There was a regular meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, February 10, 2020 in Council Chambers, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

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

Also present were: Robert E. Smith, Town Manager, Sharron Howe, Assistant to the Town Manager and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRESENTATIONS

Black History Presentation

Ms. Valerie Lawson is a 12 year old, Bloomfield resident who is a student at Ethel Walker School in Simsbury, CT. Ms. Lawson shared her Black History moment entitled, “When I Become President”. She gave a brief presentation outlining her presidential agenda and vision in creating equity in healthcare, gun safety regulation and prevention of homelessness in America.

Proclamation on League of Women’s Voters

Mayor Suzette DeBeatham-Brown presented the League of Women’s Voters a proclamation for their 100th anniversary. The League of Women’s Voters was founded by leaders of the women’s suffrage movement. For 100 years, they have been a nonpartisan, activist, grassroots organization that believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

CITIZENS’ STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS

1. **Esther Simmons, 27 Ashley Court** moved to Bloomfield in 1998 and joined the Filley Park Committee in 2008. She requested that Council make Filley Park a top priority this budget season by allocated for funding to complete this project.

2. **Joseph Suggs, 10 Sandpiper Drive** commented on improving all Library facilities in Town. He inquired about any plans for renovations or possibly moving the P. Faith McMahon Library. The capacity at this library is limited relative to adequate space with meeting rooms, computer areas, teen space and children’s programs. Mr. Suggs recommended that library renovation plans should be thoroughly discussed with community engagement.
3. **Guthrie Sayen, 700 Bloomfield Avenue** addressed environmental and climate change concerns. He spoke about the importance of the democracy to survive and the responsibility should begin at the municipal level. Mr. Sayen also expressed concerns regarding water as a public trust resource with the State Water Plan. He noted that the MDC has made a fundamental mistake with commodity business agreements regarding high volume user discounts. He suggested to the Council to send a letter of support outlining opposing these discounts.

4. **Paula Jones, 5 Bear Ridge Drive** commented on MDC’s proposal to bring back high volume discounts for Niagara Bottling. (see written statement attached)

5. **Roseanne Azarian, 102 Wadhams Road** is the Co-Chair of the Filley Park Committee. She discussed the need to create a subgroup of this committee to focus solely on maintenance of the park once renovations are complete.

6. **Joan Geetter, 14 Shibah Way** is the Director of the Library Board. She inquired about appointment letters for the newly appointed Library Building Committee members as well as the request to appoint a teenager to the committee.

**COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEES**

**Community Services** - The next subcommittee meeting will be held on February 11, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. Councilor Wong noted that she will work on Community action items as a working committee.

**Administration & Education** – Councilor Kirton gave a detailed subcommittee report outlining the following topics of discussion:
- Building project updates from the Human Services Facility and Public Works Facility renovation.
- Zoning/Blight Enforcement Report
- Complete Streets Policy
- Affirmative Action Plan and Diversity Report - 2nd quarter

**Finance** – The next subcommittee meeting will be held on February 18, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

**Public Safety** – Councilor Gough gave a brief report of the last subcommittee meeting held. Topics of discussion included: decline in crime statistics, update on traffic calming, incident briefing, fire reports and EMS volunteer property tax abatement proposal.

**Committee on Committees** – The next scheduled subcommittee meeting will be held on February 18, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. Councilor Calhoun encouraged residents who are interested in serving on town boards or commissions to visit the town website and submit an interest form to the Town Clerk’s Office.

**Land Use & Economic Development** – There will be a Special Meeting of this subcommittee held on Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. The subcommittee will continue to discussion of baseline requirements and information for the Tax Increment Financing initiative.
COUNCIL BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

FY 19/20:36 - Consider and Take Action Regarding Approval of the Tempo Connect Software License and Service Agreement between the Town of Bloomfield and GPSI Leasing II-Accord, LLC (Wintonbury Hills Golf Carts)

It was moved by Councilor DeLorenzo, seconded Councilor Kirton and voted unanimously to adopt the following resolution:

The Town Council approves the Tempo Connect Software License and Service Agreement between the Town of Bloomfield and GPSI Leasing II-Accord, LLC as reviewed by the Town Attorney and recommend execution by the Town Manager on its behalf.

FY 19/20-37: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Guidelines for Recording/Televising Public Meetings

It was moved by Councilor Kirton, seconded by Councilor Wong to adopt the policy on Recording, Broadcasting or Photographing of Meetings.

VOTE: AYE: S. DeBeatham-Brown, R. Kirton, D. Wong, S. Calhoun
       NAY: J. Merritt, C.F. Politis, K. Gough, D. Mann, P. DeLorenzo
       ABSTAIN: None

The motion failed, 4-5-0.

Councilor Mann suggested changes to the draft policy including the following:

- 24-hour notification-compliance with Freedom of Information agenda timeframes
- Including the Mayor to administer this policy is a political response. The Town Manager or his/her designee is better suited than the Mayor.

Councilor Kirton thanked the Town Manager for drafting this policy. He gave a brief description of what occurred at the last Administration & Education Subcommittee meeting relative to attempts to record. Councilor Kirton stated that he is in agreement with the Town Manager and Mayor to be custodians of this policy. There was also a brief discussion regarding BATV to provide videotaping services for every Council and subcommittee meeting moving forward.

Councilor Merritt noted that having the Mayor be a part of administering this policy could appear as having political control over the media. This policy should also include covering all meetings to be recorded, with no political influence attached. He suggested changing the language to Town Manager or his/her designee.

Councilor Gough is in agreement with Councilors Merritt and Mann comments. The initial draft policy is a good foundation to deal with this issue. The policy should also include all town boards and committees. He noted that this is an administrative function regarding building management under reasonable discretion. It does not make sense to have two people to administer.

Councilor Gough referred to the Town Manager’s e-mail dated February 6, 2020, noting that this should not be a political issue:
“In the interest of remaining compliant with Freedom of Information Laws and Regulations, I would suggest, in the interim, that participation and behavior of the press and other individuals wishing to record Town meetings and functions, be directly referred to the Town Manager for facilitation, and that Council members refrain from direct communications with those parties with regard to recording or photographing public meetings.”- Robert Smith, Town Manager

He also addressed the request for a 24-hour notification prior to any meeting to be record, in comparison to the timing of when meeting notices are issued.

Mr. Smith’s response to his original e-mail about Recording Public Meeting provided cautionary notes intended to advise Council on Connecticut Freedom of Information guidelines until a policy is in place. He did not imply trying to tell Council that this is not an area they can’t work in.

Councilor Kirton reminded all that it is the responsibility of the Council set policy and the Town Manager’s job is to execute that policy.

Councilor Gough requested a point of order in Council proceedings, noting Councilor Mann’s request for a friendly amendment to the original motion. Councilor Mann did not request a friendly amendment and the agenda item was moved only for discussion purposes. Councilor Gough suggested to send this agenda to Administration & Education subcommittee for further discussion.

**REPORT FROM THE MAYOR**

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown attended the following events this past week:

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown and several other Councilors attended the grand openings of Chosen One Restaurant and Domino’s Pizza.

On Saturday, February 8, 2020, Prosser Library hosted the Women Power the Vote: A National League of Women Voters Workshop.

She announced the partnership with Dads Matter Too initiative. The Town of Bloomfield has been chosen to host their Annual Community Day and Food Truck Festival. This day will be filled with family fun, field day games, entertainment, food and recognition of fathers and the promotion of the fact that Dads Matter Too in the lives and success of their children.

In addition, the Mayor would like to collaborate with a new program for teens entitled “Youth Entrepreneurship Series: Up your Hustle”. This program is designed for middle and high students interested in becoming a young entrepreneur as a creator, artist, inventor or change maker. They will learn about creating and maintaining your own business, compete for cash prizes. This group will meet for 3 Saturdays at Prosser Library on January 25th, February 29th and March 28th.

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown encouraged residents participate in the Police Citizens Academy. The Academy is held at least once every year, for 12 weeks, to develop an informed group of citizens who will make others aware of the challenges that face the Police Department. Topics include: accident investigations, K-9 demonstrations, handling medical emergencies, juvenile law, domestic violence and much more. If you would like more information about enrolling in a future session, please contact Sergeant John Fox at: 860-242-5501 or e-mail him at j.fox@bloomfieldpolice.org.
The first Town Hall Meeting of 2020 will be held Thursday, February 13, 2020 at the Alvin and Beatrice Wood Human Services Facility, 330 Park Avenue. She encouraged all residents to come out and hear about the “State of our Town” and voice their concerns.

**Community Events and Programs**

*Leisure Services*
- Drop-In Basketball for residents - $25 yearly fee
- On Saturday, March 7, the Mad Science Workshop session will be held at 330 Park Avenue.
- Start Smart Basketball will begin on Saturday, March 7, 2020 - Cost $50.00 per session

*Library Services*
- Winter Reading Challenge
- On Thursday, February 20, 2020 from 7:00 – 9:30 p.m., Black History Happenings: Wintonbury Poetry Series will feature Bloomfield native James Black and Howard Faerstein of Massachusetts with Open Mic that follows.

*Social & Youth Services*
- Open-Mic Event for High School students will be held on Friday, February 28, 2020

**REPORT FROM TOWN MANAGER**

Mr. Robert E. Smith, Town Manager gave a detailed status report (see attached).

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Councilor Kirton, seconded by Councilor Wong and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of January 27, 2020 with noted corrections.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilor Gough commented in the Complete Street Policy. He gave brief background this project. Complete Streets are safe, comfortable and convenient transportation systems that serve everyone, regardless of how they choose to travel, whether that is by walking, bicycling, riding transit or driving. It was also noted that there is large participation of people who work in Bloomfield, of whom this also effects relative to economic and social justice concerns.

Councilor Gough mentioned his experience in learning about Transit Equity Day. “On February 4th, as part of a national campaign, Connecticut is taking action to demand that our local, state and federal governments make public transit accessible and affordable to all, create good jobs by expanding our public transit systems, and protect our health and climate by using renewable energy to power our buses and trains.

February 4 is proclaimed as Transit Equity Day to honor Rosa Parks on her birthday. Her act of resistance by refusing to give up her seat on the bus in 1955 was a catalyst for the civil rights movement. It affirmed that everyone has the right to equal access to public transit.” (Reference: www.ctclimateandjobs.org)
On February 7, 2020, he also attended CCM conference to learn more about Brownfield Redevelopment. In addition, he mentioned the Town of Vernon as a Silver Certification town with Sustainable CT. They are strong advocates of reusable water bottles and an e-mail has been send to CEEC for inquiry regarding Bloomfield efforts towards this movement.

Councilor Merritt commented on climate change and feels as though more work can be done on the municipal level.

Councilor Calhoun thanked Ms. Valerie Lawson and her family for presenting her Black History Moment and her supportive parents. She encouraged all to applaud each and every youth on their dreams and aspirations. Councilor Calhoun also spoke about the disenfranchisement of women voters and the importance of advocating for equity across the board.

Councilor Kirton also thanked Ms. Lawson for coming out to share her dreams. He commented and clarified the purpose of the Recording, Broadcasting or Photographing of Meetings Policy. The compliance issues with FOI and 24-hour notification is justified per state statute. Councilor Kirton expressed discontentment with Councilors Gough and Mann trying to “sensor” the Mayor. He is very disappointed with Council members targeting the Mayor. The Council chose her to be their leader and why would some want to micro manage and control her.

The Bloomfield Citizens group have requested to record meetings, in which Councilors Mann and Gough are members as well.

Overall, the draft policy presented is a great start!

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown stated that it is disingenuous when someone is recording only a portion of the meeting and not the entire meeting.

Councilor DeLorenzo thanked the Filley Park Committee for their maintenance subgroup proposal. He also commented on his reason for voted against the recording policy. Councilor DeLorenzo stated that he is unclear if some adjustments should be made regarding the issues with flash photography. He also requested clarification on the specific of what type of meetings are recorded.

Councilor DeLorenzo was very impressed Ms. Lawson and her dreams in becoming the President of the United States. He wished her all the best in her future endeavors.

Councilor Wong thanked Ms. Lawson for her words of wisdom and vision over her future. She also thanked the Filley Park Committee for their commitment and dedication to making sure all bases to move this project forward for sustainability are met. Councilor Wong commented on the library and creative ways to connect with the Town. She mentioned comments regarding MDC and suggested to Council that a letter should be drafted and concerns should also be expressed to Mr. Lester to advocate concerns.

Councilor Wong expressed disappointment with her colleagues with their approach of debating “hot topics” of contention and suggested that they choose a better environment to discuss issues of concern. Her ending quote stated “You teach a man, you teach a man, you teach a WOMAN, you teach a nation”. She also quoted Maya Angelou, “You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.”

Deputy Mayor Mann commented on the personal tone from Councilor Kirton on his comments. He referenced the lack of clarity during caucus discussions regarding questions asked about the recording policy. Deputy Mayor Mann also referenced the Town Ordinance relative to no elected officials have the power to administer anything. He stated that he was thrilled to meet and hear about Ms. Lawson and all of her accomplishments.
Deputy Mayor Mann stated that he attended a Black History Program at the University of Hartford honoring Nikki Giovanni. She was conferred Doctoral status for her work in Liberal Arts. He also mentioned the meaningful discussion about Brownfield Redevelopment discussion at the CCM conference. To close, Deputy Mayor Mann commented on a Gallop Report stating that twice the number of people visit libraries as well as going to the movies.

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown quoted Dr. Martin Luther-King Jr. "We've broken loose from...slavery and we have moved through the wilderness of legal segregation. Now we stand on the border of the promised land of integration." "Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love...Our aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the white man, but to win his friendship and understanding."

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 9:25 p.m., it was moved by Councilor Kirton, seconded by Councilor Wong and voted unanimously enter into Executive Session A – Pending Claims and Litigation with the Town Council, Town Manager, Assistant to Town Manager and Town Attorney.

At 9:48 p.m. to exit Executive Session A.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:49 p.m., it was moved by Councilor Merritt and Councilor Wong to adjourn the meeting.
Citizen’s Statement by Paula Jones
Bloomfield Town Council Meeting, February 10, 2020

Good evening Mayor and Council Members,

I’m here to comment on the MDC’s proposal to bring back high-volume discounts for Niagara Bottling. The discounts are being promoted as an “economic development rate” that would apply to any customer with a single meter when the average consumption for the month exceeds 600,000 gallons per day. Only Niagara would qualify. For Niagara there would be a 20% discount on water and a 75% discount on the Clean Water Project Charge (CWPC) for monthly water usage over the 600,000 gpd threshold. The MDC has twice tried to implement these high-volume discounts, but backed off due to public pressure.

Residents and businesses with both MDC water and sewer service now pay a combined charge of $8.07 per ccf of water used (water rate of $3.97 per ccf, CWPC rate of $4.10 per ccf). With these special discounts, Niagara would pay the same rate for the first 600,000 gallons per day, but only $4.20 per ccf (water rate of $3.18 per ccf, CWPC rate of $1.02 per ccf) for usage over 600,000 gallons per day. In other words, Niagara would get about a 50% discount for usage over 600,000 gallons per day.

MDC’s CEO, Scott Jellison, has claimed (at MDC meetings and in the press) that the MDC must offer these discounts in order to have lower water rates. He’s trying to wash away the bad taste of a 13.4% increase in our water rates by suggesting that it would have been lower if Niagara had these discounts and was using 1.2 Million more gallons of MDC water daily. But for Niagara to use that much more water, they’d need 4 bottling lines up and running at full capacity every day. They don’t have 4 lines installed – they have 3, all installed without the benefit of special discounts. They’d also have to be bottling 1.8 Million gallons of water every day – even in the dead of winter. That’s unlikely – water bottling is a seasonal business. There’s high demand in the summer and less demand the rest of the year, especially in winter.
Of course, where the real money is — and what the MDC avoids talking about — is the Clean Water Project Charge discount. That discount for Niagara would be 4 times the water discount. The MDC doesn’t talk about that and Mr. Jellison doesn’t talk about lowering residents’ CWPC rate, because that rate is likely to increase substantially, not go down.

I’d like to close by thanking the Council for passing forward-thinking policy on water. In November 2018 (11/13/2018 Town Council meeting), you unanimously passed a resolution titled “To Oppose Volume Discounts by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) and Support Conservation Pricing.” To quote:

"BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Bloomfield promotes a “conservation pricing” structure by the MDC, where there is basic low (subsidized) rate for every family up to the amount needed for basic activities of daily living and, from that point on, usage rate INCREASES with the volume of water used, in order to promote conservation, adequately fund the infrastructure, and promote long-term sustainable use of water."

The next step is for the MDC is to hold a public hearing on these discounts. Members of Save Our Water CT are monitoring the situation and will alert the public through facebook posts and Action Alerts when the hearing date is known.

Paula Jones

5 Bear Ridge Drive, Bloomfield
To: Bloomfield Town Councilors
From: Robert E. Smith, Town Manager
Date: 2/10/2020
Re: Manager’s Updates

The Budget Process Has Begun – Council’s first workshop proved very informative and beneficial to Staff. We’re looking forward to reviewing operational budgets and sharing information – internal reviews and revisions are ongoing.

Meetings with Alan Budkofsky (BATV) have proven beneficial – I believe BATV will be able to work with us to provide support/production of media to improve our civic engagement and transparency. Moving forward we’ll need help with the development and production of some materials we want to put in various media channels, and while we want to use internal staff as much as we can, we know we will need help beyond that. Alan indicates that is something that BATV can help us with, and I’ll be reporting what I find back to Council as we move forward with the budget process.

Work to promote the Census is ongoing and we are dedicated to ensuring a complete count for the Town. The Complete Count Committee and Staff are working diligently to engage other organizations and promote significant Town-wide impact.

Meetings with local industry are proving very informative, and I’m finding that they are having difficulty filling positions – and need more technically trained workers. On a related note, I am also reaching out to the Chamber, to more closely involve them in ribbon cuttings/openings. We recently had a very unique experience with Dominos Pizza – and I think we made a very positive
impression on Dominos Corporate! Included in our afternoon was pizza making, box folding, and the Mayor took an order over the phone!

Rickford Made Wings!

**Councillors present:**

Mayor DeBetham-Brown
S. Calhoun
K. Gough
R. Kirton
D. Wong
The Police Department, acting on complaints, investigated a private property and were denied access by the owner. Police found an illegal kennel, seized several dogs and relocated them for care and alternate housing. There are 10 Dogs in this picture below -

Records Indicate a Lack of Care.

Comparison of Found and/or Seized Canine Vet History, Vaccinations, and Preventative Care

- K9 FIoA Prevention (Prev. Care)
- K9 Influenza H3N2 (Prev. Care)
- Fecal Exam (Prev. Care)
- K9 Heartworm RX (Prev. Care)
- K9 Parvo (Other)
- K9 Leptospirosis (Other)
- K9 Bordetella (Other)
- K9 Distemper
- K9 Rabies
- Vet History

The chart shows the comparison of found or seized canine vet history, vaccinations, and preventative care with a color-coded representation indicating whether the care was up to date, no, expired, or never done.
Other Meetings:

1. I met with a developer working to bring residential apartments and commercial office space to Bloomfield – about $25M in value. We will report as soon as there is progress.
2. I’m in discussions with Habitat for Humanity to develop more housing impact across Bloomfield. We hope to have a development proposal together this year for Council to consider, which would bring significant new, market rate housing units to Town.
3. John Coleman and I discussed the Griffin Line (rail) – there may be interest in development of passenger service on this line, but study needs to occur first to define a project (if one exists) and examine feasibility.
4. I met with Kevin Maloney (CCM) to further discuss the services CCM has to offer, and will be considering use of some services that appear to have better cost or service metrics.
5. I’ll be following up with Vera (Chamber of Commerce) to coordinate ribbon cuttings and recognition of our businesses, as well as include the Chamber in our business visitation program – I’m hoping we can help strengthen the Chamber, and have closer relationships with our business community.
6. I met with Councilman Gough and we discussed long term views across Town Issues to consider land use and sustainability, and had an interesting recap of my meeting with CEEC the prior week.
7. I’ve worked through initial departmental operating budgets with all department heads, and am preparing information for the Town Hall Meeting.
8. We just concluded our first Outlook Training program, working with most of our departmental leadership as well as administrative support. We hope to get a lot more from the software we already have, by using more of its capabilities.
9. Working with Staff I have facilitated expedited repairs to one of our buses to get it back on the road – our ridership depends upon us for important transportation needs, and we are back rolling with a minimum compliment to serve our areas.
10. Staff and I met with BOE departmental leadership to discuss progress on the review and evaluation of opportunities to create shared services. We have selected a consultant to assist with the study and are under way to engage them.
11. Staff and I met with the Health District to examine feasibility of District Staff enforcing the Town’s Housing Code – which proved to be possible and likely more effective. Now that the holidays are over, we are re-energizing that effort, and introducing Aimee (Interim District Director) to the program so we can move forward together.
12. Work is ongoing to finalize the installation of the State Communications systems with our PD. The radio equipment shack is undergoing modifications to enhance cooling capacity and eliminate mold in the dated structure. A meeting with PD, DPW and both fire districts resolved matters and we are moving forward with HVAC installation.
13. The Lions and Rotary are working at the Middle School Dance this month to screen for eyesight and diabetes; I have connected them with the Health District, and we hope to evaluate a large number of children at the event.

14. Bloomfield Rotary has partnered with a Rotary in Moscow to leverage Rotary international funds to create a women’s shelter in Moscow. It’s estimated that the facility will treat 5,000+ women each year.
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**Budget Environment**

The following numbers have been taken from prior released budgets (actuals) to give some context to the existing financial environment and challenges faced by the Town.
ANOTHER 8.7% NEXT YEAR

NOTE - Fixed External Changes will Grow by

- Town Expenditures Grow 11.3%
- BOC Expenditures Grow 13.2%
- Fixed External Changes Grow -2.7%

7 Year Growth Rate

TOWN BOC TOWN BOC TOWN BOC TOWN BOC

Fixed Changes 2014 - 2020

EXTERNAL (MC, MIRA & Health Dist.)

Some Comparisons

Across the 7 year period, % share of the Tax Levy -

MTCO - Budget Environment - Manager's Notes
We believe that over $300K in Town services are provided by the Town to the School District, that are not accounted for across Finance, Youth Services and Public Works.

Macro - Budget Environment - Manager's Notes

(Operating, CIP & Debt)

Town & BOE - Annual Expenses by Year

Projected 2020

Actual 2019

Actual 2018

Actual 2017

Actual 2016

Actual 2015

Actual 2014