

**BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**BUDGET MEETING – FY 2017/2018**  
**TOWN COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS**

There was a special meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held at 7:00 p.m. on **Thursday, March 30, 2017** for the purpose of discussion of the proposed Town of Bloomfield FY 2017/2018 budget.

Present were: Mayor Gamble, Deputy Mayor Schulman, Councilors Seldon, Washington, Rivers, Hypolite, Merritt and DeLorenzo

Also present were: Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager, James Wren, Director of Finance, Keri Rowley, Deputy Finance Director, Sharron Howe, Assistant to the Town Manager, Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Senior Services Director, Donald Harris, Chair – Bloomfield Board of Education and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Absent was: Councilor Neuwirth

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Council Deliberations**

Mr. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager and Mr. James Wren, Director of Finance presented the Council with a memorandum (dated March 28, 2017) regarding scenario adjustments to the proposed budget for FY 2017/2018.

**FY 2017/2018 Budget**

Mr. Philip Schenck, Jr., Town Manager recommended the following three scenarios for reducing the proposed FY 2017/2018 budget.

The three scenarios that were presented are:

#1 – Assumes adjusting revenue items only, as follows:

- Assuming the legislature reduces the Governor’s ECS reduction by half.
- Assumes that the Board of Education funding is reduced by one-half of the differential between the current Excess Cost funding and the Governor’s proposed Special education funding.
- Increases Interest Revenue, Tower Rent Revenue and Conveyance Fee Revenue Projections based on past history and/or new information.
- Reduces the Building Permit Revenue projection based on new information.

#2 – Assumes all of the above, plus:

- Removes funding of \$325,000 for the Town Hall boiler, which will instead be funded by current available capital funds. (In the last version we had not yet identified the full \$325,000).

#3 – Assumes all the above, plus:

- Reduces fixed costs related to medical insurance based on new information.

In addition, Mr. Wren provided projections of the General Fund Balance after amounts were subtracted for both the FY17 and FY18 budget years. Excluding the MDC reserve, and based on the current budget projection for FY18, the percentage is down to 15.96% of the budget by the end of FY18. Including the MDC Reserve, the percentage would be down to 15.30%. This percentage will fluctuate as the budget is adjusted.

**There was a brief Council discussion regarding the proposed budget scenario adjustments.**

Councilor Hypolite decided to choose Scenario #3 with the lowest tax increase of 2.68%. The Board of Education would receive \$41,569,124. Assuming the \$600,000 of \$1.2 million in revenues, the Board of Education reduction of \$500,000 in medical insurance expenses, which is not included in Scenario #3.

Initially, Mr. Schenck, Jr. proposed the budget increase of 2.72% for the Town and 3.29% for the Board. Mayor Gamble suggested that the BOE accept the same reduction as the town at 2.72%, for a savings of \$230,278 of the \$500,000.

Deputy Mayor Schulman stated he is willing to support Scenario #3 but is a bit risky. He disagreed with the added reduction without specificity and feels strongly about identifying the reason why. Deputy Mayor Schulman also stated that he would feel more comfortable with Scenario #1 or #2 without assuming the risk.

**It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Hypolite and voted unanimously to accept Scenario #3 as a base to begin discussion with the recommended 2.68% budget increase.**

Councilor Hypolite reviewed unspent funds with capital projects. He suggested funding half of the BOE from last year's budget. Councilor Hypolite also stated that he would support the \$230,000 and wanted to add \$50,000 to Social Services and Senior Services. This amount would be assigned to the Council contingency.

Mr. James Wren, Director of Finance did not contemplate the medical insurance expense savings in initial budget. This suggestion was reviewed with consultants to be legally and fiscally responsible from \$5.0 million to \$2.5 million. The BOE budgeted \$500,000 less with the reduction request of \$230,000 on the expenditure side and adding \$600,000 from revenue side assuming income is received from the State of Connecticut.

Councilor Seldon stated that he does not want to balance the budget based on income from seniors and children.

**It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Deputy Mayor Schulman to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$230,000.**

**VOTE:            AYE: J. Gamble, S. Schulman, J. Washington, L. Rivers, D. Seldon, P. DeLorenzo,  
                          J. Merritt  
                          NAY: None  
                          ABSTAIN: W. Hypolite**

**The motion passes 7-0-1.**

**It was moved Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Seldon to add \$50,000 each to the budgets of Social Services and Senior Services, totaling \$100,000. This amounts will be assigned to Council contingency to give maximum flexibility for funding.**

By adding \$100,000 to these two departments, the new percentage change is 2.49%.

It was noted that the Teacher's pension proposals are gaining traction with the state legislature and may be possibly phased in over the next 5 years.

Councilor DeLorenzo inquired about the impact of 2.49% on taxpayers. It was noted that the average household taxes increase range would be \$118.00 - \$229.00.

Mayor Gamble suggested to explore the possibility of consolidating several town departments with Board of Education departments such as: Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology and Public Works.

Councilor Hypolite stated that he was in favor of maintaining the budget line item of \$114,000 for Economic Development. An RFP has been issued for ongoing services and a thorough review is needed moving forward

Councilor Hypolite also requested that a representative of the Town Council should present the FY 2017/2018 budget at the Annual Town Meeting for ongoing services and a thorough review is needed moving forward

Councilor Hypolite also requested that a representative of the Town Council should present the FY 2017/2018 budget at the Annual Town Meeting.

**It was moved by Councilor Hypolite, seconded by Councilor DeLorenzo and voted unanimously to cancel the Special Meeting of the Town Council scheduled for April 4, 2017.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Washington and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.**