Minutes not yet approved.
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BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

There was a special meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held on Wednesday, April 20, 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; Deputy Mayor Lloyd; Councilors Cooper (6:43pm), DeBeatham-Brown, Mahon, Merritt, Oliver & Waterhouse; *and* ***via Zoom***: Councilor Goodwin

Councilors absent were: None

Also present were: *In-Person*—Jon Colman, Director of Building & Land Use; Darrell Hill, Director of Finance; Annatouchur Kingland, Senior Administrative Assistant; Bruce Lajoie, Assistant Director of Information Technology & Innovation; Elizabeth Lane, Director of Bloomfield Public Library; Rosa Matias, Director of Human Resources; David Melesko, Director of Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services; Vinci Midodzi, Assessor; Warren Plumber, Director of Information Technology & Innovation; India Rodgers, Director of Operations & Communications; Alvin D. Schwapp, Jr., Town Manager; Dr. Tracy Youngberg, Superintendent of Bloomfield Public Schools; *and via Zoom*—Daniel Carter, Director of Public Works; Andrew Crumbie, Town Attorney; Camillia Hillian, Director of Social & Youth Services; Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Director of Senior Services

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m.

Discussion and Possible Action regarding the FY 2027 Budget – Council Deliberation/Action (Part 2)

Mayor Harrington opened with remarks acknowledging a recent tragedy in Shreveport, Louisiana, followed by a moment of silence. He also corrected a prior statement concerning the Town Attorney contract, acknowledging that he had authorized the contract increase at the beginning of his administration and apologizing to former Mayor Danielle C. Wong for the prior misstatement. Mayor Harrington thanked residents who participated in the prior FY2027 budget public hearing and stated that their comments would help guide the Council's continued budget deliberations. He also acknowledged concerns regarding communication with the Council and constituent inquiries and committed to strengthening communication following the budget season.

It was moved by Councilor Mahon, seconded by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown to suspend the rules and add public comment at the end of the meeting. The motion was discussed extensively, including the requirements applicable to special meetings under the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (FIOA) and concerns regarding the timing and revision of the meeting agenda. Councilor

DeBeatham-Brown stated for the record that the agenda had initially referenced a public hearing and deliberations and was subsequently revised and questioned whether the meeting remained legally noticed. She also stated that she had requested citizen statements in advance because she wanted residents to have an opportunity to comment after Council deliberations.

Ms. India Rogers, Director of Operations and Communications, provided clarification concerning the agenda revision. Ms. Rogers stated that the reference to a public hearing appeared in the title of the agenda but not in the body and that the title was corrected as a clerical error. She further explained the timing of Councilor DeBeatham-Brown's request for citizen statements and the requirement for 24-hour notice for a special meeting. Attorney Crumbie discussion followed, and it was stated that additional business could not be added to the agenda of a special meeting without the required notice. The Council therefore did not take a vote on the motion to add public comment.

Councilors then proceeded with the FY2027 budget deliberations. Councilors questioned whether the scenarios requested during the previous meeting had been prepared and expressed concern that the Council needed specific add/drop scenarios in order to evaluate proposed changes to the budget.

Mr. Darrell Hill, Finance Director, explained that the Finance Department had reviewed the Town Manager's proposed budget and prepared a scenario approach based on changes requested by the Council. He explained that, as a general guideline, each $1 million increase or decrease in the budget would result in approximately a 1% change in the tax increase, subject to other adjustments, including the State motor-vehicle grant calculation. He stated that Finance would review Council-proposed scenarios for completeness, including salary and fringe-benefit impacts.

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown expressed concern that the Council had expected scenarios to be available before the meeting and stated that the Council's role at this stage of the process was to determine what should be added back to or removed from the Town Manager's proposed budget. She stated that she was evaluating the budget on a department-by-department basis rather than applying a general percentage reduction and requested the information necessary to understand the effect of specific reductions and restorations.

The Council discussed the status quo budget and potential targets for the overall increase. Town Manager, Alvin Schwapp, Jr., and Director Hill explained that the status quo roll-forward would result in an increase of more than 11% and asked the Council to establish a target from which staff could calculate the necessary reductions. Council members expressed a preference for seeing actual scenarios and the specific operational effect of proposed changes.

Councilor Merritt proposed reducing the Board of Education increase by $2 million. The proposal did not proceed to a final vote at that point, as the mayor and other Council members stated that the Board of Education reduction needed to be incorporated into complete budget scenarios before Council could determine its effect.

During the continued discussion, Council members identified previously discussed restorations and reductions, including trash service, Social and Youth Services, summer camp, after-school programming, senior services, Board of Education funding, non-union compensation, library services, Public Works, Information Technology, and other departmental expenditures. Council

members also discussed the need for the Town to identify potential administrative reductions and to provide sufficient detail to evaluate the operational consequences of proposed cuts.

It was moved by Mayor Harrington, seconded by Deputy Mayor Lloyd and voted unanimously to recess for 10 minutes allowing staff to prepare additional budget information and the necessary equipment for the Council to review the budget spreadsheet and scenarios in greater detail.
Recess: 7:34 p.m.
Meeting resumed: 7:50 p.m.

Following the recess, Director Hill continued presenting budget information and responding to Council questions. He reviewed the status quo roll-forward, proposed additions and subtractions, personnel and compensation assumptions, revenue adjustments, and the effect of potential use of unassigned fund balance. Council members continued to request a working Excel spreadsheet that would allow the Council to see the impact of individual add/drop decisions on the total budget, mill rate, and projected tax increase.

Director Hill reviewed revised revenue assumptions, including telecommunications tax revenue and Payment in Lieu of Taxes, and explained adjustments involving Education Cost Sharing and other State-related revenues. He also discussed personnel changes, medical-cost assumptions, Information Technology expenditures, Public Works, the Registrar of Voters, and other departmental adjustments.

The Council discussed the use of unassigned fund balance, the Town's 15%–20% fund balance policy range, the FY2026 appropriation of fund balance, and the $4 million transfer to the Economic Development Trust. Director Hill cautioned against using reserves to support recurring operating expenditures and discussed the potential impact of continued reserve use on the Town's long-term financial position and credit considerations. Council members expressed differing views regarding the amount of fund balance that should be used to reduce the FY2027 tax increase.

Council members also discussed the effect of the revaluation phase-in, the grand list, the resulting mill-rate calculations, and the increase in the MDC assessment. Director Hill provided the Council with calculations reflecting different levels of fund balance use and explained the corresponding projected tax increases.

Councilor Cooper emphasized the need for the Council to proceed with budget deliberations and requested that the Town provide the information necessary for the Council to make informed decisions. Councilor Goodwin expressed concern that Council members had previously provided specific requests and expected those requests to be reflected in the scenarios presented.

Councilor Merritt advocated for additional reductions to the Board of Education increase and discussed the treatment of non-union employees and library services. Councilor Mahon questioned whether one-time expenditures could be supported through the Economic Development Trust rather than additional use of unassigned fund balance. Councilor DeBeatham-Brown continued to request detailed, line-item information.

It was moved by Councilor Cooper, seconded by Councilor Oliver and voted to direct the Town Manager to move into presenting the budget scenarios.

VOTE: **AYE:** T. Cooper, M. Oliver, E. Waterhouse, D. Goodwin, J. Merritt, S. DeBeatham-Brown, S. Mahon, A. Harrington,
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: C. Lloyd

Motion passed: 8-0-1

Director Hill then formally presented the budget scenarios and explained the assumptions underlying each scenario. The scenarios included varying levels of use of unassigned fund balance, including a scenario using approximately $1.5 million for general operations. He explained the projected tax impacts associated with the different scenarios and continued to respond to Council questions concerning the grand list, equalized mill rate, current tax collections, and other budget assumptions.

Mayor Harrington also discussed the Town's efforts to secure outside funding for Town Center redevelopment, including congressional and senatorial funding proposals and the Town's anticipated reapplication for CIF funding. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a Town investment in the project when pursuing outside funding.

As the Council prepared to begin the formal add/drop process, Councilor DeBeatham-Brown moved to adjourn the meeting and resume the add/drop process after the budget spreadsheet was available. Councilor Mahon proposed a friendly amendment requesting that scenarios submitted by Council members by email also be included. Councilor DeBeatham-Brown declined the friendly amendment and stated that the Council should avoid confusion from multiple individual submissions and instead work from the consolidated information.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown, seconded by Councilor Waterhouse, and voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.

MAYORAL STATEMENT – APRIL 20, 2026

During the Town Council Special Meeting for the FY27 Budget Public Hearing and Council Deliberations (Part 1), I incorrectly stated that I did not authorize the Town Attorney contract increase and attributed that action to former Mayor Danielle C. Wong.

In fact, I did authorize the signing of the contract at the start of my administration. I regret this error and any confusion it may have caused.

I sincerely apologize to former Mayor Wong for this misstatement.

I also want to thank all of our residents who participated in Thursday's public hearing. Your input is valued and appreciated. We took many of your comments and suggestions to heart, and they will help guide our decisions as we continue deliberations on the FY27 budget.