both of two prescribed property tax relief programs; and

WHEREAS, the Deferment Program allows eligible (as defined by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management) taxpayers, businesses, nonprofits and residents who have suffered a significant adverse economic impact by COVID-19 and those that are providing relief to others significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to defer up to ninety days the payment of real property, personal property, and motor vehicles taxes; and

WHEREAS, the Low Interest Rate Program establishes a maximum interest rate of three (3) percent for certain delinquent tax payments on real property, personal property or motor vehicles due and payable; and

WHEREAS, both programs would benefit residents and taxpayers in the Town of Bloomfield who are struggling financially to deal with the effects of COVID-19.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD that the Town of Bloomfield shall participate in both the Deferment Program and the Low Interest Rate Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Manager shall forthwith notify the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management of the adoption of this Resolution.

Adopted this 13th day of April, 2020

________________________________________
Town Clerk
RESOLUTION

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Section 908 of the Town of Bloomfield Charter, that the below transfers of appropriations be approved:

The amounts below are free from encumbrances in the 2019-2020 General Fund budget:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FROM</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT/FUNCTION</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11736300-52231</td>
<td>Purchase of Riley Lumber Site</td>
<td>$1,314.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11733600-52231</td>
<td>Mountain Avenue Sidewalk</td>
<td>$9.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11733200-52231</td>
<td>Granby St. Pavement Rehab</td>
<td>$149,258.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39010000-52231</td>
<td>East Newberry Drain</td>
<td>$1,514.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11732900-52231</td>
<td>Lisa Lane Farm Improvements</td>
<td>$65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11733900-52231</td>
<td>Police Body Cameras</td>
<td>$64,096.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11733300-52231</td>
<td>330 Park Ave General Bld Imprv</td>
<td>$6,443.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39040000-52231</td>
<td>Senior Center Bus</td>
<td>$0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above amounts are to be transferred to the following departments in the 2020-2021 Capital Fund budgets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TO</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT/FUNCTION</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11726700-52231</td>
<td>Filley Park Improvements</td>
<td>$125,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11734900-52231</td>
<td>Tax Dept Security Imprv</td>
<td>$27,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11737400-52231</td>
<td>Police Needs Assessment</td>
<td>$50,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11737500-52231</td>
<td>Juniper Lane Underdrain</td>
<td>$19,186.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39131000-52231</td>
<td>Juniper Lane Underdrain</td>
<td>$1,514.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And it be further resolved, that an appropriation in the Town Capital Non-Recurring Fund be established in the amount of $50,000, funded from the above transfer for the project “Police Needs Assessment”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Name</th>
<th>List Number</th>
<th>Amount refunded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brown, Sheila A</td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
<td>$101.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooke Patricia</td>
<td>2018 RE</td>
<td>$888.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dingle Equipment</td>
<td>2018 MS</td>
<td>$4,699.27 DUPLICATE – TAXED ON PERSONAL PROPERTY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Ser Veh Trust</td>
<td>2018 MS</td>
<td>$291.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibson Anthony</td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
<td>$104.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holler Law Firm PAYMENT</td>
<td>2018 RE</td>
<td>$2,595.54 DUPLICATE REAL ESTATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honda Lease Trust</td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
<td>$654.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacobs Vehicle Systems</td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
<td>$36.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018 RE</td>
<td>$18,326.13 REMOVED I &amp; E PENALTY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nissan Infiniti LT</td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
<td>$222.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nissan Infiniti LT</td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
<td>$820.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peoples United Bank</td>
<td>2018 RE</td>
<td>$1,576.76 PAYMENT SENT IN ERROR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon Vanessa</td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
<td>$205.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarlett Latoya</td>
<td>2017 MV</td>
<td>$121.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toyota Lease Trust</td>
<td>2017 MV</td>
<td>$441.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
<td>$399.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancour Theodore Jrq</td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
<td>$92.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VW Credit Leasing LTD</td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
<td>$348.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$31,824.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>