There was a regular meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, April 11, 2022 via Zoom Webinar virtual meeting platform.

Present were: Mayor Danielle Wong, Deputy Mayor Gregory C. Davis, Councilors Joseph Merritt, Kenneth McClary, Rickford Kirton, Shamar Mahon, Suzette DeBeatham-Brown, Anthony C. Harrington and C.F. Politis

Also present were: Stanley D. Hawthorne, Town Manager, Sharron Howe, Assistant to the Town Manager, Keri Rowley, Finance Director, David Melesko, Director of Leisure Services, Town Attorney Marc Needelman, Nancy Haynes, Risk and Purchasing Manager and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Guest was: James Nytko, Local Government Solutions Consultant

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

The following individuals gave a brief overview and status update of the Juneteenth Celebration scheduled for June 18 – 19, 2022:

- Blue Hills Fire Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai
- Blue Hills Fire Commissioner Donna Banks
- Blue Hills Fire Captain Vincent Jaunai
- Blue Hills Fire Chief Willie Jones
- Barbara Taylor

They also requested Town Council support and co-sponsoring of the Juneteenth Celebration event in June.

REPORT FROM COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEES

Administration & Education – The meeting scheduled on April 4, 2022 was cancelled due to the FY 2023 Budget Council Deliberations. The meeting will be rescheduled to a later date in April.

Public Safety – Deputy Mayor Davis gave a brief report of the last subcommittee meeting on April 11, 2022. He reported crime statistics, increase in larcenies, traffic calming measures and use of force incidents. Deputy Mayor Davis gave a brief summary of both districts and EMS reports.
Committee on Committees – Councilor DeBeatham-Brown noted that the Town Clerk is still in receipt of interest forms from both Town Committees and new leadership for the Democratic Town Committee that will take place in April.

Finance – Councilor McClary gave a brief status report of the last subcommittee special meeting held on April 7, 2022. Topics of discussion included: ARPA-Community Survey. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on April 18, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Land Use & Economic Development – The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for April 19, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Golf Ad-Hoc Committee – The next scheduled meeting is for April 13, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Community Services – The regularly scheduled meeting on April 12, 2022 was cancelled due to the scheduling for the Council Retreat. A special meeting date to be announced.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2022-62: Consider and Take Action regarding the American Rescue Plan Act – Strategic Neighbor Engagement & Resiliency Plan and Community Outreach Survey

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Harrington to approve the Strategic Neighbor Engagement & Resiliency Plan and Community Outreach Survey for the American Rescue Plan Act funds as outlined in the attachments. (See attached)

NAY: R. Kirton
ABSTAIN: None

The motion passes 8-1-0.

Discussion

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown inquired about the cost to the Town for consultant services. It was noted that the monthly retainer is $4,000 per month. There are no outside cost of the normal ARPA consultant fees.

Councilor Kirton inquired about the actual total cost over the length of the program. He does not recommend the need to pay consultant fees from the balance of $1.6 million dollars. Every dollar should be dedicated to the needs of the community.

Mr. Stanley D. Hawthorne, Town Manager noted that the Consultant was hired by approval of the Council. He also explained the community engagement process and the use of electronic survey methods for easier access. Mr. Hawthorne mentioned that there is no personnel on staff to handle the level of ARPA survey or monitoring. He suggested a possible use of the consultant to garner other funding resources with the Federal Infrastructure grants.

Deputy Mayor Davis noted the importance of having assistance and expertise in monitoring.
Councilor DeBeatham-Brown inquired about additional methods to engage the public. There are plans in place to conduct virtual Town Hall meetings, public hearings, community forums, etc.

Mayor Wong noted the importance of having a consultant, an auditor, compliance and filing of paperwork.

Councilor Politis stated that it is essential to have accurate reporting on all projects.

Councilor Merritt suggested having the consultant research other grant opportunities.

**FY 2022-63: Consider and Take Action regarding Tax Refunds**

It was moved by Councilor McClary, seconded by Councilor Merritt and voted unanimously to approve tax refunds (per the attached list) in accordance with the memorandum dated April 6, 2022.

**FY 2022-64: Discussion and Possible Action regarding Co-Sponsoring the Juneteenth Celebration with Blue Hills Fire District along with Councilor Suzette DeBeatham-Brown (and in Partnership with the Town of Windsor)**

It was moved by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown, seconded by Councilor Merritt to approve the Co-Sponsorship of the Juneteenth Celebration with the Blue Hills Fire District.

Councilor Mahon offered a friendly amendment to add the approval of an allotment of $15,000 from Council Contingency to support the Co-Sponsorship for the Juneteenth Celebration.

The maker and seconder of the original motion accepted this friendly amendment. The vote was unanimous of the original motion to also include the allotment of $15,000 from Council Contingency for the Co-Sponsorship of Juneteenth Celebration.

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown provided context to this event. It is a Celebration for the Town. She mentioned the collaborations of Blue Hills Fire and community events. She is requesting timely support to meet the deadline for the permit application to the State of Connecticut – Department of Transportation (DOT).

All Councilors expressed their support the Juneteenth Celebration and Co-Sponsoring with the Blue Hills Fire Department.

Mr. Hawthorne provided the Council with summary of estimated costs to the Town for supporting this event. He suggested the request of $15,000 from Council Contingency for the Juneteenth Celebration.

**FY 2022-65: Discussion and Possible Action regarding Location of Summer Concerts**

It was moved by Councilor McClary to refer this item to the Community Services Subcommittee for further review and recommendation.

There was no second on the original motion, motion failed.
There was an ensued discussion regarding possible locations and frequency of changing locations. In addition, there were comments regarding placement of agenda motions and appropriateness of referral to Council subcommittees.

There were also comments about the Round Robin idea, switching locations every week. Then, there were concerns raised about continuity in one location. Deputy Mayor Davis noted the importance to rely on staff to come with suggested recommendations to consider.

Motion to Reconsider

It was moved by Councilor McClary, seconded by Councilor Merritt to refer this item to the Community Services Subcommittee for further review and recommendation.

VOTE: 

AYE: S. Mahon, D. Wong, C.F. Politis, K. McClary, A. Harrington, G. Davis
NAY: R. Kirton, J. Merritt
ABSTAIN: None

The motion passes, 6-2-0.

Councilor Kirton reiterated his request for this agenda item be considered a discussion point regarding summer concerts location. This was only suggested to direct staff with a location obtained from the consensus of the Town Council.

Councilor McClary stated that in order to make an informed decision, Councilor DeBeatham-Brown did not vote due to technical difficulties.

FY 2022-66: Discussion and Possible Action regarding Settlement of Pending Litigation

This item was discussed during Executive Session.

REPORT FROM MAYOR

Mayor Wong did not have anything to official to report. She mentioned that she is committed to work diligently with the Town Manager about having a more concise agenda of items for consideration.

REPORT FROM TOWN MANAGER

Mr. Stanley D. Hawthorne, Town Manager gave an overview of his bi-weekly report, referring to the bi-weekly report sent to the Council from April 9, 2022 (see attached). He noted that these reports are posted on the town website for public review under the Town Manager’s webpage.

Mr. Hawthorne also briefly commented on the FY 2023 budget workshops. He noted that all workshops were detailed and informing. The Town Staff and Town Council were engaged in well versed discussion regarding the FY 2023 Town Budget. The Town Council Recommended the FY 2023 Town Budget to the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for Monday, May 2, 2022.
Mayor Wong thanked the Town Manager and Town Staff for an excellent presentation and budget process for the FY 2023 Town Budget.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

There were no minutes available for approval.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilor Mahon echoed some of the sentiments from Mayor Wong really the appreciation of Town Administration and staff for developing a comprehensive and detailed budget. He excited that there was a decrease in the mill rate for Bloomfield residents.

Councilor Politis agreed on the presentation of the budget workshops. They were detailed and provided accuracy to assist Councilors with making good informed decisions.

Councilor Kirton thanked the Town Manager and Town Staff for a great budget presentation. He expressed concerns about the future of funding new town initiatives with a reduction of $8 million dollars in next year’s budget, no $2.7 fund balance and $4.6 ARPA funding. Councilor Kirton encouraged the Council and Town Manager to develop plans to generate more growth and revenue in the Grand List.

Councilor Merritt noted his discontent about the FY Council Recommended Budget. He stated that voting against the Board of Education budget ask will jeopardy teacher employment due to potential budget cuts. Councilor Merritt wants to invest more into the school system, to support the success of the students as well as a positive work environment for teachers and faculty.

Councilor Harrington echoed some of the concerns regarding the Board of Education budget. Overall, decisions that were made will give the Town, the best opportunity to revamp roads, provide sidewalks and address water issues in various neighborhoods.

Deputy Mayor Davis clarified that the Board of Education was not cut, it was a recommended increase of 4.5%. He thanked all of his colleagues for the long hours and deliberation of Council to recommend the FY 2023 Town Budget to the Annual Town Meeting. Deputy Mayor Davis believes that the Council passed a thoughtful and responsible budget. He also noted the importance of being able to deliberate on certain topics, inviting all of Council to subcommittee meetings is recommended.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**
At 9:02 p.m., it was moved by Councilor Mahon, seconded by Councilor Merritt and voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session A. – Discussion Concerning Pending Claims and Litigation with the Town Council, Town Manager, Assistant to the Town Manager and Town Attorney.

At 9:35 p.m., Town Council exited Executive Session and entered into Regular Session.

**REGULAR SESSION**

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Davis, seconded by Councilor Merritt that the town be authorized to enter into Stipulated Judgment in the pending tax appeal of Cheri Cohn vs. Town of Bloomfield, concerning the real/personal property located at 148 Balbrae Dr., Bloomfield, CT for a Fair Market Value of $174,481.00, and an Assessed Value of $122,137.00.

**VOTE:**
NAY: R. Kirton
ABSTAIN: None

The motion passes 8-1-0.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Davis, seconded by Councilor Merritt that the town be authorized to enter into Stipulated Judgment in the pending tax appeal of GRS Realty, LLC vs. Town of Bloomfield, concerning the real/personal property located at 1 Griffin Road South, Bloomfield, CT for a Fair Market Value of $8,750,000.00, and an Assessed Value of $6,125,000.00.

**VOTE:**
NAY: R. Kirton
ABSTAIN: None

The motion passes 8-1-0.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Davis, seconded by Councilor Mahon that the town be authorized to enter into Stipulated Judgment in the pending tax appeal of Walden Ave. Blend vs. Town of Bloomfield, concerning the real/personal property located at 848 Cottage Grove Rd., Bloomfield, CT for a Fair Market Value of $2,750,000.00, and an Assessed Value of $1,925,000.00.

**VOTE:**
NAY: R. Kirton
ABSTAIN: G. Davis
The motion passes 7-1-1.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Davis, seconded by Councilor Merritt that the town be authorized to enter into Stipulated Judgment in the pending tax appeal of Club Camel vs. Town of Bloomfield, concerning the personal property located at 107 Old Windsor Road, Bloomfield, CT for an Assessed Value of:

10/1/16:  G.L.: $73,290.00  
10/1/17:  G.L.: $89,420.00  
10/1/18:  G.L.: $83,270.00  
10/1/19:  G.L.: $78,890.00  
10/1/20:  G.L.: $75,290.00  
10/1/21:  G.L.: $67,760.00

**VOTE:**  AYE: D. Wong, G. Davis, A. Harrington, S. Mahon, C.F. Politis, J. Merritt, K. McClary, S. DeBeatham-Brown  
NAY: R. Kirton  
ABSTAIN: None

The motion passes 8-1-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Mahon and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.