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BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

There was a special meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held on Tuesday, April 28, 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; DeBeatham-Brown, Goodwin, Mahon, Merritt & Oliver; *via Zoom:* Councilor Waterhouse

Councilors absent were: None

Also present were: *In-Person*—Andrew Crumbie, Town Attorney; Darrell Hill, Director of Finance; 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; Dr. Tracy Youngberg, Superintendent of Bloomfield Public Schools; *and via Zoom*— Jon Colman, Director of Building & Land Use; Camillia Hillian, Director of Social & Youth Services; Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Director of Senior Services; Bruce Lajoie, Assistant Director of Information Technology & Innovation; Elizabeth Lane, Director of Bloomfield Public Library; David Melesko, Director of Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services

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

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the FY2027 Proposed Budget (Council Deliberations - Part 6)

Mr. Schwapp presented two models, one created by staff with the support of Council, and one created by Councilor Goodwin, on the implementation of the retirement initiatives. Councilors expressed mixed feelings about providing incentives for retirement, with some in favor and some opposed.

Dr. Youngberg spoke briefly about Education Cost Share (ECS) funding and the collaborative work between the Board of Education and the Town on the budget.

Deputy Mayor Lloyd reviewed the work for the evening: revisit budget modifications not yet voted on, determine use of unassigned fund balance, and revisit the Board of Education and ECS.

Council then voted on proposed budget modifications and budget reductions.

1. **Deputy Mayor Lloyd moved acceptance of the Town Manager's proposal for early retirement incentives. It was seconded by Councilor Merritt.**

   Discussion included the need for legal review. Attorney Crumbie reported that he previously reviewed the document and in terms of legal sufficiency thought it was fine.

   Councilor Merritt called the question. There was not a second.

   Deputy Mayor Lloyd restated the original motion, and added that they would focus on the October 1, 2026 implementation.

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

The motion passed 7-2-0.

2. **Deputy Mayor Lloyd moved to approve the total of ops and comms increases in the amount of $10,500, $10,000, and $18,505 as discussed the previous week. Councilor Cooper seconded.**

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

The motion passed 7-2-0.

There was a discussion about the tax increase and budget increase based on the changes made thus far.

3. **Deputy Mayor Lloyd moved to approve the senior accountant with a salary cap of $110,000. It was seconded by Councilor Cooper.**

There was a discussion on the need for a senior accountant.

Councilor Merritt called the question. There was not a second.

There was further discussion on the position, its total cost, and what would be saved from not needing to outsource work.

Councilor Merritt called the question, and Councilor Oliver seconded.

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

The motion to call the question passed 8-1-0.

A vote was taken on the original motion.

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

The motion passed 8-1-0.

There was a discussion about the tax increase and budget increase with the addition of the senior accountant.

4. **Councilor Cooper moved to accept the Town Manager's recommendations of the furloughs. Councilor Goodwin seconded.**

   It was clarified that the furlough was for management only and for four days.

   There was discussion about the potential number of days, ways to limit the impact to service, and the potential financial impact of employees filing for unemployment.

   VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Deputy Mayor Lloyd moved to reduce the Town Attorney by $43,640. Councilor Mahon seconded.**

   There was a discussion on reducing the line item for the Town Attorney, and if any action could be taken based on the information provided at the previous night's meeting.

   Councilor Waterhouse called the question, Councilor Goodwin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

   The original motion was restated.

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

   The motion failed 1-8-0.

6. **Deputy Mayor Lloyd motioned to reduce Human Resources by $127,353. Councilor Cooper seconded.**

   There was a discussion about contractual costs, the department's participation in the retirement incentive program, and if this reduction was a redundancy.

   Councilor Cooper called the question. There was not a second. A vote was taken on calling the question, and it passed unanimously.

   The original motion was restated.

   VOTE: **Yes**: Cooper, Oliver
   No: Harrington, Lloyd, Mahon, Merritt, Waterhouse

Abstain: DeBeatham-Brown, Goodwin

The motion failed 2-5-2.

7. **Deputy Mayor Lloyd moved to increase management OPEB from 1.5 to 3%. Councilor Cooper seconded.**

   There was a discussion as to what this increase would amount to. Director Hill noted that the increase would not impact the budget unless Council reduced the Town's OPEB contribution by the amount of the increase.

   Councilor Waterhouse rescinded the item from consideration, as she was the one who originally added the item to the list to consider.

8. Reducing the Board of Education budget by an additional $878,520 was discussed. It was clarified that this would leave them with a budget increase of $700,000.

   Councilor Merritt asked to remove the item from consideration, as he was the one who originally added the item to the list to consider.

   There was an update about the tax increase and budget increase with the changes made thus far.

   Education Cost Share was discussed.

9. **Councilor Merritt moved to increase the amount taken from reserves by $1.5 million to a total of $3 million. Councilor Cooper seconded.**

   There was a discussion about using the unassigned fund balance, with concerns that the numbers were unaudited, or that the funds would be even more needed in the future. Those in favor cited worry that not using the funds would devastate Town government service or increase taxes.

   There was additional discussion on using funds from the Town Center Economic Development Fund.

   Councilor Cooper called the question. There was not a second.

   Mr. Hill presented information on the unassigned fund balance.

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

   The motion passed 7-2-0.

   The updated impact to taxes and budget increase was reviewed.

Education Cost Share (ECS) funding was discussed, and the numbers updated to include the revenue anticipated from this source. The updated impact to taxes and budget was reviewed.

There was a five-minute recess, and the meeting resumed at 9:22 p.m.

There was additional discussion on ECS funding, including whether or not to include the projected revenue in the budget.

There was also discussion on the budget in general. Feedback and ideas included: the need to include money for the capital improvements project fund; further reducing the budget for operations and communications; and trying to find places for additional cuts.

Time constraints for needing to pass the budget was highlighted. Ms. Tai-Williams noted that past practice was for the Town Council to adopt the budget the same night as the Annual Town Meeting, currently scheduled for May 4, but that Town Charter allows it to be adopted by May 11.

Mr. Schwapp reported that he is still working to find additional savings.

Clarification around the Board of Education alternative school plan was requested, particularly around if the need for the school was immediate. Dr. Youngberg reported on the plan for the alternative school, including timelines and notifications, contractual obligations, future savings, and potential improved student outcomes.

There was further discussion between Town Council members and Dr. Youngberg on the budget.

Mr. Hill showed budget scenarios with and without additional ECS funding, including information on the applicable mill rate and tax increase, with some sample homeowner examples.

Councilor Cooper moved to accept the Town Manager's proposed budget with the ECS projections, and Town Council adjustments as presented, subject to changes before adoption. Councilor Merritt seconded.

There was brief discussion on the language of the motion.

Councilor Cooper updated the motion, and moved to endorse the following FY2027 budget for the annual meeting: An overall tax increase of 4.95% which equals $119,268,170 and sets the mill rate at 35.02; allocating $55,900,414 to the Board of Education, a 2.91% increase, which equals $1,578.

There was brief discussion that the last number should read in the millions, and there was a brief pause.

Councilor Cooper updated the motion a second time, and moved to endorse the following FY2027 for the annual town meeting, with the additional ECS dollars of $1.4 million included, with an overall tax increase of 3.51%, which equals $119,268,170 and sets the mill rate at 34.55; allocating $55,100,414 to the Board of Education, a 2.91% increase, which equals $1,578,520; allocating to Town government operations a 4.43% increase, which equals $1,585,915; and authorizing the Town Manager to provide retirement incentives to eligible employees, directing the Town Manager to stay within the $172,000 incentive budget given; utilizing a $3 million amount of unassigned fund balance for general fund balance applied. Councilor Merritt seconded.

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

The motion passed 5-4-0.

Adjournment

Councilor Mahon moved to adjourn and Councilor DeBeatham-Brown seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:54 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/KjdbBaqb5Z4