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BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

There was a regular meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held on Monday, April 27, 2026 at 7:00 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 (was via Zoom from 7:09 - 7:21 p.m. and then joined in-person); DeBeatham-Brown, Merritt, Oliver & Mahon; *via Zoom:* Councilor Waterhouse (joined at 8:41 p.m.)

Councilors absent were: Councilor Goodwin

Also present were: *In-Person*—Jon Colman, Director of Building & Land Use; Andrew Crumbie, Town Attorney; Darrell Hill, Director of Finance; Captain Zachary Klomberg, Bloomfield Police Department; Warren Plumber, Director of Information Technology & Innovation; India Rodgers, Director of Operations & Communications; Alvin D. Schwapp, Jr., Town Manager; Latonia Tabb, Clerk of Council; Sharron Tai-Williams, Deputy Town Manager; Dr. Tracy Youngberg, Superintendent of Bloomfield Public Schools; *and via Zoom*—Camillia Hillian, Director of Social & Youth Services; Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Director of Senior Services; Annatouchur Kingland, Senior Administrative Assistant; Elizabeth Lane, Director of Bloomfield Public Library; David Melesko, Director of Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Public Hearing

There was a public hearing to solicit public input for the renaming of the Bloomfield Greenway as the "Joe Merritt" Greenway.

Public Hearing Comments:

1. **Sharon Mann, 1 Adams Road**, spoke in favor of renaming the Bloomfield Greenway in honor of Joe Merritt. She referenced the Town of Bloomfield's naming policy, outlined Councilor Merritt's efforts with the Greenway, and highlighted the Greenway's benefits.

2. **Paula Jones, 5 Bear Ridge Drive,** spoke on behalf of the Conservation, Energy and Environment Committee (CEEC), noting Councilor Merritt's longtime advocacy for the Greenway and his continued work on the Trails Committee. She reported that CEEC voted unanimously in support of renaming the Bloomfield Greenway in honor of Joe Merritt at their 3/27/26 meeting.

3. **Kevin Gough, 5 Bear Ridge Drive**, spoke in favor of renaming the Bloomfield Greenway in honor of Joe Merritt, highlighting Councilor Merritt's advocacy and the economic benefit having the Greenway will bring to Bloomfield.

4. **Robert Dickinson, 400 Seabury Drive**, spoke in favor of renaming the Bloomfield Greenway in honor of Joe Merritt.

5. **Gail Riley, 8 Maple Avenue,** spoke against renaming the Bloomfield Greenway in honor of Joe Merritt, citing concern with the renaming something after a sitting Councilor. She noted his worthiness of the honor, but stated that she felt it should happen once he is no longer on Town Council.

6. **Ruthanne Marchetti, 669 Bloomfield Avenue**, submitted written comments read by Clerk of Council Latonia Tabb, in favor of renaming the Bloomfield Greenway in honor of Joe Merritt. She noted that she was on the committee that reviewed the Town naming policy, and felt that the renaming was within the scope of the policy.

It was moved by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown, seconded by Councilor Mahon, and voted unanimously to close the public hearing.

Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting began with the pledge of allegiance.

Announcements and Presentations

There were no announcements or presentations.

Citizen Statements and Petitions

1. **Jane Fromme, 6 Beatrice Avenue**, spoke in support of the Board of Education, stating that her son is thriving, and highlighting the changes that Dr. Youngberg has made in the district.
2. **Stacey Close, 55 Filley Street**, encouraged Town Council to fully fund education. He reported the benefits the school system had on his sons, and emphasized the importance of extracurricular activities.
3. **Joseph Washington, 56 Essex Lane**, spoke about recent tax increases and noted that they were not sustainable. He spoke about the importance of children in the community, and encouraged educational funding.
4. **Tiaca Davis, 5 Cedar Lane**, spoke on behalf of the Kindergarten team at Laurel Literacy Academy. She expressed concern with the proposed budget cuts to the Board of Education, and highlighted the impact these cuts would have on classrooms and on students.
5. **Courtney Bouchard, Carmen Arace Intermediate and Middle School**, reported that she was an art teacher who recently revived the drama program at the school. She talked about the impact of theater and the arts for students, and the detriment cutting these programs would have.
6. **Raheem, Bloomfield High School student**, reported that he was salutatorian of the 2026 graduating class, and that this was his third year at the school. He spoke about the impact that being part of gospel choir, young men's leadership, and the baseball team had on his life, and asked about future students who might not have such opportunities.
7. **Daniel, Bloomfield High School student**, reported that he is a senior at the high school and will be an Honors Husky at the University of Connecticut. He noted that his future has been shaped by opportunities in the district, and its impact on him as a first-generation college student. He noted that Bloomfield operates with fewer resources than surrounding towns, and the importance of extracurriculars on becoming a well-rounded student. He requested that the Council reconsider the reductions to the Board of Education.

8. **Kiersten, Bloomfield High School student**, spoke on behalf of Bloomfield High School athletics. She reported on scholarships student athletes have earned, highlighting the opportunities these bring. She noted that she will be attending Franklin Pierce University with direct entry to the doctorate program on an athletic scholarship, and hopes that her younger sister has the same opportunities.

9. **Noa, Bloomfield High School student**, spoke about the importance of after-school activities on social-emotional learning and academic success and the impact they have had on her. She spoke in favor of keeping the SOAR and STEAM programs, and against Board of Education budget cuts.

10. **Iyanla, Bloomfield High School student**, spoke about the negative impact Board of Education budget cuts would have on her school and its students. She noted that some students may need to leave the district to follow their passions, and others will miss out on opportunities. She also spoke to the impact on college and career readiness.

11. **Elaine Holley, 659 Park Ave**, highlighted the specialized services that her daughter receives in Bloomfield Public Schools and expressed concern the impact budget cuts would have on her progress and ability to receive an equitable education. She noted the lasting consequences of budget decisions and asked the Council to invest in students.

12. **Alexandrea, Bloomfield High School student**, spoke in favor of the Board of Education, and asked the Town Council to think about the children and children as the future in their decision making.

13. **Laila & Amyr, Carmen Arace Intermediate School students**, spoke together about the benefits of afterschool programs.

14. **Jesse White, Bloomfield High School**, urged that the schools be funded, in order to develop leaders, promote academic excellence, and provide service for the community.

15. **Alleah Red, 31 Norman Drive**, spoke about the budget as a reflection of values, and highlighted that academics, athletics and art programs are not extras. She noted the impact participating in a recent musical had on her son, and asked that the Council reconsider Board of Education cuts.

16. **Allison Borawski, Bloomfield High School**, reported that she is the athletic director at the high school. She spoke about the doors athletics has opened for students, the mentorship athletes receive, and the positive impact athletics has on academic performance and life. She noted that 75% of Bloomfield High School students participate in athletics, highlighting its importance in students' lives, and the positive benefit to mental health and a unified community. She urged support of Bloomfield Public Schools.

17. **Liz Kerrigan, Carmen Arace Intermediate School**, noted two of her children attended Bloomfield schools and that she has been a teacher in the district since 1998. She asked that budget decisions about the Board of Education be reconsidered, and reported on the impact cuts would have to students and classrooms.

18. **Elka Spencer, Metacomet School**, reported that she is the Dean of Students at Metacomet, and is a product of the Bloomfield school system. She spoke to the positive changes she's seen under Dr. Youngberg's leadership, and asked for town's support.

19. **Vaughn, Bloomfield High School student**, reported that he is the high school's valedictorian, and has received a full-ride academic scholarship to UConn. He spoke to the positive changes he has seen in the

existing programs and curriculum under Dr. Youngberg's leadership, and stated that students deserve what is standard for other districts.

20. **Lucy Hurston, 5 Christine Circle**, encouraged the Council to make the tough decisions. She encouraged them to say what they are going to do about data centers and detention centers, and encouraged funding education. She spoke against the Town Manager not living in town, suggested cutting Town-provided cars, and highlighted a recent raise for the Town Attorney.

21. **Ehanna, Bloomfield High School student**, spoke about her experience as an immigrant, moving here in 2024, and the opportunities that she's had at the high school. She spoke against budget cuts, and encouraged the Council to see students as more than figures in the budget.

22. **Dr. Tanya Moorehead-Cooley, 1216 Blue Hills Avenue**, noted that she is a graduate of Bloomfield Public Schools, 2006 Bloomfield Teacher of the Year, and current professor at Eastern Connecticut State University. She highlighted that her sons attend Bloomfield schools, and spoke to the negative impact cuts would have on students and the greater community.

23. **Naii'lay, Carmen Arace Intermediate School student**, spoke about the importance of extracurricular activities, and asked that the Council think about this when making their decision.

24. **Reda Othman, Bloomfield High School**, highlighted that he is a teacher at Bloomfield High School, and spoke favorably about the school system. He noted the impact of removing a support system for students on absenteeism and graduation rates.

25. **LaYan, Bloomfield Public School student**, spoke against cutting the Board of Education budget and the impact this would have on teacher-to-student ratios, test scores, and enrichment activities. She highlighted that she came today with the band to show what comes out of Bloomfield Public Schools, and asked that it not be taken away.

26. **Clare Kindall, 27 High Hill Road**, highlighted that she has served on both the Board of Education and Town Council in a neighboring town. She noted her surprise by the Board of Education's percentage in the Town Manager's proposed budget, and reported that she thought a higher percentage would be a better balance. She requested a revised budget for residents to be able to review; recommended an RFP process for legal services; requested that special meeting votes be published within 72 hours as required by FOIA; and recommended a hiring freeze.

27. **Rickford Kirton, 7 Hickory Lane**, reported that he decided to send his daughter to private school because of the resources and investment in students there. He spoke against cutting the Board of Education budget. He made budget recommendations, including using the trust fund and reducing the communications department.

28. **Erin Barringer, 28 Kenmore Road**, spoke in favor of funding the Board of Education budget. She highlighted the importance of making budget decisions on accurate information, and encouraged the Council to review department expenditures, particularly for costs that go across multiple departments.

29. **Abigail Mullins, 2 Julie Lane**, noted that she is a first-year teacher at Laurel Literacy Academy, and a graduate of Bloomfield Public Schools. She spoke to the difficulty in observing the deliberation process. She shared a letter on behalf of the second-grade team at Laurel expressing their strong concerns regarding the proposed budget cuts and their long-term impact.

30. **Reverend Curtis Lungrin, 59 Ledyard Avenue**, spoke about the impact afterschool programs have had on his daughters, currently in Bloomfield Public Schools. He spoke about the social and behavioral needs of children asked that school programs that support these needs be funded.

31. **James McGovern, 25 Diana Drive**, reported that he graduated from Bloomfield Public Schools, but took his sons out of the school system. He asked if the current school model was the best structure or if there were alternative models, such as partnering with CREC, that would better serve students and taxpayers. He requested that the Town Manager be removed due to performance concerns.

32. **Roger Bunker, 28 Old Village Road**, reported that his children went through the Bloomfield school system, and highlighted his experience serving on the Juvenile Review Board. He encouraged the Council to think about students who haven't done very well in the school system, and suggested increased funding of Town youth services to support these students.

33. **Dan Pray, 17 Maple Edge Drive, via Zoom**, requested that the Board of Education be fully funded, and highlighted his son's positive experience with the SOAR program. He spoke in favor of Dr. Youngberg's leadership and the direction of the school system.

Council Business

Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes

- *April 13, 2026*

It was moved by Councilor Cooper, seconded by Councilors Waterhouse & Mahon, and voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

New Business

2026-47: Consider and Take Action Regarding Approval of Applications for the Neighborhood Assistance Act Program

It was moved by Councilor Cooper and seconded by Councilor Waterhouse to adopt item 2026-47.

Mayor Harrington noted that it would be to schedule a public hearing as required by the Department of Revenue Services.

Councilor Mahon called the question. The motion was not seconded.

The initial motion passed unanimously.

2026-48: Consider and Take Action Regarding Authorization to Participate in the FY2025 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Program

It was moved by Councilor Cooper and seconded by Deputy Mayor Lloyd to approve item 2026-48, consider and take action regarding authorization to participate in the FY2025 EMPG.

Mayor Harrington read the resolution it its entirety:

"*TITLE: Resolution Authorizing Participation in the FY2025 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Program*

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (OHS) and the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEM HS), provide financial assistance to municipalities under the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program to strengthen local emergency management capabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Bloomfield recognizes the vital importance of maintaining a capable and coordinated Emergency Management program to enhance preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery operations for the safety of its residents; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Town of Bloomfield to participate fully in the FY2025 EMPG program and to authorize the appropriate officials to apply for and administer these funds in accordance with all applicable federal and state requirements;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Bloomfield that:

1. The Emergency Management Director, or their designee, is hereby authorized to apply for and accept FY2025 Emergency Management Performance Grant funds from the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS), on behalf of the Town of Bloomfield.

2. The Town Manager, or their duly authorized representative, is empowered to sign and execute any and all agreements, assurances, or other documents necessary to apply for and receive such funds, including reimbursement requests and grant reports.

3. The Town of Bloomfield agrees to provide the required local match and to comply with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and grant conditions as required by the EMPG program.

4. This resolution shall remain in effect for the duration of the FY2025 grant period unless rescinded or amended by subsequent action of the Town Council."

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown asked about the 50% match, and Mr. Schwapp stated that there would be an approval process with Town Council before any money had been accepted.

It was noted that fiscal year 2025 was not a typo.

Councilor Mahon moved to strike the verbiage of "receive" and state "apply for." The motion was not seconded.

There was discussion about the language in the resolution. Captain Klomberg explained the grant program and its requirements.

Councilor Merritt called the question. The motion was not seconded.

There was additional discussion.

Councilor Merritt called the question a second time, and it was seconded by Deputy Mayor Lloyd.

VOTE: **Yes**: Cooper, DeBeatham-Brown, Harrington, Lloyd, Merritt, Oliver, Waterhouse
No: None
Abstain: Mahon

The motion passed 7-0-1.

The original motion was restated.

VOTE: **Yes**: Cooper, DeBeatham-Brown, Harrington, Lloyd, Merritt, Oliver, Waterhouse
No: None
Abstain: Mahon

The motion passed 7-0-1.

2026-49: Discussion and Possible Action Concerning the Crumbie Law Group Engagement Agreement

Councilor Merritt moved to table this item until after coming up with a budget. Deputy Mayor Lloyd seconded.

Councilor Waterhouse called the question. The motion was not seconded.

There was discussion as to whether enough information had been provided as to make a decision regarding the Crumbie Law Group engagement agreement, and as to if the Town Manager or the Town Council was responsible for approving the engagement agreement.

A vote was taken on the motion to table.

VOTE: **Yes**: Harrington, Lloyd, Merritt, Waterhouse
No: Cooper, DeBeatham-Brown, Mahon, Oliver
Abstain: None

The motion failed 4-4-0.

There was a discussion around the fact that the contract with the Town Attorney had already been signed.

Attorney Crumbie reported that the Town Charter states that the Town Council is involved with the Town Attorney appointment. He reported that the prior Town Manager executed the contract with the previous Town Attorney, and the same occurred when he was appointed. He reported that the Town Charter states the Town Manager is the CEO of the Town, and that state statute gives the Town Manager the authority to negotiate and execute contracts for the Town.

Attorney Crumbie clarified that he is a consultant, not a Town employee. He stated the other law firms that are included in the legal fees portion of the budget, and outlined reasons for the increase in legal fees, including lawsuits and Freedom of Information Act complaints and requests. He outlined his retainer and fee structure. He noted that when he started with the Town he was at a reduced rate and that attorneys typically revisit their hourly rate annually.

Attorney Crumbie reported his understanding that once the former Town Attorney was appointed, that Town Council had no further involvement in his rate or rate increases. He noted that he had not been able to locate a written contract for the former Town Attorney.

Councilor Mahon moved that the Council review and vote on the hourly rate of the Town Attorney annually. The motion was not seconded.

Attorney Crumbie noted that Town Council could make a rule that when the Town Attorney/legal department comes up for a raise, that it could come before Town Council. He highlighted that this could happen going forward, but could not be used retroactively.

There was a discussion on whether the Council needed to take any action since the contract had already been signed.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Lloyd, and seconded by Councilors Merritt and Waterhouse, to take no action on this item.

VOTE: **Yes**: Cooper, Harrington, Lloyd, Merritt, Oliver, Waterhouse
No: Mahon
Abstain: DeBeatham-Brown

The motion passed 6-1-1.

There was a five-minute recess.

2026-50: Discussion and Possible Action Concerning FY2027 Proposed Budget (Council Deliberations- Part V)

Mr. Schwapp outlined a retirement incentive program for senior management, with one iteration this year followed by a second iteration next year, with the plan for some of the positions subsequently not to be filled. He requested Council's vote to move forward with the retirement incentive.

There was a discussion, and concerns expressed included loss of institutional knowledge, the need for a transition period, the potential for over-incentivization.

Director Hill outlined the potential impact of retirements in the budget.

Mayor Harrington shared an update on potential Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funds coming from the State, and noted that they should find out how much Bloomfield will receive in the morning.

There was a discussion about the Town Charter deadline for budget approval, with consultation from Attorney Crumbie.

It was moved by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown to move the Annual Town Meeting to the second Monday in May. It was seconded by Councilor Merritt. Councilor DeBeatham-Brown withdrew the motion.

Mayor Harrington provided an additional update on ECS funding from Senator McCrory. Based on the potential numbers reported, Dr. Youngberg gave a perspective on what this funding would look like for the school district.

It was moved by Councilor Mahon and seconded by Councilor Cooper to adjourn.

Councilor Mahon updated the motion to table the budget discussion, seconded by Deputy Mayor Lloyd.

VOTE: **Yes**: Cooper, DeBeatham-Brown, Harrington, Lloyd, Mahon, Merritt, Oliver
No: Waterhouse
Abstain: None

The motion passed 7-1-0.

Report from the Town Manager

There was no report from the Town Manager.

Report from the Mayor

There was no report from the Mayor.

Council Comments

There were no Council comments.

Adjournment

Mayor Harrington moved to adjourn and Deputy Mayor Lloyd seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:55 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/watch?v=q1WAJRSCerE