There was a regular meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, February 24, 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

Absent was: Councilor Patrick DeLorenzo

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Aliyah Robinson, Senior at Bloomfield High School sung “Lift Every Voice and Sing” in honor of Black History Month.

CITIZENS’ STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS

1. Valerie Bolden-Barrett, 32 Terry Plains Road commented on home repairs that were completed under the Housing Rehabilitation Program through the Town of Bloomfield in 2013. Mrs. Bolden-Barrett provided the Council with written documentation of communications between town officials and the State of Connecticut regarding the poor workmanship of repairs done within the housing program. (See attached) Mrs. Bolden-Barrett is requesting action from the Town to rectify her concerns and make the necessary repairs to fix her roof and other damages.

2. Meredith Johnson, 109 Boothbay Street presented an art painting that was commissioned to the Doll House Foundation. She is requested this piece of artwork to be displayed at the Human Services Facility located at 330 Park Avenue. Ms. Johnson also read a literature piece that correlates with the artwork.

3. Dennis Hubbs, 16 Brooke Street commented on the importance to finish the Filley Park project. He read a statement of support advocating to increase funding to complete this project. Mr. Hubbs asked the Council to make the completion of Filley Park a priority in 2020.

4. Paula Jones, 5 Bear Ridge Drive submitted comments via e-mail regarding her opinion with the draft policy on Recording/Televising Public Meetings, Policy #110.08. (See attached)
COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEES

Community Services - The next subcommittee meeting will be held on April 14, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Administration & Education – Councilor Kirton gave a brief subcommittee report of the Special Meeting held on February 19, 2020. The subcommittee discussed details regarding guidelines for Recording/Televising Public Meetings. There were several changes suggested in the draft policy and recommended to the full Council for approval.

Finance – Councilor Kirton gave a brief update of the last subcommittee meeting held on February 18, 2020. There were several items of discussion including 2018 Audit results and town revaluation updates.

Public Safety – The next subcommittee will be held on Monday, March 9, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Committee on Committees – Councilor Calhoun gave a brief report of the last subcommittee held on February 18, 2020. The subcommittee reviewed vacancies on several boards and commissions. They recommended appointments to the Board of Assessment and Appeals. There were several vacancies within the following boards/commissions: Bloomfield Recreation Committee, Beautification Committee, CEEC, EMS, Fair Rent Commission and Inland Wetlands Watercourse Commission. 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. The subcommittee will discuss the project timeline and define areas based on property tax values to project bonding capacity.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

FY 19/20-37: Consider and Take Action Regarding Guidelines for Recording/Televising Public Meetings (Policy 110.08)

It was moved by Councilor Gough, seconded by Councilor Kirton to table this agenda item until the next scheduled Council Meeting on March 9, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 19/20-38: Consider and Take Action Regarding Agreement between Bike Walk CT and the Town of Bloomfield

It was moved by Councilor Wong, seconded by Councilor Kirton and voted unanimously to authorize the Town Manager to enter into an agreement with Bike Walk CT (in order for the Discover Ride Series to commit to this event in Bloomfield)
FY 19/20-39: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding MIRA’s Statement of Interest (Connecticut Solid Waste System (CSWS) Redevelopment)

Mr. Robert E. Smith, Town Manager gave a brief overview of the request from MIRA regarding a Statement of Interest for the Connecticut Solid Waste System Redevelopment project. Mr. Smith recommended not to send a letter of support at this time. He suggested that the Council wait until a settlement has been reached with the State of Connecticut – Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), given the wide range of pricing that has been present in dialogue from $95 a ton to $130 a ton. In addition, there are some uncertainties regarding the procurement process as well as the agency that would execute the project.

FY 19/20-40: Consider and Take Action Regarding Appointment to the Board of Assessment Appeals

It was moved by Councilor Calhoun, seconded by Councilor Kirton and voted unanimously to approve the following appointments to the Board of Assessment Appeals, with term ending November 2021, no disclosure required:

- William Ortiz (D), 3 Hampton Lane
- Harriette S. Howard (D), 7 Spice Bush Lane
- Meredith Johnson (U), 109 Boothbay Street

FY 19/20-41: Consider and Take Action Regarding Tax Refunds

It was moved by Councilor Kirton, seconded by Councilor Gough and voted unanimously to approve the tax refunds (per the attached list) in accordance with the memorandum dated February 19, 2020.

REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

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

On February 25, 2020 at 6:30 p.m., Prosser Library will host the Science Explorer’s Club from youth ages 7 and up.

Also, at Prosser Library a Diabetes Self-Management Workshop will be held beginning on Thursday, March 5, 2020 from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. for 7 weeks.

On April 16, 2020, the Bloomfield Citizens Academy will begin its spring session. More details to follow.

Access Health has extended the Special Enrollment period. Interested individuals can contact the West Hartford Bloomfield Health District for more information.

Census 2020 is here! The Census Committee has been thinking of innovative ways to ensure that everyone is counted 100%, which equals funding for the community. The first mailer will be distributed by the end of March. Mayor DeBeatham-Brown encouraged all residents to complete this mailer and return it.
REPORT FROM TOWN MANAGER

Mr. Robert E. Smith, Town Manager thanked Council for participating in all of the preliminary Capital Improvement/Operational Budget workshops. The draft budget will be completed and sent to the printer this week.

He has also developed an Interim Team for the Department of Public Works due to the resignation of their Director John Lawlor.

Mr. Smith mentioned the overall success of the first Town Hall Meeting of 2020 entitled “The State of our Town”.

Mr. Smith commented on the tragedy that occurred over the weekend at Elizabeth’s Restaurant. The Town will continue to work with local businesses and the Police Department to ensure safety of patrons and the overall business environment. He ended condolences on behalf of the Town and leadership to the victims’ families.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor Calhoun, seconded by Deputy Mayor Mann and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of February 10, 2020.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Politis encouraged residents to volunteer their time, get involved and work towards making a better Bloomfield.

Councilor Gough thanked Ms. Meredith Johnson for her artwork dedication to the Town, inviting visual and written art displays throughout town buildings. In addition, the Economic Development Commission is also looking to showcase the arts, in the hopes of bringing businesses and people together.

He also thanked the Octagon Bicycling Club for their participation in Bike Walk CT and hosting this event with Town of Bloomfield. He thanked the Filley Park Committee and their diligence for advocating to complete the park project. Councilor Gough commented on the development of the Complete Streets Policy. He is hopeful that work will be done to minimize exposure of utility lines.

Councilor Merritt encouraged unaffiliated individuals to join local boards and commissions. He commented on the level of funding and all pending projects that the Town can’t afford to complete all. Councilor Merritt commented on the incremental cost to finish the East Coast Greenway bike path, which is seven miles throughout town, including the installation of sidewalks along Park Avenue.

Councilor Calhoun mentioned that Negro History Week was established in 1926, moved into Black History Month in 1970, a way of remembering important people and events in the history of the African diaspora. African Americans should honor their culture 365 days a year and should also be uplifted moving forward. Councilor Calhoun encouraged the community to come out and support the upcoming budget meetings, which will begin in March.

Councilor Kirton thanked everyone that came out to the Council meeting. He commented on the double homicide that occurred over the weekend. He encouraged everyone to show more love and compassion for your neighbors.
He commended the Bloomfield Police Department on their excellent investigative work. Bloomfield is a safe community and asked everyone to continue to support the local businesses in Town.

Councilor Wong thanked the Filley Park Committee for their overall commitment and advocacy efforts for the park. She also stated that she is excited about Bike Walk CT coming to Bloomfield. Councilor Wong thanked the soloist, Aliyah Robinson for uplifting the community with her voice. She extended her thoughts and prayers to the families of the victims murdered in Bloomfield over the weekend. Councilor Wong ended her comments with this quote: “There is a saying in Tibetan, ‘Tragedy should be utilized as a source of strength.’ No matter what sort of difficulties, how painful experience is, if we lose our hope, that's our real disaster.” - Dalai Lama XIV

Councilor Mann expressed his excitement regarding Bike Walk CT event that will be hosted in the Town of Bloomfield. He commented on creating more connectivity for all in Town. He encouraged all to come out and be a part of the FY 2020/2021 budgeting process. The lack of potential funding from the federal and state government will have an impact on local municipal decision for funding programs and services.

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown reminded residents of the Annual Town Meeting for the presentation of the FY 2020/2021 budget on Monday, May 4, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. – Bloomfield High School Auditorium. The official budget discussions will begin on Thursday, March 12, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. with the Board of Education and Town Manager.

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown also commented on the weekend tragedy that took two lives here in Bloomfield. She encouraged everyone to learn to converse again, with social media, texting and all electronic media, the community has lost the ability to connect one on one. The Town of Bloomfield has “good fabric” and is the greatest place to work, live and play. She asked the community to be a part of strengthening those resolves in making Bloomfield great! She ended her comments with a quote, “If we as a people realized the greatness from which we came we would be less likely to disrespect ourselves.” - Marcus Garvey

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:20 p.m., it was moved by Councilor Kirton and Deputy Mayor Mann to adjourn the meeting.
The attached requests for refunds of property taxes are submitted for your approval in accordance with Section 12 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

All of these requests have been reviewed by the Assessor.

The refund for Bluestone Landscapes was due to Assessor’s adjustments to the taxes paid.

The refunds for Newberry Bloomfield, Ronald Peikes and Torrington Savings bank are due to double payments.

The refund for Toyota is due to several leased vehicles that the Assessor’s office adjusted due to ending a lease, disposal of vehicles, or no longer registered in Bloomfield.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Name</th>
<th>List Number</th>
<th>Amount refunded</th>
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<tr>
<td>Best Brandon</td>
<td>2017 MS</td>
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<td>Bluestone Landscapes</td>
<td>2016 PP</td>
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<td>2017 PP</td>
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<td>2018 PP</td>
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<td>Fletcher Neville</td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2017 MS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2017 MV</td>
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<td>Gooden Joslyn</td>
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<td>Jones Allan</td>
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<td>Lowrie-Morris Marvette</td>
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<td>McGrath John &amp; Mcgrath Kristen</td>
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<td>Modrick Melanie</td>
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<td>Nolan Services</td>
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<td>Ron Peikes Trustee for Curtis</td>
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<td>Heyward</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Torrington Savings Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toyota Lease Trustee</td>
<td>2018 MV</td>
<td>$1,403.42                Several Leased Vehicles</td>
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<td><strong>Total Refunds:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$16,532.70</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Hi India, my apologies - misspelled your last name in my first attempt to copy you.

Paula

------- Forwarded message -------
From: Paula Jones <paulajones4276@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2020 at 10:10 AM
Subject: Comment on Agenda item 19/20-37 – Consider and Take Action Regarding Guidelines for Recording/Televising Public Meetings (Pol. 110.08)
To: Robert Smith <rsmith@bloomfieldct.org>, Suzette DeBeatham-Brown <sbrown@bloomfieldct.org>, <dmann@bloomfieldct.org>, <scalbourn@bloomfieldct.org>, <pdelorenzo@bloomfieldct.org>, <kgough@bloomfieldct.org>, <skirton@bloomfieldct.org>, <jmerritt@bloomfieldct.org>, <fpolitis@bloomfieldct.org>, <dwong@bloomfieldct.org>
Cc: <showe@bloomfieldct.org>, <irogers@bloomfieldct.org>

I am unable to attend tonight’s Council Meeting, so would like to submit this comment.

If the Town is to adopt Guidelines for Recording/Televising Public Meetings, such guidelines should not discriminate or be barriers to recording. I encourage the Council to take another look at this policy and not pass it as presented. I am particularly troubled by Part IV Section A of the proposed policy – particularly the 24-hour notice requirement – and can think of 3 issues with it:

1. This section is unenforceable, but seems designed to imply that without 24-hours notice, someone can’t record. It’s impossible to apply consistently to individuals, news organizations, and private groups. I think a case can be made that it is discriminatory, or, at the very least, it can be perceived that way. Did all the news organizations that filmed the Town Hall meeting on February 13th provide 24 hours notice? Did they all notify the Mayor? The Town Manager? I doubt it.

2. Our Town’s track record posting meetings isn’t perfect and never will be. (No town can achieve perfection in this regard.) For example, no agenda has ever been posted on the Committee on Committees webpage for the February 18, 2020 meeting. How would one know to notify the Manager, Mayor, and Chairperson Calhoun? How is anyone supposed to know for certain that a meeting will even be held? By physically checking at the Town Clerk’s office on a daily basis to see if meetings have been cancelled or rescheduled? A 24-hour notice is not a practical requirement for the public.
3. Agendas are often revised and items added or deleted on short notice. For example, here is the history of agenda postings for the January 21, 2020 Finance subcommittee meeting (where video and flash photography were used in recording a portion of the meeting, but no objections were raised): Submitted on January 15, 2020 – 5:21 PM, Revised on January 17, 2020 – 2:01 PM, Revised on January 20, 2020 – 2:01 PM, Revised on January 21 – 10:23 AM. A second recent example would be the Finance subcommittee meeting on February 18. “Presentation from Metropolitan District Commission (MDC)” is shown on the agenda posted on the town website, but apparently that item was pulled from the agenda prior to the meeting with no reposting of the agenda. Requiring someone to provide 24 hours notice of intent to record when agendas are in flux is not practical.

I know that our Town Manager, Mr. Smith, has indicated that he’s working on arrangements for BATV to film Town Council Subcommittee meetings. That’s great - it can’t happen soon enough. In the meantime, please hit the pause button and reconsider more broadly the implications of this policy as drafted.

Thank you for your consideration.
Paula Jones
5 Bear Ridge Drive
TO: Bloomfield Town Council
FROM: Valerie Bolden-Barrett
RE: Damages to My Home resulting from the Housing Rehabilitation Program
DATE: February 24, 2020

I originally came before the Council on May 28, 2019, to tell the members about my experience with the town's 2013 Housing Rehabilitation Program. I described the deterioration of my home from water damage due to the shoddy reconstruction of my roof by the subcontractors hired to do the job.

With no response from the town to my complaint, I asked the state Housing Department to intervene, and it assigned Mr. Miguel Rivera to my case. Mr. Rivera reportedly met with the town's planning director, Jose Giner, to discuss the matter on Aug. 24, 2019. I thought I would be allowed to attend the meeting, but Mr. Rivera informed me that I would not be included.

I emailed Mr. Rivera about the meeting with Mr. Giner when I didn’t hear back from him after two weeks had passed. He finally responded with the email (No. 1) that I’m submitting to the Council. In that email, he wrote about a pending resolution, a resolution that has not yet transpired.

I’m also submitting to the Council an email (No. 2) from Mr. Rivera’s boss, Steve Dielila, in which he stated that Mr. Rivera would give me an update on my case. However, to date, I’ve received no update from Mr. Rivera.

And I’m submitting to the Council an email from Att. Marc Needleman’s (No. 3), which includes an insufficient offering of $10,000 for the repairs, despite my quotes from contractors for the costs. The email also includes his statement accusing me of basically “fleeing” the town by asking to be compensated for more than what he said I was due.

Finally, I’m submitting an earlier email (No. 4) from former town hall planner, Thom Hooper, who told me that the total cost for the repairs after the rehab was completed was $25,694.47. The town actually paid the contractor $22,000. It appears the town was prepared to hold me accountable for $3,000 more than what it paid the contractors. I had asked Mr. Hooper several times for an itemization of all the repairs, which all homeowners in the program should have been entitled to, but the total cost was all that he sent me. This was one just one of the failed responsibilities of the town under the program.

Meanwhile, the damaged areas in my home continue to deteriorate. Large cracks have opened in the ceiling below the roof line, the walls continue to swell and peel in the affected areas and both the first- and second-floor bathroom windows leak when it rains due to the over-saturation of water. The windows need replacing. The longer the delays in settling this matter, the costlier it will be.

I’m asking the Council for a resolution.

Valerie Bolden-Barrett
32 Terry Plains Road
Bloomfield, Ct
860-680-8608 (cell)
860-503-3343 (home)
Good morning, Ms. Bolden-Barrett.

The conversation with Mr. Giner went very well.

Mr. Giner is working on a workout that must be reviewed by the administration prior to him contacting you.

The workout must meet the compliance requirements of the program and I believe what was discussed will accomplish everyone’s needs.

Thank you.
Miguel Rivera
ivMr. Rivera will reach out to you with an update.

Steve

Steve DiLella
Director of Individual and Family Support Program Unit
Connecticut Department of Housing
860-270-8081

From: vybolden@att.net [mailto:vybolden@att.net]
Sent: Friday, November 1, 2019 6:10 PM
To: DiLella, Steve <Steve.DiLella@ct.gov>
Subject: Bloomfield, CT, Housing Rehabilitation Program

Dear Mr. DiLella,

As you may know, Mr. Miguel Rivera intervened on my behalf with the Town of Bloomfield on problems I’m having with the faulty roofing work that was done on my home under the town’s mismanagement of the Housing Rehabilitation Program.

I was excluded from the meeting between Mr. Rivera and the town planner, Jose Giner, so I’m not certain about what transpired. However, Mr. Rivera did give me a brief update after the meeting, which led me to believe that he and Mr. Giner worked out a resolution. Three months have passed and I’ve heard nothing from any of the parties, even after sending an email to Mr. Rivera and Mr. Giner. I’ve retained copies of those emails.

I had hoped that Mr. Rivera would have followed up on the matter. Evidently, the meeting and what Mr. Rivera told me transpired wasn’t done so in good faith. Meanwhile, my home continues to deteriorate from the shoddy roofing and the town’s mismanagement of the program. We’re already moving into the winter season with no compensation offered up to cover the complete cost of repairs. I sent Mr. Rivera quotes from contractors, so he’s aware of the costs.

If you would kindly update me on the situation, I’d be very grateful. Then I’ll know how to proceed from here going forward.

Sincerely,

Valerie Bolden-Barrett
860-680-8608 (mobile)
860-503-3343 (home)
From: Marc Needelman <marc.needelman@mnnlaw.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2019 4:59 PM
To: Eric Rothauser <erothauser@bw-law.com>
Cc: Jose Giner (jginer@bloomfieldct.org) <jginer@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: RE: Bolden-Barrett

Funny how she's looking for an amount equal to what her original debt was.

Here's our bottom line. We will give her $10,000.00 to be used towards repairs. In return, she will execute the Note and Mortgage never finalized.

Marc N. Needelman
Town Attorney

Tel.: 860.242.7174
Fax: 860.242.8291

Email: marc.needelman@mnnlaw.com

URL: needelmanlaw.com
Valerie,

The consultant is finishing up the calculations for all of our rehab projects and sent me the figures for your home late yesterday. It looks like the total cost for all the work completed at your home is $25,694.47. While this is still a working figure, we don’t think it will change at this point.

Once all the projects are completed, we will have the paperwork prepared to record that dollar amount in the Town Clerk’s office. This loan will be payable upon the transfer of the home. As with our previous rehab program conducted in the late 1980’s, there will be no interest on the loan so the figure will not increase over time.

Thom Hooper
Director of Planning
Town of Bloomfield