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BLOOMFIELD, CT

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

There was a special meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held on Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. in a hybrid meeting style. The in-person meeting location was Bloomfield Town Hall – Council Chambers, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT, and the virtual location was via Zoom.

Councilors present were: *In-Person:* Mayor Harrington; Councilors Cooper; Mahon, Merritt, Oliver & Waterhouse (joined at 7:20 p.m.); *via Zoom:* Deputy Mayor Lloyd; Councilors DeBeatham-Brown (joined at 9:10 p.m.) & Goodwin

Councilors absent were: None

Also present were: *In-Person*—Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Director of Senior Services; Annatouchur Kingland, Senior Administrative Assistant; Warren Plumber, Director of Information Technology & Innovation; India Rodgers, Director of Operations & Communications; Alvin D. Schwapp, Jr., Town Manager; Sharron Tai-Williams, Deputy Town Manager; *and via Zoom*—Lynda Laureano, Assistant Director of Building & Land Use

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Public Hearing - FY2027 Town Manager Proposed Budget

There was a public hearing to solicit public input for the consideration of the budget for the Town of Bloomfield for Fiscal Year 2027.

Mayor Harrington outlined the budget process. He reported that the FY27 budget will not include cuts to waste collection; to Senior Services; to Social & Youth Services; nor to Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services.

Public Hearing Comments:

1. **Ruth Hanks, 10 Applewood Road**, expressed concern about the consequences of eliminating trash pickup and recommending looking into ways to remove food waste from trash.

2. **Eunice Medwinter, 46 Newport Drive**, thanked Public Works for the great job they did with snow removal over the winter. She spoke against trash removal, and asked how the Town was able to give bonuses in 2024-2025.

3. **Mark Slitt, 7 Bathcrescent Lane**, echoed removing food from the waste stream, highlighting the Town's prior composting pilot program. He spoke against the Town Manager's proposed budget, and noted that the Town Manager does not live in town as required.

4. **John Forlenza Bailey, 12 Kensington Park**, stated that taxes were raised last year and that the budget did not seem thought out for taxpayers.

5. **Mark Sanderson, 17 Oak Lane**, reported feeling that the budget was a political ploy that did not include input from the Council. He highlighted cuts that he thought could be made at Town Hall, including to Communications & Operations. He spoke to concerns about where money was going,

highlighting MDC and the Crumbie Law Group, and to the amount of money made by the Town Manager's Office.

6. **Robert Berman, 8 Hiram Lane**, spoke to how the budget was presented compared to Town Charter requirements. He expressed concern about potential inaccurate numbers in the budget, comparing them to recent Finance subcommittee data.

7. **Stanley Sorkin, 10 Muirfield Lane**, reported that he is the present of the Greens Edge Gillette Ridge Association comprised of 168 homes. He stated that he was glad that trash collection would not be removed, but was concerned about the budget and increased taxes caused by revaluation. He also confirmed that pool services would be restored.

8. **Joan Geetter, 14 Shibah Way**, requested that the proposed library positions be filled, and spoke to all the services that the library offers.

9. **John, young student**, requested that the rec center and pool be funded, offering to donate money from his piggy bank, and speaking to the impact the rec center and pool have had on him.

10. **Faith Taffe, 18 Englewood Ave.**, noted that she brought her son to the meeting to show the power of advocacy, and asked everyone for the opportunity to hear each other out. She spoke to her concern in seeing certain items, such as a dog park and increased salaries, included in the budget, and activities that impact families being cut. She spoke in favor of keeping the rec center and the positive benefits it offers to the community.

11. **Roy Duncan, 18 Barn Hill Road**, expressed frustration with the proposed budget. He noted concern that Council did not give the Town Manager guidance on budget goals and expectations and that the budget did not comply with the Town Charter. He expressed displeasure with the Town Manager.

12. **Catherine Jewett, 10 Maple Ave.**, stated that the proposed budget sent a message to residents, cutting services used by all. She noted these services are what make a community, and encouraged the Council to work with residents.

13. **Rickford Kirton, 7 Hickory Lane**, provided a list of proposed items to help the budget, including using fund balance. He suggested MDC numbers be reviewed, highlighted the communication department budget, and suggested no non-contractual salary increases. He expressed concern with the cost of the Town Attorney, and with the accuracy of the budget. He requested that library hours not be cut, and that the pool, Senior Services, and Public Works be funded.

14. **Esther Harris, 104 Hubbard Street.**, spoke to the importance of democracy and voting for people who do what they say they are going to do.

15. **Halsteen Graham Days, 89 Wintonbury Ave.**, spoke in support of the pool, trash service, and Senior Services.

16. **Syd Schulman, 8 High Ledge Road**, noted his experience with municipal budgets and suggested a list of cuts and adds. His suggestions included removing one assistant from the Town Manager's Office; reducing Council contingency and Town Manager contingency funds; reducing funding in Operations & Communications part-time, Town Manager's Office personnel, IT contractual services, Town Clerk advertising, Assessor's Office professional services, Human Resources training, and Town Attorney budget. He also advocated that the Town hire a full-time Economic Development Director.

17. **Gail Riley, 8 Maple Ave.**, expressed disappointment with the budget. She requested that the trades line item be returned to the general fund and that contingency funds be reduced. She asked for items to be reduced that would not hurt the citizens of the Town. She suggested eliminating raises and reorganizing workload.

18. **Keith Martin, 357 Park Ave.**, spoke to Bloomfield's potential. He asked that the town look into ways to bring in more money and to take a long-term approach to how money is spent. He noted the path being proposed between Blue Hills Avenue and Tyler Street and expressed concern with it being behind his house.

19. **Steven Zelman, 129 Oliver Way**, expressed concern that Town Hall administration is overstaffed, and recommended bonuses only be given out based on performance review standards within a contract. He requested cuts so that items that support the community can be funded.

20. **Ed Garcia, 30 Croydon Drive**, expressed concern about the impact of the tax increase on people with fixed incomes, noting the amount of seniors in Town. He spoke about affordability and the possibility that people might need to move.

21. **Joe Washington, Essex Lane**, requested no cuts to waste collection, the recreation center, or to the library. He spoke in favor of supporting seniors and children, and to redirecting Town Hall salaries.

22. **Nicola Poplin, 9 Brighton Park Way**, expressed dismay at the police presence at Town Hall and to the lack of accommodations for the number of residents who came out. She expressed disappointment as to how residents were being treated, and contrasted the salaries of Town Hall staff with that of teachers. She noted that she thought the Town Manager should live in Town, and that he should be on administrative leave based on the allegations against him. She encouraged citizens to vote and asked for Council civility and respect.

23. **Karen Robinson, 9 Caramoor Park**, stated that it did not make sense to her to bloat the administration and then reduce the services that require administering.

24. **Mary Berstene, 24 Brown Street**, expressed her support for the pool and the rec center, noting its impact on her family in the summer and its importance in building community and helping the Town flourish.

25. **Joaner Weidman, 247 Park Ave.**, requested more activities for seniors and youth. She expressed frustration at the state of her street, and reported that she was told money was allocated to fix the road but that nothing had been done. She noted the steps that she's taken and people that she's contacted to

try to stop tractor trailers on the street. She expressed frustration with Copaco plaza, and shared ideas for additional activities in Town.

26. **Robert May, Edwards Way**, talked about the impact that raising taxes would have on him as a retired person who recently took on a part-time job.

27. **Jeff Clement, 24 Hoskins Road**, via Zoom, expressed confusion as to why the budget proposal was presented as it was, and inquired as to how the mill rate interacts with property values.

28. **Syd Schulman, 8 High Ledge Road**, (*second comment*) suggested taking additional money out of the rainy-day fund, and presented items that he thought should be added into the budget including, Leisure Services Grants Manager, senior minibus hours, and Social & Youth Services emergency and foster care funds.

29. **Dadrian Ellington, South Barn Hill Road**, spoke in opposition to leisure services cuts, contrasted this to the proposed funding for a dog park, and advocated for supporting children.

30. **Rickford Kirton, 7 Hickory Lane**, (*second comment*) noted that there are two fire districts in Town, with one district having an additional mill percentage on top of the Town mill rate. He highlighted that this was not included in the Town budget, unlike previous years, and suggested that it should be in order to show residents the full tax increase. He also encouraged educating residents about the budget, and requested additional opportunities for residents to speak on the budget.

31. **Eunice Medwinter, 46 Newport Drive**, (*second comment*) expressed confusion as to how homeowners are being penalized for increased home value with increased taxes. She asked that the mill rate be lowered, and emphasized that residents are being pressed from all sides economically.

32. **Marcia Lareau, 7 Andrea Lane**, expressed frustration with increased taxes, noting that it was not manageable. She stated that trust had been lost, and encouraged the Council to earn it back.

33. **Jeff Clement, 24 Hoskins Road**, via Zoom, (*second comment*) expressed support for hiring an economic development specialist, and thought this would be of more value to Town than another assistant. He expressed concern about affordability and about residents being priced out of Town.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the FY2027 Proposed Budget (Council Deliberations - Part I)

Councilor Cooper motioned to move into Council deliberations, and Councilor Waterhouse seconded.

Councilors thanked residents for their feedback and provided a range of suggestions to and feedback about the Town Manager's proposed budget. Cost drivers were also discussed.

There was discussion about the Town Attorney's contract, and whether the Town Manager or Town Council has the authority to determine compensation increases.

There was a discussion on how to proceed with deliberations.

The Council provided a number of budget modifications that they wanted to see, including: hiring of an accountant; funding of part-time library positions; continuation of bulk waste pickup; a cap to educational tuition reimbursement; one new police vehicle; reduction of the Operations & Communications budget to FY2025 numbers; reduction of the Town Attorney budget; elimination of non-union, non-contractual raises and bonuses; reduction in Town Clerk's office; minimized use of vehicles; minimized training; reduction of the digital forensic police program; use of reserves; use of a hiring freeze; a pause on non-essential spending in all departments; and recapturing unused funds from Council projects. Additionally, an analysis of Town benefits and a staff matrix study was suggested.

Adjournment

It was moved by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Mahon, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Lynn Weisel, Recording Secretary, based on the Zoom Video Recording.

The meeting can be viewed in its entirety at www.youtube.com/live/82wZwOyVbWI