The call
1. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the estimate and recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town of Westport for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
2. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town Railroad Parking Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
3. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town Sewer Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
4. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Wakeman Town Farm Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
5. To take such action as the meeting may determine, to require that property taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, shall be due and payable in four quarterly installments, and to designate the dates of the first days of July, October, January, and April as the dates upon which such installments shall be due and payable, and that all taxes in an amount of $100 or less shall be due and payable in a single installment on the first day of July.
6. To take such action as the meeting may determine to require that the motor vehicle tax shall be due and payable in a single installment.
7. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the First Selectman and a request by the Conservation Director, to amend Section 2-55 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Westport, Connecticut by increasing the land use fees to the extent they relate to the Conservation Department. (First reading. Full text of the proposed fee schedule is available in the Town Clerk’s office).
8. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance to approve an appropriation in the amount of $950,000 to the Capital & Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund (C&NEF) Account to purchase 5 dump trucks to replace five 2002 trucks.

Minutes
Moderator Eileen Flug:
Good evening. This meeting of Westport’s Representative Town Meeting is now called to order. We welcome those who are joining us tonight in the Town Hall auditorium, as well as those watching us streaming live on westportct.gov, and those watching on Optimum Government Access Channel 79 or Frontier Channel 99. My name is Eileen Lavigne Flug and I am the RTM Moderator. On my right is RTM Secretary Jackie Fuchs. Tonight’s invocation will be delivered by RTM member Catherine Calise:
Invocation, Catherine Calise, district 2:
Happy Monday. Happy May everybody. When Velma called to ask me to give the invocation to kick off our budget meetings for May I was quite surprised and honored! She said it would be really nice, ‘your family has such a long history in Town and your Father was on the RTM for 10 years.’ In fact, my dad recently asked me if I remembered going to The League of Women Voters or going door to door with him when he was campaigning for the RTM…..so I got my training young! Few people know my Great Uncle Dominic was on the Shellfish Commission for many years and I remember his retirement party from there more than 20 years ago in room 301….little did I know I would be spending so much time there! Westport is special to many people for different reasons; for me, it’s my roots and my hometown. There was a time when Main Street was all mom and pop stores that knew you by your first name. It was common to run into Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Robert Redford, and Jack Klugman….you had to wonder if this was the East Coasts’ version of Hollywood! Westport was a place where I used to welcome newcomers into our neighborhood with a freshly baked cake I had made, hand delivered to their doorstep welcoming them to Westport. Over the years our Town has grown and welcomed many more families to enjoy the very special place it is. Over the years, our Town has grown and welcomed many more memories to enjoy the special place it is. With that, I’d like to have a few words of thanks and guidance.

Lord, we are gathered here tonight with the great privilege and responsibility of representing our fellow citizens in closing the chapter on thousands of hours of work by hundreds of dedicated employees, elected officials and volunteers whose goals are embraced by the spirit of a better tomorrow. We pray that you will provide us with the objectivity and courage required to make the correct decisions to successfully open a new chapter for the year ahead with the optimism and belief that we will continue to be a community that serves all its citizens in the best and most economical way possible. Amen.

There were 34 members present. Ms. Thomas and Ms. Kirby notified the Moderator that they would be absent. Ms. Cady notified the Moderator that she would be late. Ms. Hogan, Ms. Hamlin and Ms. Feller were also late.

Ms. Flug:
Are there any corrections to the minutes of the April 7 meeting? Seeing none, they are deemed approved. If you later find any corrections, please let Jackie or me know.

Announcements
I have an announcement that former RTM member and Deputy Moderator Bill Raines passed away this past weekend. Mr. Raines was on the RTM from 1990 – 2001. There will be a memorial service planned within the next few weeks so stay tuned for more details about the memorial service.
We send birthday greetings this month to RTM members Neil Phillips, Kate Kirby, Peter Gold, and David Floyd. Happy Birthday!

Our next RTM meeting will be tomorrow night, May 5, and, if necessary, Wednesday, May 6, both at 7:30 p.m.

There are no upcoming RTM committee meetings scheduled.

**RTM Announcements**

Dave Floyd, district 4:
On his final RTM meeting, we'd just like to say a few words on behalf of the RTM about Stuart McCarthy. We’d like to express gratitude and best wishes to Stuart McCarthy. I wish one of your biggest fans, Bill Meyer, was here to speak. For 26 years, you were an excellent steward of our beloved parks, golf course and beaches. But you didn’t stop there. You improved our parks and beaches and built our recreational programs: The Levitt Pavilion, the Longshore Pavilion, Longshore Golf, Wrecking Crew to name a few. The crown jewels of Westport. It was your job, but we know it was also your passion. You brought energy, integrity and forthrightness every day. There’s an old saying, “There’s no limit to what a man can achieve if he doesn’t care who gets the credit.” I think that is fitting. So long, Stu, and a heartfelt fist bump.

Ms. Flug:
Thank you Mr. Floyd and thank you for being here at, probably, your last RTM meeting; although, you’re always welcome to come back or to watch us streaming live on westportct.gov.

Matthew Mandell, district 1:
It’s a Chamber of Commerce announcement. The Chamber of Commerce is having its Second Annual First Citizen Awards. It’s on June 9. We will be honoring Maxine Bleiweiss, the retiring Executive Director of the Library, Sam Gault, the President of Gault Energy and the keynote speaker will be Ron DeFeo, the CEO of Terex Corporation, and also we will be honoring three young entrepreneurs, three seniors from Staples High School that have been doing their own entrepreneurial work and two seniors from Weston High School, as well. So, hopefully, you guys would like to come to the gala evening on June 9 to celebrate the wonderful things people in Westport and Weston have been doing.

Ms. Flug:
Before we begin with the agenda, I’d like to quickly lay out the plan for the meetings tonight and tomorrow night. We are going to review the Town Budget tonight and the Education Budget tomorrow night. The first Resolution of Agenda item 1, approving the Town Budget, will be voted on tonight as long as we don’t go past a certain hour, and the other two Resolutions of Agenda item 1, involving the Education Budget and the combined budget, will be voted on tomorrow night. I’ll be making a few adjustments to the order of the agenda for efficiency: Tonight we’ll start with the first reading, listed as agenda item 7, and then move to agenda item 1, the Town Budget. We’ll then go to
agenda items 2, 3 and 4 (Railroad Parking Fund, Town Sewer Fund and Wakeman Town Farm Fund), and finish up tonight with agenda item 8, the dump truck appropriations. Depending on how long our meeting goes, agenda items 5 and 6, dealing with the timing of tax payments, will be addressed either tonight, or tomorrow night after the Education Budget. If we do not complete the Town side of the budget this evening, we will still start with the Board of Education Budget tomorrow night at 7:30, as planned, and then pick up with the Town side after that is completed. I am hopeful that we can do this all in two nights. If, for some reason we cannot, we will reconvene on Wednesday, the 6th, at 7:30 p.m.

I'll have more comments about the budget when we get to that item, but first let's address the first reading, item 7 of the call.

The secretary read item #7 of the call - To amend Section 2-55 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Westport, Connecticut by increasing the land use fees to the extent they relate to the Conservation Department.

Presentation
Alicia Mozian, Director, Conservation Department:
Thank you very much for amending the agenda. That was very thoughtful of you. I am here tonight to propose a fee change. In the Town Code it says that every three years we need to look at our fees to see if they need any adjustments. In 2012, we did a very big overhaul so that the fees that are proposed this time around are kind of a tweaking of those, just some minor things. I look forward to meeting with the appropriate committees before the meeting in June. Do you know what committees that would be?

Ms. Flug:
The Environment Committee and the Ordinance Committee and perhaps the Finance Committee, as well. We'll have the meetings before the June meeting so we'll be presenting at the June meeting.

Ms. Mozian: I saw the background is in this packet.

Ms. Flug:
There are no committee reports at this time. As I said, we'll have committee meetings within the coming month and reports at that time. Generally, we don't hear comments at first readings although the public is entitled to comment if they wish.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments.

Ms. Flug:
We now turn to the Budget. Typically, the only committee reports delivered verbally during RTM budget sessions are the Finance Committee report on the Town budget, which will be presented tonight, and the Finance and Education Committee reports on the Education budget, which will be presented tomorrow night. Other committee reports
have been sent to RTM members in advance, and there are additional reports on the stage in front. If other committees wish to report verbally, they may do so, especially if their committee reports include recommendations that differ from those of the Finance or Education Committees. For example, if a committee recommends a decrease in the budget or a restoration of an amount cut by the Board of Finance, they should make that report verbally. To do so, please raise your hand when we turn to that section in the budget. I will be calling out each general budget area in turn. If any RTM member wishes to make a motion or discuss that particular area, or a committee wishes to report verbally, please raise your hand when we come to that item of the budget. If no one wishes to discuss that area, I will consider that area approved and move on to the next one. If a motion to decrease or restore an area is made and seconded, we will hear the committee report if the report addresses it, then hear comments from the public, and then turn to the RTM. A word about voting: The RTM may approve or decrease a budget item by a simple majority vote. The RTM may restore funds cut by the Board of Finance by a 70 percent majority vote of those present and voting. An abstention is not a vote and is not counted as a vote. If there are multiple motions to restore or reduce a budget item, we will address them using the fill-in-the-blank method. That means I will ask to have all motions on the floor at once for that particular budget line item. We’ll then vote beginning with the largest reduction or restoration and follow in descending order from that. I would ask the Finance Director to please keep a running total. At the end of our review, we will vote on the first resolution of Item 1, the Town Budget.

I will ask members of the public to please limit their remarks to three minutes. In the first section, which we are going to start in a moment, you may address any individual item or the budget as a whole. If there is a motion to decrease or to restore any item in the budget, I will open the floor back to public comment so the public can comment on that specific item, and I ask that you then confine your remarks to that one area. I understand there will be a motion to restore funds to the Transit District budget, so, for that item, I ask you to hold your comments until that motion comes up, and not address it in the overall budget discussion. In accordance with RTM rules, no new agenda items will be addressed this evening after 11:30 p.m. unless a 2/3 majority of RTM members present agree to continue past that time. I will try to be sensitive to the hour, and if I don’t feel that we will finish tonight at a reasonable hour, I will try to let those departments that I expect we will not get to tonight go home. Hopefully, that will not be necessary. I’d also like to remind everyone of the Town Charter provision on conflicts of interest. Charter Section C38-2 states that “no Town employee or any member, whether elected or appointed, of any Board, Commission, Agency, Committee, Department or of the Representative Town Meeting of the Town shall participate in any official capacity in the hearing or decision upon any matter in which such person has, directly or indirectly, a personal or financial interest. In the event of such disqualification, such fact shall be entered on the records of the commission or board.” Article 6 of our own RTM Rules of Procedure add the provision that “all members should be most sensitive to permitting an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest to exist, even though a complete disclosure of all circumstances would show that an actual conflict did not exist in a particular case.”

Mr. Weiser has notified me that he will not be voting on the Human Services budget.
I ask that any other RTM members who would like to recuse themselves from the vote on any particular department’s budget make their intentions known at this time by raising your hand and indicating the portion of the budget so that we can put that in the record. Mr. Mandell will be recusing himself from voting on the Earthplace budget. Ms. Talmadge is recusing herself from voting on the Wakeman Town Farm Budget and the Earthplace budget. Ms. Milwe is recusing herself from voting on the Wakeman Town Farm budget. So noted. Thank you.

Finally, while at times it may seem that we are going through certain segments of the budget without much discussion, you should know that members of the RTM have spent a great deal of time meeting with Town staff, with board and commission members, and in committee meetings about the budget. RTM committee members have attended Board of Finance meetings and budget workshops, and have met and worked with the specific Town departments and boards and commissions over which the committees have budgetary oversight, in some cases for months. What you see now is the culmination of all that effort.

The secretary read item #1 of the call - To adopt a budget for the Town of Westport for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable. By show of hands, the budget passes unanimously.

Presentation
First Selectman, Jim Marpe:
Madam Moderator, members of the Representative Town Meeting, Town of Westport employees and fellow Westport citizens:
Several weeks ago, I presented to the Board of Finance the proposed budget of the Town of Westport for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2015 and ending June 30, 2016. At that time, I presented some broad themes that focused on delivering the excellent services that Westporters have come to expect: controlling our expenses through efficiencies; fully funding our obligations while paying down long term debt; and minimizing property tax increases. I am pleased to say that the Board of Finance agreed with these themes and direction and unanimously adopted my proposed budget with only a minor revision. Tonight I am reiterating the “Citizen-centric” theme from last year – making Westport a Town that continues to work on behalf of all its citizens; one that is constantly looking for efficient, effective, innovative and affordable ways to deliver and improve Town services. With the help of the Green Task Force, I also asked every department to focus on sustainability – the concept of leaving our Town as good as, or better than we found it, particularly in the areas of energy utilization, water quality, waste management and recycling. The objective is to reduce the Town’s impact on our environment and resources of all kinds. In addition, I specifically tasked the departments of Public Works and Parks and Recreation to look for cost-effective ways to improve the maintenance and upkeep of public spaces such as our beaches, parks and shopping areas. Tonight, I am here to present for your review and discussion, the Town portion of the Westport Operating Budget. After receiving feedback at the budget workshop
meetings earlier this year, I worked with our Finance Director, Gary Conrad, to refine our budget request. I want to acknowledge Gary’s leadership in these efforts along with the thoughtful and proactive participation of all our department heads in re-thinking various elements of our budget. With their input and help, we have also developed a five year operating budget forecast and a five year capital expenditure forecast. We plan to review and discuss those at future meetings.

The Town budget for the coming fiscal year as recommended by the Board of Finance is $78,885,507 or a 2.5 percent increase over the current year budget. Let’s take a look at the Town budget by specific department and accounting code grouping.

Our first category is General Government which includes:
- Land Use Departments
- Tax Assessment, Collection and Finance
- Audit
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Voter Registration and Elections
- Town Clerk
- Historic District
- Selectman’s Office

The proposed budget for this group is $5,977,859, or an increase of 1.4 percent. Within the General Government category, the significant increases are related to our information technology migration to the Microsoft Government Cloud, the need to budget for, potentially, two presidential primaries, a new position in the Planning and Zoning Department, and the expansion of an existing part-time position in Human Resources to full-time. In Planning & Zoning, we are proposing a Land Use Coordinator’s position that will make it faster and easier for the public to obtain land use permits. The Coordinator will serve to streamline the permit process and will serve as an interdepartmental liaison on behalf of those seeking permits. Not only will we be able to process permits faster, but we will be able to increase the number of permits issued weekly by 30 to 50 percent and substantially reduce the waiting time for the public. In addition, it will allow our zoning specialists to focus on the increasingly complex applications we are receiving from major commercial developers and also to allocate more time to zoning enforcement efforts. The Land Use Coordinator position has been created in other communities with great success.

I would also like to note that, thanks to earlier approval this year by the RTM, the Planning and Zoning Department will be increasing its fees for the first time since 2003. These changes went into effect today, too late for you to take advantage of the old fees. These long overdue fee increases will make ours fees comparable to similar peer communities and will allow Planning & Zoning to cover much more of its operating costs. This is a graduated fee system whereby residential projects of lesser value will pay less and commercial projects of a higher value will pay more. Based on a rolling three year average, we estimate that Planning & Zoning fees could increase by at least
$250,000 per year. This has been included in the budgeted revenue projections and will be used in calculating the 2015-2016 Mill Rate. The Human Resources Department requests that the position of Payroll Coordinator be made full time. This is a crucial position whose work has expanded due to the changes in Health Care benefits, the addition of the 401 (k)/Defined Contribution plans, the fact that we have more retirees in the Defined Benefit Plan, and additional reporting and analysis needed for management to make crucial decisions relating to pension and contract negotiations. The category of Public Safety (Police, EMS and Fire) reflects an overall increase of 1.7 percent. The Police budget is $8.6 million, reflecting a 2.1 percent increase or $180,000. The increase is attributed to contractual increases for the union membership, five police cars, as part of the normal replacement process, and a new van for the police vehicle maintenance group. The Fire Department budget increased 1.4 percent or $125,000, primarily related to contractual increases for the union membership. A small increase of $18,000 is included for the return of fire prevention education to the schools and to demonstrate fire prevention at smaller public venues like the Slice of Saugatuck and the Rotary Duck Race. In an additional bit of good news, our $1.1 million budget for Fire Department water service represents a three percent decrease because of favorable tax rulings for Aquarion which will be shared with customers over the next several years. The Public Works budget of $9.6 million reflects an increase of three percent or $276,000. This represents increases in road maintenance for catch basin cleaning, street marking, and the purchase of a new small truck with a plow and sander. Approximately $50,000 of the increase is for solid waste disposal driven, in part, by the stronger economy driving volume and by additional waste disposal fees being levied by the state. We are also planning to expand the contractual hours of the Tree Warden to 35 hours a week because of the positive results of his activities throughout the Town and the opportunity to expand his success in grant writing and obtaining tree donations. He will also devote a portion of his time to open space coordination and improvement. The Westport/Weston Health District’s budget totals $542,402. This 2.5 percent increase is a reflection of contractual obligations. The Human Services department shows a small increase of 1.3 percent or $14,654 which is a result of a modification of a program manager’s salary and responsibilities. In addition, we are extending the hours of operation of the Senior Center. More of our seniors have chosen to remain in the workforce, so they are not able to use the Center for Senior Services during traditional “business hours.” The Parks and Recreation budget will increase $4.6 percent or $218,000 to $5 million as a result of an increase in contracted services for field and park maintenance improvement projects. We are also requesting funds to improve the power and lighting outlets in the marina docks, replacing the workboat and its trailer, and the installation of Jet Ski ramps. The marina and boating expenses are largely offset by our boating fees. We have also experienced an increase in the enrollment in our various programs; those costs are reflected in this budget, but will be offset by an increase in fees. Also, we have significantly revised the Parks & Recreation user fee structure which will result in an overall increase in fee income. The Library submitted a request for an increase of $114,828 or 2.5 percent which is a result of contractual salary increases, innovation and technology services, and expanded marketing, communications and information services.
A word about Westport's debt structure; the Town and Board of Education debt outstanding as of June 30, 2015 will be $108.8 million. The Town, schools and Sewer Fund will continue their aggressive program to pay down debt with another $13.3 in principal payments for the year ending June 30, 2016. The Town portion is $2.8 million. New debt issues are planned for the 2015-2016 fiscal year in the amount of $5.9 million which includes $5.5 million of authorized but unissued debt.

Westporters value the open spaces that are available to them. I believe it will be important to have the ability to move quickly and put options on key properties to become open space if and when they become available. We certainly had that discussion last week. I also believe it is important to demonstrate that we are seriously considering acquiring strategic properties. Consequently, I am requesting a $200,000 transfer from the General Fund to the Real Property Fund to add to the existing $800,000 in that fund. None of that fund can be spent without appropriation authorization of our funding bodies, but I believe we need to set aside these funds in the good times in order to be able to react quickly and seriously to what could be once-in-a-generation opportunity. Going forward, I plan to examine how portions of our various land use fees could also be used to build our Real Property Acquisition Fund.

Pensions and OPEB Funding for employee pensions are re-evaluated every year. The pension funds in the aggregate were reported to be partially underfunded as of June 30, 2013, the latest valuation year, but the picture continues to improve on the funding of these obligations. As of March 30, 2015, the market value of the pension fund was $269,766,088 which is approximately 90 percent of the anticipated liability. The request for the Annual Required Contribution (ARC) to the pension budget is $9.6 million compared to the contribution in the 2014-2015 budget, the current year, of $10,953,862. Retiree medical costs are now funded through the OPEB (Other Post Employee Benefits) Account. By June 30, 2015, there will be $35,003,062 in the OPEB Account and the budget this year calls for a contribution of $6,455,000, as the Town continues to build the balance to reflect the actual unfunded 20-year projected liability. That 20-year unfunded liability is currently calculated to be $107,538,526 so there remains a big gap in accounting for this long term liability. The good news, compared to many other municipalities, is that we are making steady progress annually in addressing it.

Earthplace has requested $95,000 for 2015-16 which represents no increase over the prior year. Last year its income exceeded its projections as a result of stronger programming, higher attendance and increased contributions. The current year is on track for a 20 percent growth in revenues.

The $90,000 decrease that you see up there represents the accounting for a previous appropriation for two capital projects that will be completed this fiscal year: The Woodland Pond has been restored and is awaiting a new education platform planned for later this spring. Private funds totaling $14,800 were raised at the fall event to ensure completion. Plans for the Harbor Watch lab move are being finalized and a late spring move is still on schedule. This $100,000 project is supported by a split of Town and private funding.
With regard to the Westport Transit District, this is the one area of my proposed budget where the Board of Finance has taken a reduction. My original budget request was $310,359. Specifically, the Board of Finance removed $37,714 from the requested Transit District funding: $20,000 for marketing and $17,714 as Westport’s share of a new Norwalk Transit District position which would be focused part-time on marketing and planning efforts for Westport. During the restoration period I requested that the Board of Finance reconsider funding these two activities. The request was rejected which has resulted in the current Board of Finance request of $272,645. It is now up to the RTM to decide if it wishes to restore some or all of the $37,714. These additional funds are intended to fund opportunities to increase ridership, in part, by marketing the use of a new app to allow users to know when they can expect a bus and partly to support professional transit planning that would be provided by the Norwalk Transit District. If restored, I believe it will be important to establish metrics that measure the success of these and other initiatives covered by these additional funds in anticipation of the same funding concerns next year.

Finally, I have included the three other major funds that you will be voting on:

- **Railroad Parking:** The Railroad Parking Division is a partnership between the State Department of Transportation and the Town of Westport. Fifty percent of any unexpended excess funds that remain after five years are returned to the DOT. The Railroad Parking Fund is always budgeted to break even or to be cost neutral. Any excess revenues or reduction in expenses revert back to the Railroad Reserve fund. With the approval of the Department of Transportation and appropriate Town funding bodies, these funds may be appropriated for Capital projects such as parking lot repaving. I should note that in 2014-15, the Town experienced twelve winter storms that put a severe stress on the Railroad Parking snow removal budget. Railroad Parking will be coming back for an additional appropriation from those reserves to cover this overage. The Railroad Parking Division is overseen by the Police Department and the security of the stations is performed by police officers. Administration is overseen by the Deputy Chief and the Finance Department and the Town’s General Fund is reimbursed for those administrative costs by the Fund. The Fund is run so that the users pay for the cost of operating the Railroad parking and infrastructure. The general taxpayers do not fund any portion or bear any expense of the operations of the Railroad Parking Division. The decrease in the budget is the result of a reduction in extra help and reduction in overtime.

- **Wakeman Town Farm:** Previously this year, the RTM approved a capital appropriation to the Town-owned Wakeman Town Farm to make necessary repairs to the farmhouse and to renovate the classroom spaces. The Town provides no operating funds to the Farm. It is important to note that while its funds appear in our budget and go through the budget process and all of our budget controls, Wakeman Town Farm is fully self-supporting through fundraising and program fees.
- Sewer: The Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) operates as a separate Fund and is paid for by the users. To the extent that Town buildings such as the school buildings and this building, we do use the General Fund to pay for our share of the sewer use. Otherwise, this is self-supported by all users of the sewer and no one else.

There are no changes to these three fund budgets from previous submissions.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this summary of the Town's proposed operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year. My thanks to our department heads who have worked to develop a conservative, responsible budget that reflects the economic realities of our citizens as well as the realities of our operating costs. I also believe this budget supports the on-going quality of life that we have come to expect in Westport. I look forward to your favorable action on this budget recommendation. Thank you for your time and attention. The department heads and I are here to respond to your questions and comments.

Board of Finance, John Pincavage:
Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the RTM and present my comments about the Board of Finance–approved budget for 2015-2016. Rather than repeat the First Selectman’s presentation, I will focus on the fact that this year's budget process was the least controversial of any budget since I have been on the board. Both the Town and the Board of Education budgets were approved with minimum controversy with one minor exception. The First Selectman and managers of the various Town Departments as well as the Board of Education and the Education Department staff are to be congratulated on the their budget preparations. The best part about this year's process was the real hard work was done in the workshops. That was where things got ironed out and people understood what needed to be done going forward. The fact that we had near unanimous approval on everything is a testimony to that. Based on the combined budget, we are probably up 2.28 percent for both budgets. That’s going to be offset by continued growth in the grand list, continued strength in building permits, conveyance tax receipts, as a result of that, the Board of Finance should be able to set a mill rate for this year, assuming this budget is approved in the range of zero plus or minus one percent. Last year, if you remember, we had a fractional decline in the mill rate. Our goal for this year was to basically have it unchanged or very close to unchanged. We are also going to be able to maintain a 10 percent plus funds ratio to expenditures. Our minimum goal is to have something better than nine percent. What were we concerned about? Primarily, increases in head count. Why are we so negative on that? Again, primarily because they carry a long tail. If you hire someone as a permanent employee, you have them there for 25 or 30 years and then you have another tail that goes on into retirement and also health benefits for a long period of time. We were concerned about that and, fortunately, it was held down to very minimal levels primarily to maintain current services. Secondly, the board wants to keep a focus on increasing efficiencies between Town departments and the Board of Education by combining functions where is makes sense, outsourcing where it makes sense; effectively, just becoming a more efficient operation for the benefit of the citizens of the
Town. We continue to attack our unfunded liabilities, especially OPEB, which I guess by the end of the year, it’s still only 30 percent funded. Again, with over $100 million liability, we’re making progress but we’re not there yet. The only proposed budget that was reduced was the Transit District. Please understand that we did not eliminate the Transit District budget. We did not wholesale gut it. Basically, we got rid of two proposed increases. One was for $20,000 for marketing. We gave a $20,000 marketing grant last year and, as we found out in our deliberations, much of it was unspent. If it’s unspent by the end of June 30, it gets turned back in to the Town. Our promise to them was that if, in fact, our $24,000 reduction held, we would be willing to continue to carry over those moneys that might have to come back to the Town General Fund at the end of the year. The other thing that we decided to not approve was the $17,714 proposed to fund half of a new person at the Norwalk Transit District who is to assist the Westport Transit District. What was never made completely clear is what this person would be doing, who would be managing him or her, and what are the metrics by which this person would be judged. If those questions had been answered to the satisfaction of the Board of Finance, there likely would have been a different outcome. The bottom line is that the Board of Finance approved budget for 2015/16, the tax rate increase, if any, will remain small, Town services will be maintained at satisfactory levels and our school system will be able to maintain its high quality, a pretty good trifecta in my estimation.

Committee report
Finance Committee, Jeff Wieser, district 4:
I will try to be as brief as possible with my report. There are copies up here or it is online in the electronic packet in the Town calendar. Our committee is required in the Town Code to study Town revenues and financial policies and practices. We work with Town officials to secure adequate reports for the larger Representative Town Meeting. The Finance Committee further studies the current financial position, the financial aspects of the annual budget, capital requirements and long-term financial planning. We met on several occasions with the Board of Finance and the Board of Education. I certainly agree with John Pincavage. It’s been a great year, a very cooperative year in talking about the various budgets. Our committee spent many hours with them. Most importantly, we met with Schools Superintendent Elliott Landon and all Board of Education members, including Chair, Michael Gordon, on April 22 to review the Board of Education budget. Subsequently, First Selectman Jim Marpe and Finance Director Gary Conrad and many Department Heads joined us on April 23 to review the Town of Westport Budget. I have to thank the Finance Committee Allen Bomes, Lois Schine, Cathy Talmadge, Rick Weber, Seth Braunstein and Kate Kirby for many hours with these boards and in the workshops for their attention to the budget process. On their behalf, I also thank all of the individuals, named and not named here, for their patience in helping us deal efficiently with the many intricacies of the budgeting process.

This report, covering the Town Budgets, is the first of two budget reports prepared by the Finance Committee. The second, covering the 2015-16 Education Budget, will be presented tomorrow by Allen Bomes.

BACKGROUND
The preparation for this year’s budget discussion was similar in many respects to that of the previous few years; although, as I say, it really was a whole lot less contentious than some of the many I’ve enjoyed over the years. The rebound of the financial markets has reduced some of the urgency in funding the balances in the pension and OPEB accounts, but there are still a few critical issues: We continue to be burdened by the large contributions required by those legacy plans; the Town continues the need to pay down our still substantial debt outstanding. Finally, all are committed to keeping the tax burden of the Town’s citizens as reasonable as possible. We reviewed the Town Budget, as presented and approved by the Board of Finance at its March 17 Meeting. The question of restoration, as John points out, is often a broad and contentious issue. This year, we only had the two things to deal with, both involving the Westport Transit District. Mr. Marpe and the department heads of the largest departments helped us focus on the bigger issues confronting their departments. We came up with a budget of $78,885,507, a 2.46 percent increase to the budget. It is a balanced request, as the projections of virtually all departments were within a modest range. While various aspects of the departments veered off the average, but all departments are maintaining a disciplined approach to budgeting. We really did not find any particular conflict with the presentations by any of the largest departments or their managers. We continue to focus on the ongoing need to move the pension plans of the Town to Defined Contribution contracts and away from Defined Benefit plans. This effort continues and is gaining steam over the next few years as we are able to negotiate with all our major unions. It is something we are all keeping our eye on as it is important to the Town.

We spoke at length on the subject of the Westport Transit District. Westport Transit District Commissioners, Jennifer Johnson and Gene Cederbaum, requested restoration of two amounts. The first is for $20,000 for marketing, and the second is for $17,714 as explained. That would be for a part-time employee which, if approved through this restoration and if the State provides its share of the funding, this person would be employed by the Norwalk Transit District to work half time on Westport issues. As Mr. Marpe just said, he is not specifically asking for the restoration but he did not object to it in any way. On the first request, we were advised that a similar $20,000 marketing amount, as Mr. Pincavage said, had been in this Fiscal Year, but only $3,000 has been spent and possibly another $3,000 will be spent on repairing a sign. We went a little bit in a different tack. The Transit District was asked to assure us that if we provided the restoration, they would be frugal in their use of this year’s approved $20,000 allocation, they would return as much as possible to the General Fund, and they would report back to us after June 30, then we would approve the restoration. With that comment, we voted 5 – 1 to approve the restoration of the $20,000 with Kate Kirby objecting.

Secondly, the $17,714 is requested to be spent on a half time administrator, which would put the Transit District on a more professional footing. As a part time employee (or shared employee) operating under the Norwalk Transit District, this person will be outsourced, with no benefit or pension obligations on Westport’s part. They would add expertise that would be very useful during what we thought was a great time with the ramp - up of the Transit District’s plans to add GPS technology for its ridership, and extra buses in the evening hours. On that basis, we again approved 5 - 1 the restoration of that $17,000 with Kate Kirby objecting.
BUDGET RECOMMENDATION
With the restoration, we voted unanimously 6-0 to adopt the slightly revised $78,923,221 Selectman's Budget which now represents a 2.51 percent increase over the FY2014-2015's revised budget, so instead of 2.46, 2.51.

In other actions, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the RTM the Board of Finance approved budgets for the Sewer Fund ($4,739,320); the Railroad Fund ($1,801,974) and the Wakeman Town Farm Fund ($115,600).

TAXATION IMPLICATIONS
Just a few points which John very clearly pointed out but I will belabor, once this is approved with the Board of Education budget tomorrow, it would create a total Town budget of $202,805,295. This is 2.1 to 2.2 percent increase which is very modest for where we have been in the past. Once we pass that total budget, there are certain adjustments that go through the calculation. Those include the non-tax revenues such as Parks And Rec. fees, which is why it is good to get Parks And Rec. fees up, licenses which have been helped a lot by the building activity and sales activity, grants from the state for education and those sorts of things and, one of the most important things, the amount of money from the General Fund that the Board of Finance decides will be brought over to reduce taxes. That fund, as Mr. Pincavage points out, is above the 11 percent cap that they like to keep it at to maintain our bond rating. Last year, we pulled $4.4 million out of that fund to reduce the tax rate last year. If that happens this year, I think there will still be a little bit of a tax increase but it's awfully close and Mr. Pincavage has commented on that.

PROJECTED TAXES 2015-2016
The total amount to be raised by taxation is $183,596,000. We have a Grand List of $9,928,269,000. That brings you to an 18.49 mill rate without that transfer of the general fund. So that will be reduced. What that means, if you have a $700,000 assessed house, last year you were billed $12,558 in taxes. This year will be $12,943 which without that General Fund transfer would be about a three percent increase. The other interesting statistics, quickly, are, the total outstanding in 2006 was $177 million and since 2006 has been paid down to $108 million which is really remarkable but that is $11,286 per household so we still have a debt load which we still have to worry about and think about and make sure we don’t let get away from us. While we still have a small debt issue this year, by the end of 2016, June 2016, debt is expected to be $103,557,000. I think John discussed the annual required contribution to the pension so I won’t go over that. I’ll just say thanks again to the committee and thanks to everybody responsible for a smooth budget process and a very good result.

Ms. Flug:
We’ll now turn to public comment, but first I’d like to note a few guidelines for the public: When you come to the podium, please state your name and spell your last name, and state your address for the record. Please limit your remarks to three minutes, and while you are certainly welcome to support and agree with comments that have already been made, in order to save time, please don’t repeat the same comment. With that said, are
there any members of the Westport electorate who would like to address the budget as a whole?

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Dr. Heller read the resolution and it was seconded

RESOLVED: That the First Selectman’s budget items recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting be adopted, and the sum of $___________ for the First Selectman’s Budget is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures and such sum shall be added to the amount appropriated for the Board of Education Budget tomorrow night.

Ms. Flug:
It has been moved and seconded to approve the resolution just read. Before we address the budget by category, are there any RTM members who would like to address the budget as a whole?

Members of the RTM
Wendy Batteau, district 8:
I just have my usual quick question about calculations with respect to OPEB in particular. Are the employees who are with the Board of Education and receiving OPEB still included in the Town’s budget line for OPEB contributions? If so, could you say what is the amount of money that is in the Town’s budget that would actually accrue from the Board of Education.

Gary Conrad, Finance Director:
I don’t have the valuation report with me but the OPEB cost is about $10.5 million of which $6.5 million goes in on a cash basis, goes into the investment of the fund. The rest of it is paid on a pay as you go basis. That represents only the Town side. The Board of Education has the portion that they fund and that is on a pay as you go basis. The future liabilities on the Board of Education side would be for the WMEU employees that are members of the plan and also there is a piece in there of people that are not covered by Medicare and are currently retired. There is also a projection in there for the people who are not 65 and not covered by Medicare and we also have a liability for those. I don’t have the exact number. I just have my budget book with me. I apologize.

Ms. Batteau: Do you have a ball park number?

Mr. Conrad:
I know that on the retiree side, just the Medicare portion alone represents a little over $4 million. That’s a very small group of people. There are approximately 30 people that are not covered under Medicare that we have to pay the full cost on the Board of Education side. In addition to that, there are probably 30 to 32 members that are active that are also in that group that they calculate. They could possibly retire before 65 when they would possibly be able to go into Medicare.
Ms. Batteau:
Just for people who haven't been following the OPEB adventure, this refers to employees that are actually Board of Education employees and receive OPEB benefits. Their OPEB benefits are calculated in the Town's budget rather than the Board of Education budget.

Ms. Flug:
At this time, I will read each category of the budget one by one. If there are any comments, questions or motions on the category that is read, please raise your hand. If not, we'll move on to the next one.

Ms. Flug reviewed the budget:
Section 1: No comments.

Section 2 Public Safety:
Kristan Hamlin, district 4:
We all spent an enormous amount of time working on Baron’s South and that consumed and took away a lot of our focus. As many of you know, I turned with renewed interest last week to the Police Budget. I have expressed to many of you and to the Police Department my concern about the size of the budget. It’s $8.6 million and then there is another $318,000 worth of overtime cost for police officers in the Railroad Budget. Together that’s $8.918 million. I looked at the cost for other Towns in Fairfield. It’s very easy to find that information. Each Town posts their budgets and took the budget of other Police Departments and divided it by the size of other populations of those Towns to get some comps. What I found is our budget works out to $8.918 million divided by 27,000 people is $333.30 a person. Weston is $173 a person, about half. Fairfield is $220 a person. New Canaan is $287. Norwalk which is the high crime and usually you would have a disproportionately high number is $236. I also noticed that Towns like Wilton reduced the budget by 1.89 percent for their police budget last year at the request of their RTM the year before. Weston decreased their police budget. They went down $100,000 or so down to $1.8 million. Then I looked at crime rates to try to figure out whether to see if it could be justified by that way and it looks like Westport does worse in terms of crime statistics than Weston, New Canaan, Easton, Wilton, Greenwich, Darien, the places where you would think we would do better, we do significantly worse. What is very clear is that the part of the budget that is the highest for Westport is salaries and the compensation. That is significantly higher than places like Darien. It is almost double Darien which is a comparable sized Town. I know we have some restraints because of the pension benefits and union agreements but the thing that concerns me the most that I think we can address most effectively is the $1.2 million overtime costs that we have in the general police budget which is made worse by the fact that there is another $318,000 in the Railroad Parking Budget for police overtime for a total of $1.518 million. If you look at the overtime costs for other Towns, it’s disproportionally high compared to the other Towns as well. I know the Board of Finance has tried to do something about this by asking that the numbers of the police officers come down and not be added to and I think that's the correct approach but, it is very clear when you look at the number of police officers in other Towns that we have a
very high head count and we have lots and lots of police officers. Normally, what that would mean is you would not have to resort to overtime because you have a high head count. There are 16 police officers in Weston in their whole Police Department. We have got 74 people in our police department including 66 sworn officers and the Deputy Chief and the Chief. So we have plenty of officers, more than our comparators in other Towns and yet we are resorting to really what is an abuse of overtime. It's just too much. I guess my concern is that we cut overtime significantly in the Police Budget by $500,000 but given how burned out we all are with Baron's South and how difficult it is going to get people to focus on this now, I am really just calling on the Board of Finance from at least this member of the Public Protection Committee and I'm also on the Railroad Parking, Transit Committee, I'm asking the Board of Finance to focus on that next year, actually imposing strict limits on overtime and cutting overtime by at least $500,000.

Public Works – no comments
Health District – no comments
Human Services – no comments

Library
John Suggs, district 5:
I'll preface this by saying it's more than a bit daunting to come before you tonight after six days ago having worked so closely with Jimmy Izzo to whip the votes on the Baron's South issue and knowing that 20 of my peers voted on the other side of that issue, other than myself. I take that in due consideration. Also, the fact that I'm addressing the sacred third grail of our Town, which is the library, so I know this is an uphill battle. I fully respect that but it has come up. It originated with a constituent and so I need to follow this to the logical conclusion. With that, I am making a motion and depending on the outcome of that motion, there may be a second motion. I will read it out now:

I move to decrease the library budget by an amount to be determined following a public noticed bidding process but not to exceed $15,000 for the repair of the floor damaged by the weight of the library stacked books in the dining room of the Golden Shadows home. I believe I have a second.

Ms. Flug:
You need to state your motion in terms of a certain dollar amount. You cannot have a conditional statement.

Motion: To decrease the library’s budget by $15,000.

Ms. Flug: It has been moved and seconded to decrease the library’s budget by $15,000.

Mr. Suggs:
To put it in context, our chair is going to refer to it in his report.

Ms. Flug:
We will have the Library, Museum and Arts report and then we will have comments by the public.

Arthur Ashman, district 7:  
I’m not going to read the report word for word but I’m going to try to dwell on certain points that the committee felt were irritating, in general, and wanted to bring to the attention of the RTM. I might point out before I start that a lot of these points have been settled by an email that we received today from our Selectman but let me tell you the tone of our meeting. The committee members present were myself, Brandy Briggs, John Suggs and Rick Weber. Absent were Catherine Calise, Hope Feller, Kristian Hamlin, Clarissa Moore and Wendy Batteau. Also attending and I think this is important were, of course, the library group, Maxine Bleiweiss, Mike Guthman, Joe Pucci and his staff, Dewey Loselle was there, Helen Garten and Morley Boyd from the Historical Society and, of course, Tony McDowell. I am not going to go into Earthplace budget which I think you’ve heard and Tony has done a lovely job and he is instituting all sorts of ways to increase revenues.

Ms. Flug: Can you stick to the library.

Dr. Ashman:  
The Library, Museum and Arts Committee met on April 7 to discuss the Selectman’s budget for the fiscal year from July 1 to June 30, 2016. We also had some discussions and opinions that were stated on various topics relating to the library and its process for disposing of unwanted books and the use of the Baron’s South mansion called Golden Shadows for storage, handling and manipulation of books. Some of the committee thought the use of Baron’s South as a book storage was totally incorrect. It should also be pointed out that a lot of what we call neglect and destruction occurred in the mansion as a result of the handling of books and the way people reacted there. This whole thing came about when we were reviewing the budget. At the outset, I would like to say the budget of $4,556,340, which represents a 2.42 percent increase from last year after discussions and questions which you’ll hear right now, was approved. The motion that you heard came up because of certain things we encountered in the mansion. This whole thing started when one of John Suggs’ constituents saw books being tossed in a dumpster next to the library. The policy of how books were disposed of and what they do with books was amply covered by Maxine. We had no question with what she said and how she said it but this opened a can of worms with regard to the mansion and what was happening. Today, the entire mansion is used for books and they are stored in boxes. Some of them were open. It was obvious to us that there were some problems which, again, I’m going to say were suitably addressed in the email that you all have with reference to what was going on. I’m going to ask John to give a quick talk about what the committee found.

Mr. Suggs:  
Thank you Arthur. For your edification, these are photos of library books stacked high. They are also blocking a fire exit and so forth. Basically what has happened, as a result of this initial inquiry, it became very clear to us that Golden Shadows has been impacted
negatively as a result of being turned into a storage warehouse instead of the beautiful home that it was. So, we looked at this and we addressed two issues, the first being that the floor was damaged because of the books. That’s addressed to the initial motion that we have but the discussion was that this is no longer sustainable as a storage warehouse. There was a consensus that was reached in our discussion with the library that they would work with the First Selectman’s office and come back with a plan with a target of leaving after the July Book Sale. That was the consensus that we had. Today and over the weekend, that plan was returned to us and I’ll have the library speak for itself and I definitely want the First Selectman’s office to speak for themselves but. Basically, with a statement that they did not intend to move out after the July sale. So this is an issue. Right there, there is a door that is tied up so that vandals can’t get in but it is a fire hazard. I know in the report today, the Fire Chief said he would support efforts as long as they don’t lock the doors and have a fire hazard. This is where we are right now. At this point, I would like to defer to the community because we have several community members who want to talk about this and then we will come back to you after we have heard from the community.

Dr. Ashman:
I would just like to add that originally we had some health concerns, some fire concerns, some insurance concerns and all of the concerns have been addressed in a memo…

Mr. Suggs: Not necessarily all of them.

Dr. Ashman:
Hold on John, we think most of them, John is correcting my words, have been addressed by the memo we received today from the First Selectman’s office. The point that John made and I would like to second is in front of everyone, the library had agreed to move out in six months which is after the book sale.

Members of the Westport electorate
Mike Guthman, Terra Nova Circle, President of the Westport Library Board of Trustees:
I was the one who spoke on behalf of the library at that meeting and at no time did I give a date certain as to when we move out. I told the committee that we would move out if and when the Town thought there was a better use for the mansion than storing books. That was the position that I reiterated in my memo to the First Selectman that was on the stage at the beginning of this meeting. We continue that we have been very grateful that we’ve had these 15 years to use the mansion to store books. It has been an integral part of making the book sale successful. This year the book sales have contributed $91,000 to the library which is $91,000 less that the Town has to provide for those services. In those slides, you saw the books were stacked up against the walls. That was a directive we had from the Department of Public Works following the initial time when one beam did fail and the picture showed that beam being held up on a temporary basis. Since then the books have been stored in a fashion that the dept. of public works assures us is the proper fashion and that is what we will continue to do. If the Fire or Police Department feels that they are stacked inappropriately, we will
certainly shift them around to store them in the proper fashion. I hope you’ve had the chance to read my letter to the First Selectman and his letter back to me.

Jonathan Cunitz, 7 Lamplight Lane, Member of library board and former member of the RTM:
Rather than suggesting that the library budget be cut, I would suggest that the RTM approve approximately $50,000 to pay for the storage of these books at another facility rather than the mansion. The book sale involves hundreds of volunteers spending thousands of hours and the cost of renting a facility other than a Town facility that is available free of charge would equal approximately half of the money that is raised. Basically, what you are saying is half of the work of these people is a waste. We have a facility here that is not being used for any other purpose, that is not planned for any other purpose right now, that is being used safely and there is no reason for the library move out and for that matter to have our budget cut because of some accumulated damage to a facility that has been ignored by the Town for many, many years.

Jeff Block, 67 Partrick Road:
I don’t have a real dog in this race. I really support the library 100 percent. I think it is one of the great institutions that we have. But looking at the inside of the mansion, having walked through it and having taken a look at the damage that was done to it, it was not built as a warehouse. It was built as a home. But the load bearing that it has to take on with these books has damaged it and more than likely will continue to damage it. I do think we need to find another resource for the storage of these books or, somehow, maybe even minimize what is stored there now temporarily. Bring half of it out. Go rent a pod, something of that nature. But do something to save the house. Every day those books are in there, it’s putting more pressure on the beams. You can see from the pictures that the damage has already been done. It’s impossible to ameliorate what has already happened. We need to take some form of action on this. I don’t know whether taking money out of the budget is the right thing to do but if we take money out, let’s not take it out; let’s put it to a use for some alternative form of storage.

Morley Boyd, 6 Violet Lane:
I recently toured Golden Shadows with a licensed architect who has about 40 years of experience in the field. He is also on the State of Connecticut’s list of Certified Architectural Historians. I thought I would share with you a few of his observations because they do directly relate to the matter before you tonight.

1. He described the structure as “A significant example of high style domestic mid-century work”, a first rate house, a distinguished period piece with first rate construction.
2. He stated that “The house needs immediate intelligent attention to remedy the mounting effects of deferred maintenance.”
3. He observed that the living room floor was dangerously overloaded with books, that it appeared to be sagging and that there is catastrophic structural failure quite possible. “It is remarkable that the floor joists have only failed in one room”. He continued “It appeared to me that the living room floor has deflected. This needs to be confirmed with measurements. Two steel beams on the south/north
axis support wood joists. It is possible that these steel beams have bent under the load. We don’t know their sectional dimension or whether this is an accurate surmise but we do know that the living room floor is supported by two beams and if one were to fail, the entire floor would collapse.” He concluded with “The loading of this floor that I observed yesterday is tantamount to a loading experiment in a structural lab looking for the weight that a particular design will withstand and its failure point, not a good experiment when people are occasionally occupying a building.”

Next, I reached out to a licensed structural engineer from Westport. As it happens, he had been similarly consulted by the library 15 years ago concerning storage of books at Golden Shadows and provided firm guidelines on the matter of loading. Because this is a residential building and, therefore, not designed to support the loads associated with the commercial use at present. He recommended the stacking of books should never exceed two feet in height and that storage boxes should only be put at the very edge of the room. After providing his expert opinion, he was contacted again by the library a couple of years ago after the dining room floor partially collapsed into the basement. In direct contravention of his previous advice, books had been stacked to the ceiling. The engineer strenuously repeated his advice that the books be stacked no higher than two feet. Three days ago, I took these pictures, books at eye level. Some rooms had been completely filled. The last thing I wanted to say is the previous use of Golden Shadows was residential. The current use as a storage facility is not permitted in either AA, which was the previous zone, or the current zone which is DOSRD2. It is not permitted. It is illegal under our current zoning regulations and a zoning complaint form is on file.

Helen Garten, 4 River Lane, Third Selectman:
I also have been working on plans for possible uses for Golden Shadows and other residential structures the Town owns but tonight I’m speaking only for myself as a private citizen. I’ve been a long-time supporter of the library and I think the volunteers at the book sale do wonderful work. I think the library and the book sale are tremendous assets for the people of Westport but so is Golden Shadows. We, the people of Westport, own a mansion that time forgot. It looks exactly the same now as it looked 17 years ago when we bought it. In my opinion, it has historical significance and I think it has cultural significance, as well, but we are letting the building die. It may have been good that someone has been occupying the building for all this period but currently, the current use is no longer good for either the building, the books or the volunteers who work there. The space is not climate controlled like a real storage facility would be. There are now simply too many books, too many boxes to be stored unobtrusively and safely. I haven’t counted the boxes but I have been in the building periodically over the last six months and I haven’t seen any diminution in the number of boxes. The problem is I think we should be concerned about blocked exits, we should be concerned stress on the floors. The problem is there really is nowhere else in that building on the top two floors to put these books. The house should be so much more than a storage facility for anybody. Now that the land around it will be open space, the house could be a centerpiece of the property. We are considering, finally, long-term alternative uses for this property but current circumstances make it very, very difficult to do that. It’s tough to assess what electrical needs the building has. It’s tough to assess whether there is damage that has to be corrected before we can even think about an alternative and it’s
very tough to sell people on the possibilities for this house. I think those of you who are in real estate know how difficult that must be. So, I don’t think exit strategy can wait until we have a tenant ready to occupy the building. Frankly, I don’t think a partial effort, moving out some of the books, is going to help us or to help the library. What we need is to empty out the house so we can assess its needs and evaluate good future uses as a community. What the library needs is a real storage place, a place where they can bring in as many books as they want so the library book sale can be as successful and as big as they want it to be.

Ms. Flug:
I’d like to ask all the speakers to confine your remarks to the request for a budget cut of $15,000 which is to repair the Golden Shadows mansion. The question isn’t whether the books should be stored at the mansion or not. The question is whether the library should be asked to pay $15,000 toward restoring the floor. That was the motion? [Yes.]

Mr. Marpe:
Thank you for correcting the discussion we should be having here tonight. The discussion of the use of Golden Shadows and what we do in the future is for another time. The motion, as I understood it, was to reduce the library budget by $15,000. The reality is, while the library is in some ways viewed as a separate entity from the Town, 80 percent of their budget is supported by the Town so this $15,000 we are talking about from one pocket into another pocket is really not a practical reduction, unless your intent here tonight is to reduce the overall library’s budget by that much money, when we struggle with the book sales to help supplement the funds that go there. Having said that, as I said in the memo, we understand and appreciate that there are a lot of concerns about the quality and the way the structure is being maintained. I have committed that the Fire Marshal will inspect on a regular basis to address the concern about fire exits and possible fire concerns. I do believe our Director of the Public Works Department, widely respected gentleman that you have all worked with for nearly 30 years, also has the ability to look at the structure and understand what needs to be fixed and what needs to be addressed. While I respect that other people were somehow in there inspecting the building, the reality is I think our staff also has a great appreciation and great care for that building whether or not others choose to believe that. So, I am committed to regular inspections. I am committed to working with the library to find alternative uses. For the time being, in terms of the $15,000 cut, I recommend you do not take that action. I think it’s inappropriate. We have had a process that has been going on here for months in terms of budget process and to at the last minute to put this forward is inappropriate.

Members of the RTM
Ms. Flug:
Mr. Suggs, you have already spoken once. This will be your second time so we should have the other RTM members speak and then you can come back for your second time. Do you want me to look it up? Under debate on the question, page 42, Robert’s Rules: Immediately after stating the question, the Chair should turn to the maker of the motion to see if he wishes to be assigned the floor first in debate to which the
maker has the right, if he claims it, before anyone else has been recognized even though have others have risen and addressed the chair first.

To my mind, you have already taken the opportunity by making your presentation and making a speech when you made your motion. You didn't just get up and make a motion. You made your motion and you made a speech at the time you made your motion.

Ms. Hamlin:
I was not at the meeting. I am on the Library Committee. Mr. Weber will address what happened at the meeting. I have to agree with Mr. Marpe that it is inappropriate at this time to impose a penalty. My sense just of fairness, the $15,000 deduction is a penalty. It's a penalty that is being imposed without a hearing, without due process. Just on due process grounds alone, I would be opposed to it.

Rick Weber, district 9:
I did attend that meeting. Mr. Suggs brought up some very good points about the condition of Golden Shadows and we discussed it at length. There was an issue about whether it was the responsibility of the library, as the tenant, or the trespasser, or whether it was the responsibility of the landlord, or the Town. Notwithstanding any of this, we decided not to have a penalty; we decided not to impose any reductions; we decided to accept the budget as is and go forward. Now if good people here want to discuss what we want to do with Golden Shadows, great. Let's do it. Let's have a committee meeting at the library. Let's discuss what we want to do with Golden Shadows. Let the Town discuss it. Let people have their issues and have the time to deal with it. This is not the time. This meeting should not be hijacked for the purpose of having a $15,000 penalty against the library. We had the committee, discussed it, resolved it, in a fair and open manner. I don’t know if we had a quorum but whoever showed up, showed up and we discussed it. We asked the library to consider moving out at the end of June or July. They said they would look into it. The Town would have a meeting. I was told there was a meeting subsequent that was very productive and constructive. I'm assuming the good people of Westport are moving in that direction. So I would urge you to vote against the motion and let’s move on.

Ms. Batteau:
I am on the Library, Museum and Arts Committee as well I did not attend the meeting. I had an emergency that night that kept me away from it. We heard from Mr. Weber that the members of the committee which did not constitute a quorum voted against a penalty. I would agree with both Ms. Hamlin and Mr. Weber. This is not the time to impose a penalty. We are penalizing them for not doing something that we did not ask them to do? Why would we do that? I think the library has made good efforts. My concern, frankly, is as much with the condition of the books as well as the condition of the building. The building currently is being assessed, looked at as to whether it’s a historical site. It's currently designated open space. No repairs or anything can be made while it is designated open space. So, there is no other use for it. I see no sense in penalizing the library $15,000 and I suspect if you had a vote of the Library, Museum and Arts Committee right here to make a recommendation, they would recommend, not
unanimously, they would recommend that you not deduct this $15,000. And if you haven’t read Mr. Marpe’s email, I would recommend it.

Peter Knight, district 8:
I have participated in the book sale for the past six or seven years. These are not, as was described, unwanted books. They are donated books. A huge amount of effort goes into sorting the books, pricing the books, segregating the books. Where they are stored is kind of secondary. The whole effort is to raise money to contribute to the Town budget to maintain the library. They contribute about $100,000 a year. Where the books are stored is quite secondary as far as I’m concerned. They have made use of a public property, rightly or wrongly, with some secondary implications for that. It’s a separate issue altogether. As far as I’m concerned we should not support this motion and, on the other hand, we should congratulate the people who have made the huge effort from the Staples Football team to the old men like me from the Y’s Men who contribute to donating these books and sorting them out and raising money to support the library. I oppose the motion.

Brandi Briggs, district 6:
I just wanted to come up really quick as being the fourth person at the meeting. I do agree with what Mr. Weber said. At that meeting, we had a lengthy discussion. We did talk about all these issues but, at the end, we did recommend, all four, even though we didn’t have a quorum, we did vote to recommend that we approve the budget as is. This is not a discussion for tonight. It should be put off to another time and approve the library budget.

Diane Cady, district 1:
John, your original proposal was to deduct $15,000 from the library budget. Why would you do that to the library? I don’t think you shared that.

Mr. Mandell:
John, I’m not sure I understand. You said you were intimidated by coming up in front of here. It’s not because you were in the minority last week. It’s because you are wasting a lot of our time tonight. There is no reason for you to give us a report from a committee when other people said it didn’t happen. They voted to move it forward and that’s exactly what we should do now.

Mr. Suggs:
I wouldn’t say intimidated but sobered. First the question, why the $15,000? Then secondly the issue of the vote and the report and, lastly, I want to speak to the response we got today. The $15,000 because the library has acknowledged that they broke the dining room floor. They have taken full responsibility for it. As with if you broke it, you fix it; I want to see the library repair damage to Town-owned property that they created. So that’s the first piece. The second piece is the report recommended the full budget based on the understanding that there was a consensus at the meeting that they would move out after the July sale. That was the understanding. If you read the minutes, the report was very clear on that. There was a consensus to leave in July. In fact, that target date
was given to us by the First Selectman’s representative, Dewey Loselle. He actually pulled that target date out. Lastly, I want to respond to the issue of the statement that the First Selectman’s office has issued today, late in the afternoon. This statement appears to be a de facto contract. It lists 60 days’ notice and so forth. It appears to be a de facto contract which any lawyer can work on. Unfortunately, Mr. Marpe does not have the authority to enter into such a contract. In short, the de facto long-term non-remunerated contract needs to be presented to the Board of Finance for review and authorization. This is not an act that the First Selectman can take unilaterally. In light of this concern and the concern that, for the last 15 years we have been violating our own zoning laws and zoning regulations, I find it very hard for us to expect any business, any resident to accept our zoning regulations when the Town itself doesn’t follow it. When it was residential zoning AA, it was out of zoning regulations to have a warehouse. When it is open space, it out of regulation so for 15 years this Town has turned a blind eye to a clear zoning regulation.

Ms. Flug:
Mr. Suggs, can you please confine your remarks to the $15,000 for repairing the floor.

Mr. Suggs:
I would like to make a suggestion. The $15,000 to repair the floor, again, it is not a punishment. It is simply holding accountable the entity that caused the damage to fix it. I would like to bring it back to what Dr. Cunitz said, the solution here to a Selectman who is entering into a contract without Board of Finance approval, with legal qualifications.

Ms. Flug: Mr. Suggs, that is not the issue here.

Mr. Suggs:
There is that issue. It’s been raised by public comment and it has to be responded to. It seems to me the solution would be this, if the First Selectman would roll up the $15,000 and roll up the $45,000 to relocate this place for storage and bring to the Board of Finance which he should have done originally, but bring to the Board of Finance a supplemental appropriation request for $60,000, we can solve our legal problem and we can solve all of these issues. I would hope that we would have the leadership of the First Selectman but, barring that, my motion stands.

Ms. Flug:
Mr. Kaner, I apologize to do this at this late notice but that is Mr. Meyer’s seat and we have asked that no one sit in Mr. Meyer’s seat for the remainder of this session.

Dr. Heller
Just a very quick comment, the motion to take $15,000 from the library budget does not solve the problem; therefore, I think that we should just defeat this motion and look to find a solution another way.

By show of hands, the motion to decrease the library’s budget by $15,000 is defeated 1-32-1. In favor: Mr. Suggs, Dr. Ashman abstains.
Parks and recreation – no comments

Miscellaneous #915 Transportation Service

Peter Gold, district 5:
I’m up here to make a motion to restore the $37,714 to the Westport Transit District budget that was cut by the Westport Board of Finance. As was explained earlier, $17,714 will be used to cover Westport’s portion of the costs of a half time transit professional with the remaining portion of the salary to be covered by state funds. It is important to note that there will be no long tail here. There will be no pension liabilities. All the benefits will be covered by Norwalk. The $20,000 remaining of the restored funds will be used to cover marketing and market research budget for the year. These cuts were the only cuts made by the Board of Finance in the combined Town and Education Budget of approximately $180 million. They are less than .002 of one percent of the entire Town budget, a miniscule amount. The request to be restored has been reviewed by three RTM committees, the RTM Finance Committee voted 5-1 to recommend restoration of the funds. The RTM Transit Committee voted 7-0 to recommend restoration of the funds. The RTM Long Range Planning Committee voted 3-2 to recommend restoration with three additional members not present at the meeting asking to be counted as endorsing the restoration, as well. You have those committee reports and hopefully you have read them. One member of the Long Range Planning Committee who did not vote to endorse the request did volunteer to help with the market research study for the Transit District. Jack, when you get back from your vacation, I’ll be sitting on your door step. Oh, you’re back. Let’s talk after the meeting. The Westport Transit District provides six commuter rail access routes to the Saugatuck and Greens Farms train stations in morning and evening plus morning and evening shuttles from the Imperial lot to the Saugatuck train station. Currently, commuters who want to catch the last bus home for Saugatuck or Greens Farms must take a train leaving Grand Central station no later than 6:30. If they use the Imperial Avenue shuttle, they can take a 6:53 train from Grand Central. While details are still being worked out, the evening schedules for commuters’ routes will be extended around Labor Day allowing additional schedules for commuters who may need to leave New York later than current schedules allow use of the Transit District buses to and from the trains. Also, scheduled to be rolled out this fall, is an intelligent transportation system that will permit people to use their smart phones, pads and similar devices to determine exactly when the bus will be at their location. No longer will people have to wonder when the bus will arrive or stand by the roadside worrying that they missed the bus. Both the additional evening commuter routes and the intelligent transportation system will significantly improve the ability of the Westport Transit District to meet the Town’s needs both for the Town’s residents and those who come to Westport to work and to shop. In addition to the commuter rail access services, the Westport Transit District provides five different door to door services for Westport’s senior citizens whether or not they have a disability and for Westport’s non-elderly citizens with a disability. These services permit individuals to get to places in Town such as the library, the Senior Center and to shopping whether on Main Street or the supermarket and to their doctor’s appointments in Town or as far away as Stamford. You may be asking why the Westport Transit District needs a half-time staff person. I’m sure you are. For many years, the
Westport Transit District has relied on support provided by the Norwalk Transit District to operate its bus services. It has greatly benefited from that support in ways large and small, seen and unseen. However, the Norwalk Transit District’s administrative staff has not been extended in well over 10 years and it is strained to its limits. In order to respond to the increasing demands Westport has placed on it and to respond to new market developments and demands. The Norwalk Transit District needs to hire additional professional staff. Working with the Westport Transit District’s two unpaid, volunteer, well intentioned, hard working but with no professional transportation expertise, Directors, this professional staff person with the tentative title of Manager of Planning And Service Development would be dedicating half of his or her time to working on Westport-based projects and initiatives providing Westport with the planning and technical focus it needs for transportation. This is the first time since the early 1990's that Westport will have a transit professional dedicated to helping the Town determine how to best meet its transportation needs. What can the new staff person accomplish? Possible tasks could include analyzing Westport’s current route structure in light of current usage, data gained from the intelligent transportation system, a review of the addresses of those on the waiting list for railroad parking permits and other sources to see if existing routes should be changed or eliminated. For example, such a person could determine if a bus route should be modified to run past the commuter parking lot on the Sherwood Island Connector on the way to Greens Farms Station as a way to help alleviate the lack of parking at that station. The person could determine how to use the intelligent transportation system to better coordinate the coastal link buses with the commuter rail access shuttles so commuters who live anywhere near the Post Road, even if it is not near a current commuter route, can use the Transit District shuttles to get to the train station. The professional could review the recommendations of the SWRPA bus study, long in the making but finally arriving here in draft form this past March, and developing an action plan to implement those recommendations best determined to meet the needs of the Town at a cost the Town could afford. The person could also conduct market research on existing and potential riders developing and implementing an appropriate marketing plan. None of this will happen quickly and the results will not be seen overnight. In fact, even if we vote to restore the funds for this position, given the state’s own budget cycle and the time needed to find and hire the appropriate person, it is likely that the staff person will not be filled before sometime this autumn. Given that, while I believe metrics are important, it is important to understand that whatever metric we come up with for this person, it will have to be a part year metric. Given all this, if we want to preserve a transit system and improve transportation in Westport, we have to invest with a longer term time horizon than one or two years. We got many, many emails on this subject including one from the Green Task Force. As the Green Task Force stated, when it comes to transportation, Westport can plan for the future or live in the past and long-term planning for a sustainable Town starts now. Why do we have a marketing budget? A prime example occurred yesterday. Dan Woog posted a story on his blog about a long-time Westporter who suffered a mild stroke and is no longer able to drive. The Westporter wanted to know if there were Westporters who would be willing to drive him to and from the library several times a week. While many people were kind enough to offer their services, neither the Westporter himself nor any of the volunteers ever mentioned the transit system’s existing door to door service which would pick him up from his door and take him to the library for a total round trip cost of six dollars. People who live in Town,
whether for their whole lives, like the person who was the subject of the blog or just recent arrivals do not know about the bus and if they don’t know about the bus, they can’t take it even if it will come right to their door. Other examples of people not taking the bus simply because they did not know about it abound. Some were set forth in the emails that the RTM members are receiving. Another one came to light at the RTM Transit Committee meeting that discussed the transit district budget. When it was mentioned at that meeting that there was currently a program in Westport funded entirely by the state to provide up to four free taxi rides home for bus commuters who arrive at the train station when the buses are not running either because they arrive after the last bus or have to get home in the middle of the day because of an emergency; the RTM members in attendance at the meeting were amazed. If you don’t think ridership will improve because of marketing, look at the after school shuttles. According to Dewey Loselle at that same meeting, after it was announced it was going to terminate at the end of the school year, after the termination was announced and it got all the publicity in the paper about the attempt to restore it, ridership went up on that service went up 13 percent for a service that is going to be terminated. Parents were simply not aware of the service before hearing about its discontinuance. Marketing is important. Members of the RTM have received numerous emails all in support of the Westport Transit District and the role transit plays in Westport. Support has come from all quarters including the Downtown Merchants Association, the Green Task Force, local realtors, seniors, people with disabilities, people without cars who rely on the bus, commuters and others who simple see the value a transportation system provides in terms of cleaners air, reduced traffic and congestion and improved parking. Many of these people are here tonight and waiting to address the RTM. I don’t need to repeat the reasons they support restoration of funds for them. Rather, I see no better way to demonstrate why you should vote to restore the requested funds than to let you hear from these people directly.

Ms. Flug:
It has been moved to restore the $37,714 to the transportation service budget. Seconded by Ms. Milwe.

Members of the Westport electorate
Melissa Kane, 33 Rice’s Lane, Chair Downtown Steering Committee:
I am speaking this evening to request that the RTM restore in full the amount that was cut by the Board of Finance to the Westport Transit District. To me, this is a simple matter. In order to grow transit you need to support transit and robust mass transit is part of a larger vision of pedestrian friendly, safe, less congested and environmentally sustainable Town and downtown. That means, at the very least, committing to much needed marketing funds and to reasonable matched funds to provide a part-time paid staffer. Without this, our Transit District cannot grow to what it needs to be to be effective for the Town of Westport. Speaking tonight for myself, I’d like to point out how a healthy fully funded Transit District relates to Westport’s Downtown Master Plan which is, hopefully, in the end process of rewrites to get us to a final draft. The Downtown Master Plan is predicated on core values and directives all of which are determined by Westporters and a number of which related directly to transit. Creating a downtown that works for all Westporters, doing it in an environmentally sustainable way, improving traffic flow and enhancing connections between downtown destinations. One of the four main elements of the plan under which
many of its recommendations are grouped is called mobility. This deals with traffic and circulation and is directly connected to transit in all of its modalities. Throughout the plan, multi-modal transit solutions are recommended in order to create the increased mobility that downtown so desperately needs: bridges, pedestrian connections, Post Road crossing improvements, intersection improvements and, of course, two specific recommendations supporting the expansion of and better access to mass transit in downtown. Specifically, and I’m going to quote from our draft here which is available online:

This Plan supports the findings of the SWRPA/Westport Transit District Bus Study as they relate to improving public transit connections to and from downtown, especially the recommendation for a new daytime connector between Saugatuck Station, Imperial Avenue Lot, and downtown. The Plan also would support additional routes into downtown. Providing more transit connections through downtown would help reduce traffic as the hundreds of employees who work in downtown every day—in addition to visitors—would have an alternative means of transportation to reach downtown that does not require parking.

The second recommendation is one to provide amenities for transit passengers such as bus shelters and better signage. None of these important upgrades to mobility can be accomplished without adequate funding for transit. One part-time staffer for bare bones marketing. It’s all connected and it’s simple. We, as a Town, must decide that this, our mobility is a priority. The administration recognizes this. The Downtown Steering Committee recognizes this. The public recognizes this. I hope the RTM will recognize this as well. Thank you for your time.

Eugene Cederbaum, 57 Partrick Road, Co-director with Jennifer Johnson of the Westport Transit District:
You have heard that the district is seeking the restoration of $37,714 to its budget. I think it’s important to point out and Peter mentioned it that both the budget and, even more so, the request for restoration is a miniscule part of the overall Selectman’s Budget let alone the overall Town’s budget but its importance to transportation is very significant. Jennie and I are extraordinarily gratified but not totally surprised by the letters, emails and phone calls that the RTM has received in support of restoration from a broad spectrum of those who live, work, provide services to children, the elderly and others in our Town. This showing of support for public transportation is in direct contrast to the opinions expressed by Board of Finance members to the effect that there can never be reasonable demand in Westport for bus transportation. That opinion is one that is not supported by the support that you have already received in document form and already have heard tonight and I’m sure will hear after my remarks. Public transportation is at a crossroads. Either we continue along the same path we’ve been experiencing since Jennie and I became Directors or we take advantage of a remarkable opportunity to take a quantum leap to higher usage, better route scheduling, and changes in service that reflect the needs of Westport. That will lead to reduced congestion on our roads and reduced pollution in the air. The restoration of funds to the district, if successful, will enable us to hire a ½ FTE person as you have heard. The person is an independent contractor so it doesn’t have the long tail that Mr. Pincavage referred to. I will point out, in this regard, that there have been other hires in the Selectman’s Budget that will become employees or are employees expanding their time...
both in Land Use and in Payroll. I will note also that Mr. Pincavage believes that there is no job description of what the part-time person will be doing for the district. But there was a proposed job description that Ms. Johnson gave to the Board of Finance and the RTM as well. There are seven specific responsibilities this new person will have. So, I don’t want to repeat what others have said and my time is running out. But, I thank the RTM for considering this restoration and for its recognition that there is an extremely important public good in Westport to public transportation and we are about to realize a very, very significant increase in the way it’s delivered.

Pippa Bell Ader, 62 Woodside Avenue, Vice Chair of Green Task Force:
RTM members, the Green Task Force supports the Westport Transit District in its efforts to create and implement a sustainable transit system that is available to all Westport residents. The Green Task Force defines sustainability as the intersection of what reasonable people would consider economically responsible, environmentally sound and socially just; In essence, meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To this end, we recommend that going forward, priority should be given to the development and implementation of a comprehensive sustainable transit plan addressing transit infrastructure issues and relieving potential opportunity losses. Our reasoning is:

1. Transport is vital to the blood life of any Town but in Westport it is particularly important. With the unique geography such as split urban centers and employees from other Towns who must get to these centers, of widespread residential areas and a diverse population. We also note a rich history of public transportation and the relative proximity to many other communities and opportunities.

2. Westport can plan for the future or live in the past. Megatrends are pointing to increased use of public ridership and shared ownership models reducing private car miles. Hard to believe, car ownership has in fact declined since it peaked at 1.1 cars per licensed driver in 2001. By 2008, the average number of miles driven in the United States fell for the first time in history declining 3.6 percent from 2007. At the same time, the number of trips by public transportation rose to a 50 year high. So, Westport can structure itself to maximize itself and stay ahead or it could fall into a trap of designing a transport system for a car and oil dependent era of the past or, if even worse, it could fail to design at all.

3. We feel that setting the right goal is critical. Having the right conversation means reengaging with all levels of Town Government and residents about improving safety, livability and air quality while reducing congestion. It starts with placing sustainable transportation at the heart of the Town’s sustainability goal with the ultimate goal of net zero.

4. Long term planning for a sustainable Town. We believe that starts now. We support a transit funding plan that includes considerations for the future while being economically feasible and environmentally sound. This might require a paradigm shift including the development of the Town transit commission. Thank you. We see this as a turning point.

Michael Rea, district 8, Tupelo Road, Board of Finance:
I am speaking for myself. What brings me to the people’s podium tonight is the cut to the transportation budget of the $37,000 and, yet, gives me another opportunity to speak out in favor of restoration. My colleagues on the Board of Finance initially made this cut in the transportation budget by a 4-3 vote. Subsequently, at the board’s restoration meeting, not one person in attendance was willing to second my motion for deliberation purposes for the restoration of the $37,000. This is the only proposed cut by the Board of Finance on the whole Town budget. I don’t deplore the actions of my fellow board members. In fact, I applaud them. Our scrutiny of the whole budget and our relentless pursuit to get more out of current sources is a good and necessary part of the budget review. I do, however, disagree with making this particular item the annual budget punching bag. Too much is at stake. Our quality of life is at risk if we don’t address our transportation needs. Local streets are choked in traffic. We have a long waiting list for railroad parking and no relief in sight. Trains and interstate highways are congested. Infrastructure investment is badly needed. We cannot afford to fix all these things at one time. No single method is sufficient but, rather, a combination. Yet, we can’t fix one at the expense of another. But here in Westport we have a viable option, a local solution that citizens are basically unaware of, services that are underutilized and now budget cuts that undermine our Transit District’s objectives. The Transit District has laid out a vision of our transportation needs in Westport. They have identified problems and needs. I think our time is much better spent in defining the benefits that the future could produce and not just making another list of deficiencies of the current system. The Transit District came to the funding bodies requesting moneys to get professional help and marketing dollars, essential elements for any successful enterprise. We, as a Town, have asked as much from Earthplace and Wakeman Farm about how they measure up with marketing expertise and professionalism. It makes no sense why we should deny the Westport Transit District of this. I have read the long-term visions of the Westport Transit District. You saw it in your packets. These recommendations and goals are commendable and will support a prosperous sustainable and livable Town of Westport in the future. Let’s not shortchange the Westport Transit District and let’s not short change ourselves.

Dick Lowenstein, 372 Green’s Farms Road:
I cut my teeth on transit when I joined the RTM in 1997 and was appointed Chair of the Transit Committee and haven’t let go of it since. Everything I was going to say was said by everybody before me and I particularly want to applaud Mike Rea for his comments. My points that I was going to make were basically the same ones I made before the Board of Finance and he made them better than I did. Support the restoration. Thank you.

Jim Ross, 18 Hillandale Road, Chair, Westport Citizen’s Transit Committee:
I have chaired the Westport Citizen’s Transit Committee since 2012. I am here, obviously, in support of restoration. You know back in 2012/2013 we formed the Citizen’s Transit Committee at the request of the First Selectman and the reappointment last year by First Selectman Marpe. We took a look and met with all the various demographics. Our mission was to really evaluate the existing conditions and solicit input and feedback from the community. We had probably 30 or so meetings with
realtors, people with disabilities, seniors, the whole nine yards. The two recommendations that I will paraphrase from our report in 2012/13 which, by the way RTM, I sent to you this evening, are about introducing a better integrated governance of transportation with our Town Government and process as well as having a strategic marketing plan. These are things that we talk about in the presentation. I won’t go over it. I encourage you to look at it. The committee members as well as the membership of the Citizen’s Transit Committee worked hand in hand with these Transit Directors and it is a thankless task. This is a public utility that when Super Storm Sandy hits, when Metro North goes off rail, when there is a big accident on 95, we end up calling our Transit Directors who, by the way, are citizen advocates. Transportation is not a charity or a fundraising event. It is a day to day thing that cuts across every one of our lives. We need to start taking it seriously. As the Green Task Force said, ‘We don’t want to live in the past. We need to start thinking about the future’. My concern is, I’m watching Gene and Jennie working their knuckles off to try and do budgets. They don’t have a closet to even put their proposal in. They don’t have any support. Nothing. And, yes, we need marketing staff, as well. So we need to come back and start thinking about the future instead of every year having to re-argue is transportation important here. I hope the Board of Finance will take this as an opportunity to see there is support. This is a watershed moment for us. I hope you all can restore funds.

Steve Desloge, President, Westport Downtown Merchants’ Association:
We also encourage the RTM to restore the funds. I would like to take a little different perspective. I would like to address specifically the issue of core downtown retail development and the steadily increasing amount of commuting retail employees to the downtown area. The reality impacts both downtown parking and the current inability to transport commuting employees from the train station to the core downtown area throughout the entire retail work day. If the Town depends solely on volunteer personnel to study, anticipate the consequences, advise and manage this trend then, also, as a member of the Downtown Steering Committee, I feel that the primary goal of the Downtown Master Plan is improve traffic flow and parking management. As noted on page 9:

The market study assessment findings underscore the importance of devising strategies and recommendations in the plan for solving traffic, parking and pedestrian circulation challenges to accommodate downtown customers.

The Merchants association conducted a survey last summer. There are approximately 1600 retail employees working downtown. If one assumes that at any one time, 40 percent or 50 percent of employees are working per shift, you have an average of about 650 – 800 employees that commute to downtown every day. During the peak shopping seasons, this increases to almost 75 percent, well over 1,000 employees. The addition of 50,000 sf. new retail space will increase this number of employees to at least 1,000 of not more. From Labor Day to Christmas, through the holidays, this will approach 1500 plus employees. On page 52, Mobility, Traffic and Circulation, this is one of the primary goals:

Link downtown into the public transportation network to provide alternatives for employees and visitors other than driving to downtown.
The challenge that Westport faces is to substantially increase the number of employees who take public transportation and decrease the number of employees who drive downtown every day. Quite simply, the Town of Westport has to stay ahead of the curve on this issue and not get behind the curve. Otherwise, substantially more cars will continue to drive downtown every day and fewer employees will seek out public transportation. I’ll note that on our survey we identified eight percent of our employees who would be willing to take public transportation to and from downtown. This specifically addressed the commuter link that is an off-peak system. This effort takes a substantial and sustained long-term marketing effort and dedicated staff person to assure that every possible avenue is being pursued. We, therefore, support the restoration of the funds.

Nancy McCormack, Executive Director, ITN Coastal Connecticut:
We are a service provider for seniors in Westport. We work very closely with transportation providers to provide a cohesive transportation service to all of the citizens in our Towns. If we don’t have somebody that we can work with directly, then people in the Towns actually lose out what their transportation options are. The population is aging as we know and by 2030, one in five adults will be 65 plus and you’re going to have more and more people who will rely on alternate forms of transportation to be able to get around. So, we encourage Westport to take a step forward now to put someone in place who can coordinate all these services for Westport Residents.

Jennifer Johnson, Co-Director, Transit District:
I am not going to lose out on the opportunity to let you all know that we have brochures up here of the schedule. I did want to specifically say thank you to the many who have written in fantastic letters and the opportunity that this has given us to articulate the issues that we have. I do intend to take all the comments and save them because, hopefully, as Mike Rea said so well, I hope that next year we can move this forward and not spend five months trying to just get the budget passed so we can actually spend that time on actually moving things forward. I do want to specifically thank Norwalk Transit District who has sat through many of these meetings, Nancy Carroll and Richard Banks who are here tonight. I do have one other comment I want to add is the idea of spending smart. Westport will be benefitting from the intelligent transportation system that you’ve heard about. That’s a system that I found out from Nancy is a $5.6 million system that’s being installed on the Norwalk Transit District bus routes. By spending smart, by having someone in Westport, at least a part-time person who has the beat on Westport, we can focus on how we are using this money and make sure this resource is properly implanted in our Town and used well. We have the opportunity to and at the same time we are benefitted from two studies now that are near completion, the Railroad Parking Study and the Bus Study amounting to over $200,000 of study funds that Westport didn’t put any money into. Maybe in the Railroad Parking, we put in some money in. But the bottom line is we don’t want these studies to go on the shelf and be another study. So, spend smart. We’re not asking for much. It does allow us to move forward at a very exciting time. Thank you very, very much.

John Hartwell, 35 Beachside Avenue:
I am Vice-Chair of Connecticut Commuter Rail Council. I have been on the Council for six years but tonight I am speaking as a private citizen who lives in Greens Farms who would like better transit. Tonight, I came on the train from New York. I was coming to this meeting. I had to go all the way to Green’s Farms to pick up my car because there was no service out of Saugatuck to bring me downtown so I could make the meeting. It’s a minor example of what we face on a regular basis. I would like to point out just two elements of what has been spoken about tonight because there’s been a lot spoken about large transit issues and we clearly have to make progress on those but this particular budget item has two pieces to it. Both are important. The first one is the $17,000 plus for the part-time person from Norwalk. That is essential because we are going to have this new intelligent transit system that Jennifer just spoke about. It is going to come online by October. It’s going to start in the summer and be fully implemented by October they tell us. It is going to allow commuters to know exactly where the buses are so they won’t have to stand out in the cold. They can move right to the place where they pick up the bus. It is also going to provide a ton of data about who got on a bus and where and when they got off. So there is going to be a massive amount of data that’s going to start coming in in the fall and we need to be able to use that data to make changes to the bus system. One small bus change that I’d like to see: if you drive to the Green’s Farms station in the morning, there is an electronic sign that says, “If the parking is full, go to Saugatuck”. That doesn’t help you if you just tried to come to the train and you’ve got five minutes to catch the train and you arrive at the station and, oh, excuse me, it’s full. There’s a parking lot on Sherwood Island Connector that is not part of the bus system. It is a half mile away. It’s never full. It’s a perfect place for somebody to drop their car and go to Green’s Farms which is a very small very nice station. We have 3,000 people that get on the trains every day in Westport, most of them in Saugatuck, some at Greens Farms. We can improve the service with some intelligent work here. We’ve got data coming in. We need to make use of that data. Then what do we do when we change the system. We heard already, on Dan Woog’s blog yesterday, a lot of people had no idea that there was a special bus service available to people. It needs marketing. It needs promotion. Everybody in here is inundated every day with information. We need to find a way to break through with the right information here to get people on these buses. There’s a lot of upside potential here with the new intelligent transportation systems coming on board and with marketing. Those are the two things I ask you to keep in mind: one is the person; the second is the marketing.

Carolin Sigal, 5 Scott Allen Lane:
I am a member of the Citizen’s Transit Committee since 2012. Everything I’ve heard tonight tells me one thing: You have to spend money to make money. We’ve been talking all night long about how we need to market the system but we can’t without money. We keep talking about, oh this is an expense that Westport can’t bear. At least that’s what some members of the Board of Finance think year after year. Thirty-seven thousand dollars is chump change in the grand scheme of things. Just ask the Education Budget. If we want to expand services at maybe not such a huge cost to the Town, has anyone brought up grant dollars yet? You know who can do that? A part-time person who does that professionally. I have written grants before. They are hard and
time consuming. You need somebody who knows what they're doing. If we get somebody on board who can do that, we can have money coming to this Town that isn’t costing our Town. I don’t understand why this is not a no brainer. So, in support of this, absolutely. Another thing I wanted to say from a personal experience, John Pincavage was talking about the grand list. He did with us in 2004 because we bought in Westport when our real estate agent handed us one of those lovely brochures that Jennie Johnson just showed not just the timetable but also the routes. We based our home search on proximity to the routes, found a home and we’ve been here ever since. And I plan on staying until you have to woodchip me. Please support restoration of funds. It’s a great cause. You all should be on board with it.

Ms. Flug:
We are reviewing a motion to restore $37,714 to the Transportation Services budget. This was a cut by the Board of Finance. Restoration requires a 70 percent vote.

Members of the RTM
Clarissa Moore, district 4:
We’ve gotten lots of emails on this issue and heard impassioned speeches from many people in this room. I think this is an issue where what we need to remember is sometimes the headline is not the story. What we are talking about is a three percent increase. The amount is diminimus but put it in context, it is a three percent increase in a budget that overall is increasing 2.5 percent. The emails and the people who spoke gave their views of the future which sounded lovely and gave us, ‘Please what you need to do is support the less fortunate; you do need to support the elderly. I don’t think anyone in this room would disagree with that. We do need to support the less fortunate. We do need to support the elderly. But I want to make sure that everybody who is listening to this understands that what is in question is not whether we have a transportation system; the issue at hand, the $37,000, is to market the transportation system. I think we need to be aware that this is a very difficult task. I find it difficult to believe that a commuter who gets off the train every single day and sees an empty bus doesn’t know there are bus services available. Perhaps it’s true and perhaps with our expenditures, we can get through to him. I also believe that I’ve also heard that this marketing person and the marketing budget will help us survey consumers and figure out what they want in terms of bus routes. I’ve also heard that we’ve done a lot of that work in terms of bus routes. Normally, the beauty of a democracy and the beauty of a market economy such as America’s is that consumers vote with their pocketbook. Every single day, each commuter makes the decision: Do I keep my parking place at the station or do I get on the bus? I think it is going to be very, very difficult to persuade people who are currently driving cars to switch to buses. I’m also not sure that buses are the transportation of the future. However, that being said, I have a lot of faith in the RTM Transit Committee. I think that Gene and Jen have done an amazing job as well working on the Transit Committee. In our Long Range Planning Committee, we were told that they were going to look at routes. They are going to figure out which routes are efficient and which are not and they are going to market and try to increase ridership. I also want to say we have a long way to go in terms of increasing ridership before we come anywhere near break even on these or have buses that are at all full. So, here’s
what I say, I say, surprise me. Maybe I find it difficult to imagine but I’m willing to go with you guys. But, I’d like to say, as Mr. Marpe did, let’s have some plan. I’m hoping that in a year’s time the Transit Committee will report to the full RTM or to the Long Range Planning Committee and let us know, has ridership increased? Is this working? And where do we go from here? I’m prepared to vote in favor of it so long as we have accountability. We realize it’s a very, very difficult task. I realize I may be a skeptic but I’m hoping it works.

Liz Milwe, district 1:
What’s so great about living in district 1 is Saugatuck. Now, in Saugatuck, we have the best ice cream; we have a great butcher shop; we have great Thai food. It’s become the hot spot in Town. With that we have a lot more traffic. Many of my constituents have called me about the Peter bridge market intersection. And how can we help with that? By taking the shuttle. Most people don’t even know about the shuttle. Any kind of product right now, you need branding. You need marketing. We have two terrific volunteer directors who are telling us what we need and I think, in our Town, if we get the word out, we have a new application that is coming so we can look on our phones and find out where the buses stop, we’ll be very successful. It’s hard but we have to change the culture. I’m voting for this. Let’s support the transit and get some marketing going.

Seth Braunstein, district 5:
I think success takes a lot more than well wishes. It even takes a lot more than hard work. We have some extremely dedicated volunteers that have put in a tremendous amount of time to try and improve the district. At this point, I think it would be foolhardy of us to starve it of what I think of are a small amount of resources that could potentially go a long way. So, I’m not going to belabor the points that everyone has made before me about the value of the Transportation District. But I would want to hammer home two key themes: $17,000 for half an employee should get Westport a lot of bang for the buck; $20,000 earmarked for marketing is something that I think will be approached in a very prudent manner. In fact, if you look at the current marketing budget that has not come close to being utilized. The beauty of that is it can get turned back. It’s not a situation where the people who run the Transit District feel a need to spend it. They will only spend it if the need is there and they feel like they can utilize it effectively. So, we have spent an awful lot of time on $37,000. I would very much recommend that we go forward tonight and reinstate.

Jack Klinge, district 7:
As one of those who was alluded to in the report who voted against restoration, I want to say why I voted that way. It was really to send a message to not just to the RTM but to the Transit District itself, all the committees. This program has an incredibly large marketing problem. It has no riders. It’s a consumer marketing, right now, almost financial disaster. I proposed at that meeting that we went to last week that any money we spend out of the $37,000 goes to a serious consumer research project to identify who our prospects are, why they are not using the Transit District now, what they are waiting to hear, what is going to turn them on, what is going to motivate them, basically
to try to quantify the potential for this operation. It’s not going to get done by sitting on in July and working on new routes and putting up bigger signs. You don’t know who you are talking to. You don’t know what they are going to hear. If you don’t spend the money you get on consumer research, you heard Peter mention that I volunteered. We’ll be looking at some local research firms and see what they can do for us for a price. I’m begging you, don’t waste your money on half a person who’s not going to do any consumer marketing, don’t waste your $20,000 on signs and brochures and stuff until you know who you are talking to, what motivates them, what message they want to hear.

Ms. Hamlin:
I think a lot of you know that I am a budget hawk and I am for restoring these funds and giving the funds. I am also on the Transit Committee. I’m aware of some things that I think you should know about. We get $2 million a year in parking fees that we can use on things like transit bussing, repairing the parking lot, improving more parking, all kinds of things. Instead, and you’re going to be hearing about this later tonight, there’s a lot of pork. There’s a pork-fest going on inside this Railroad Parking budget where money is being sucked away for things that is taking the money away from us so it can be used for parking. I’ve written a lot about it today. I’m very sympathetic with the Board of Finance trying to cut where they can but, of all the things you could have cut in that Railroad Parking budget, there is so much other pork there. This was not the thing to cut. So, I’m going to come back later. I really want us to deliver to the taxpayers this year not a bigger budget so I am going to be suggesting ways that you can pay for this with other cuts but this is really an important thing to do. Let’s try to make sure that we use the Railroad Parking fees for something productive like what has been presented tonight.

Ms. Flug:
Are there any members who would like to speak against restoring the funds? [No.]

Louis Mall, district 2:
I am going to support restoring the funds simply because maybe we can use the $20,000 to figure out how we are going to address the ridership. In my neighborhood, I notice it is the newcomers are using the bus because they can’t get a parking permit. They are certainly taking advantage of the buses. We are shooting ourselves in the foot. We are trying to encourage more ridership but we want to keep cutting the Transit Budget. The emails that I got, all of them were in favor of restoring the funds. I promised them that the RTM would do the right thing.

Diane Cady, district 1
A few of us are old enough to remember the minibus in Town. The little red and white Mercedes bus that moved around Town like a grasshopper. They were so used by the kids, by adults, by commuters. I think there is probably something to learn from those people, some of whom are still around.

Mr. Gold:
You’ve heard everything that there was to hear. I just want to briefly sum it up and respond to some of the comments. It is true that people vote with their pocketbooks but they vote with their pocketbooks in many ways other than just riding buses. As you heard from the letters you received from realtors, as you heard from Carolin Sigal when she spoke here, people vote with their pocketbooks when they buy houses here because of the bus system. It increases the value of the houses to everybody. It helps the Grand List. As you heard from Steve Desloge, the merchants benefit from transit. It gets the employees to work. It frees us spots for customers. The merchant benefit, presales and presale tax benefits to Town, higher home values. There’s lots of ways to vote with your pocketbook but that’s important, as well. I agree that we need to show results but I remind you that person will not come on board until sometime this fall. So, results will be there but I will not promise them within the next year. We will try to get results. We will not just increase service to increase service. There will be a reason for doing so. We will have that reason. I will get the Transit District Directors before the committee as many times as it takes to set us metrics, to set up goals, to report back on their progress. We will work to get this thing put together in a way that works for everybody. I just wanted to thank you all and remind you if we want this service to be continued in the future, we have to make sure it has enough funds, as Seth Braunstein said, to live today.

Mr. Wieser:
I was sort of hoping maybe we were going to be done for tonight but it looks like it's going to be a long night. I just can’t let it go. I don’t have anything against the police. I don’t know if anyone does. I am a big supporter of the police. I think the police are great. I think the Board of Finance is great. I think the Board of Finance has looked over the budget of certain aspects for the last 10 years in many, many meetings that many RTM members have attended. You cannot call this a pork fest and get away with it. We have got to have the conversation calm tonight, clear tonight and not call anybody names. Pork fest is not appropriate because that is not what it is. It is transparent and we’ll hear more about it tonight, apparently. I just ask that we not call names.

Ms. Flug:
Thank you, Mr. Wieser. That is a point well made. We should remain civil and respectful of all branches of government. We shouldn’t be questioning the motives of anybody and we should continue to be respectful.

We have 34 members present and voting. Seventy percent of that is 23.8 so we need 24 votes to restore.

Voting on the motion to restore $37,714, to the Transportation Service budget. The motion passes unanimously.

Continuing with the budget:
Miscellaneous budget includes pensions, insurance, social security, unemployment compensation, Earthplace, transportation service, reserve for salary, employee product, accrued for vacation and there’s the total. Transit is part of the general category of
Miscellaneous. Railroad Parking is not part of the general budget. – No further comments

Debt service – no comments
Other financing uses – no comments

Mr. Conrad:
The total budget including the restitution of $37,714 to the Transit District, the total Town Budget will be $78,923,221.

By show of hands, the budget passes unanimously.

The secretary read #2 of the call - To adopt a budget for the Town Railroad Parking Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable. By show of hands, the Railroad Parking Budget passes 30-1; Hamlin opposed.

Presentation
Chief of Police Dale Call:
In regards to the Railroad Parking fund, you have the budget in front of you for the dollar amount $1,801,974, the Board of Finance request on that. I’m sure that there’s going to be questions on that. I’m going to address certain aspects of what it is the Police Department does with a little bit of history if Madam Moderator will indulge me a little bit. The Police Department has been running Railroad Parking for 27 or 28 years when the Town Administration in the mid-1980’s asked the Police Department to take over the operation of the Railroad Parking. We have been doing it ever since then. I think it is no secret that since I took over as Chief of Police, that we have been clear that if there is somebody else who wanted it, we would gladly hand it over. However, nobody has stepped up for that. Everybody seems fairly content to leave it where it’s at. Quite honestly, if one wants to bicker over the costs, I think that the Railroad Parking Division does a fairly good job of it. If one is to go down to the train stations, one would see a definite improvement in facilities and operation, certainly in the last 10 years... Even going back further than that. As far as the cost involved in that, what they go for, there is in an overtime line $270,000 that is spent directly out of the Railroad Parking Budget that pays directly for police officers on an overtime basis to patrol the train stations and the surrounding parking lots from three p.m. to two o’clock in the morning. Prior to the fiscal 12/13 year, that was done by three fulltime police officers which was an arrangement that was agreed upon with the Town of Westport, the Police Department, and Connecticut DOT for the 2001/2002 budget year in lieu of providing that on an overtime basis. When I took over as Chief, one of the things I resolved to do was to cut the three positions to reduce head count which was the desire of the Town Administration, the Board of Finance and this body right here. We did that by getting rid of some vacancies and, with the agreement of all, we placed them on an overtime basis. These are dedicated patrols, paid for directly from Railroad Parking that patrol only the train stations and those parking lots. We have been in training this week for
recertification with the other chiefs from Fairfield County so we took the opportunity to check with the chiefs from Greenwich to Stratford on the New Haven Line to find out what they do for their train stations. Greenwich is blank. Their chief wasn’t there. I couldn’t get ahold of him. Chief Fontneau from Stamford told us there are no dedicated patrols to the train station. MTA has a station there with MTA officers. When they are not patrolling they are in and about the station. When patrols have time, they swing through the parking lots. Chief Lovello from Darien told us there are no dedicated patrols at the train stations. When their patrol cars have time, they swing through the train stations. Chief Kulhawik from Norwalk told me they have no dedicated patrols for the train stations. They swing through when they have time. Fairfield told us that they assign two special police officers who are unarmed with no arrest powers who walk through the parking lots in the daytime. They hire one special officer in the evenings until 10 o’clock at night. We were told the cost for that is approximately $170,000 for unarmed special police officers with no arrest or enforcement powers. Chief Gaudett from the Bridgeport Police Department told us there are no dedicated patrols for their train stations. When their officers have time, they stop by the train stations. MTA parks police cars there for a presence at their substation. Chief Ridenhour says that this year they have no dedicated patrols for the train stations; however, the next fiscal year, the Police Department is taking over the security function. During the day, they are hiring three civilian security agents who are also parking enforcement. And at night, they are hiring one police officer on an overtime basis every day of the year. He told us that amount is not being funded from their budget. He says, the quote was, “I don’t know where the money is coming from. It’s not coming from my budget. It is coming from other departments.” That’s Greenwich through Stratford. So, that $270,000, without question, no other Town does it. We have dedicated police patrols because, for the last however many years, it’s been important to the commuters and residents of Town to have that dedicated patrol. If it’s the opinion of this body, if it’s the opinion of the Board of Finance, if it’s the opinion of the First Selectman, who we all take direction from, we do not run our own show, to eliminate that, then we can eliminate that. Then we will also have police officers swing through the parking lots when they’re not doing something else. That’s a decision that we’ll abide by if that’s the direction anybody wants to go. There’s another $48,000 that is spent to traffic control. Those are the guys that stand at Bridge and Riverside in the morning and afternoon. That’s all that that covers right now because said security patrol covers the other traffic post at Charles and Riverside. That second post was eliminated in the evening to be covered by the guys already paid to be down there. That’s a savings to the Railroad Parking Fund. I’ve been in this Town my whole life. My father worked here before I did. My father used to work that job. I used to work that job. Once upon a time, that job was truly train traffic. You sat in your car. A train came in. You did it. As Liz pointed out, Saugatuck is the new hot spot. So, usually, when that officer is there, he is pulling traffic through constantly while he’s there. I know some of Liz’s constituents would like us to have an officer there 16 hours a day pulling traffic through which we can’t do because we, frankly, don’t budget that within our police budget as nice as that would be to have. With I-95’s backups, with the extra traffic through there, it’s far more than train traffic; however, it’s a benefit that’s paid for out of the Railroad Parking Fund. Most other communities do not assign police officers to do train traffic. You sit in traffic and wait your turn to go, much like other Towns do not
always put police officers or traffic agents outside schools to get you in and out faster. I spent several years at Masuk High School waiting my turn to go in because they do not do that. Another benefit that comes out of the Railroad Parking Fund. Again, if the decision is not to fund that, then we will not put anybody there unless we have somebody who is not doing anything else. We can’t pull our existing patrols to go and do traffic. The other portion of the Railroad Parking Fund that usually raises some eyebrows, especially among our fellow Chiefs, because no other Police Department this well-known runs their Railroad Parking or any parking operation, are the salary allocations that are reimbursed back to the Police Budget. These are for the actual work of running that division. Again, go to the train station, take a look and see what you can see. It’s definitely an improvement. The percentages, the percentages are not based on any science that we can come up with. They are an approximation of how much time is actually spent. I can tell you that Deputy Chief Koskinas, who is allocated at 70 percent of his salary down there, probably puts in more time than that working on Railroad Parking. He doesn’t work an eight-hour day. He’s normally here on the weekends. He’s always here at night for one thing or another. Is that a good investment of your dollars for a Deputy Chief? Listen, we run Railroad Parking. Somebody’s got to run it. That’s how it is for us. Is it a value? I think looking at the facilities and the operation, yes, I think it is. That dollar amount, the reimbursement back to the Police Department Fund is $249,434 this year. That’s down from $291,737 last year. That’s down considerably from the $413,000 that it was, I believe, five years ago. I’ve made it my job to try and find ways to cut down on those costs and to look at those allocations and figure out what is appropriate and what’s not. From $413,000 to $249,000, that’s a significant drop in five years. I don’t know that anybody is going to argue with that. Some of the other charges are employees who work directly for Railroad Parking: A service assistant, which is a title for a clerk who spends her entire day doing railroad parking; a custodian who works solely for the train stations. There are allocations for other clerks who backfill. When you walk into the Police Department to pay for your permit or for your parking tickets at the train station, the railroad clerk is upstairs doing something else. That work is done by another clerk. Our accounts payable clerk spends a large portion of her day processing the bills and payments that have to come through the Police Department before they head to Town Hall. Every one of these charges, every one of these salary amounts is here in black and white. They are not hidden. I don’t know how much more transparent that it could actually be. Finally, the Railroad Parking Fund is not tax funded. I think everybody here is aware of that. It is funded through the fees that are generated by the permit holders and by those who rent space and the boxes that are down there. That’s where the money comes from. I don’t think in any way, shape or form that we waste that money. Are there ways to do it better? We are always open to suggestions on that. We don’t tell anybody no. The three full-time police officers who used to be funded solely through Railroad Parking who didn’t have names, we couldn’t tell who they were. Were they senior patrolmen or junior patrolmen? The internal Auditor, Lynn Scully, said maybe there is a better way of doing that than having three full-time police officers. We take it seriously. That fiscal year, we eliminated those three full-time police officers. They are not there anymore. There is no headcount. As John Pincavage said, headcount is important. There are other things along with salary that go with it. We listen to what we’re told. That’s really where we are with the Railroad Parking
Fund. This is where that money goes to. The personnel costs are very clearly set forth on there. I think it is a responsible budget. I think that there’s always room for improvement. We are always here to listen to suggestions and make it better. I’ll be available for questions if there are any.

**Members of the Westport electorate- no comments**

Dr. Heller read the resolution and it was seconded.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Railroad Parking Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting, be adopted and the sum of $______________ is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures.

**Members of the RTM**

Ms. Hamlin:
I have first a couple of questions for Mr. Conrad. The Transit Committee got a draft railroad budget on Jan. 28, 2015 and then we got another one more recently. On the more recent one, there was added on $30,000 which was indicated to be miscellaneous. When we asked police representatives who were there at the Transit meeting, where that $30,000 came from which is called Accounts Payable, General Accounting, they said that’s a number we received from you and we were hoping to get an explanation from you as to what that $30,000 is for.

Mr. Conrad:
That has been historically the same number in the budget. In addition to that, there is another line; it is called Miscellaneous Expense for $120,450. In that is included refuse collection, transit subsidies and sales taxes. The balance is an allocation that goes back to the Town for all the financial departments for all the purchasing, accounts payable, payroll, benefits, CAFR and the audit costs.

Ms. Hamlin:
We were told today in some correspondence that it is an additional labor cost for some police officer work related to the railroad parking. Is that not accurate?

Mr. Conrad:
That is not accurate. That is for, you notice it says department 151. One hundred fifty-one is the General Accounting Department.

Ms. Hamlin:
Is it true that it’s the Police Department that does all the administration of the Railroad Parking fees?

Mr. Conrad:
Railroad Parking is run by the Police Department. The administrative part of the Town is run by the Finance Department. It is no different than the Sewer Fund or any other outside fund.
Ms. Hamlin:
So there is $92,450 that is Town Hall administration. You’re saying that is a payroll cost?

Mr. Conrad:
That is an allocation back to the Finance Department that covers HR and payrolls.

Ms. Hamlin:
So there is $92,000 in HR function that is going to the HR function for the five people that are down there and dedicated?

Mr. Conrad:
It’s a combination of multiple items, not only covering payroll costs. We have people allocated in personnel and HR that do cover the questions of people and calculations of the pensions. The pensions are separated as are the insurance costs. For all the people that are directly related to performing any duties down there, their costs are separated out in this budget. If you go back to the Finance Budget or the Police Department budget, you’ll find credits in the General Fund operating side that the moneys that come back into the General Funds are a reduction of what the taxpayers are paying for. This is value assessed and paid for by the people that are using the Railroad Department.

Ms. Hamlin:
So you’re saying, for the five dedicated employees who are down there plus the overtime is down there, there is a $92,450 Town Hall administrative cost for doing the HR for those folks and separating out the pension.

Mr. Conrad:
It’s not just the HR function. I’m trying to explain it. I don’t know how to explain it any better. There are multiple functions that are going on there. We do all the purchasing. We do all the payroll. We do all the HR. We do all the financial reporting. They are part of our CAFR. They also absorb some of our audit costs. The external auditors come in and perform audits on this account. We also have DOT auditors come in and basically look at it. This is being split and approved with the DOT. The budgets are handed to them. They review them and approve them. So, it goes multiple levels.

Ms. Hamlin:
Recently, the Town of Darien decided to take some functions away from the Police Department and bring it into Town Hall and also hire an independent contractor. That brought their costs down significantly. When I talked to some experts and people at SWRPA, they indicated, our administrative costs are at $1.8 million per year and their administrative costs for other comparably sized Towns are significantly lower. Have you considered making the suggestion that, for instance, you said that Foti who we love and admire, he’s got an allocation of $145,000 salary which is not his real salary. His real salary is $132,000 but we’re paying 70 percent of the fully loaded $145,000 for the
Railroad Parking Fund. Wouldn’t it be less expensive to have an administrator do this within Town Hall who isn’t paid as much as $145,000 and isn’t fully loaded with all those expensive pension benefits and have our very talented Foti Koskinas go back to being a Deputy Chief instead of a Railroad Administrator? Wouldn’t that be more effective and less expensive?

Mr. Conrad:  
I’ve worked with Foti. I think he does a great job managing this. This cost, having a police officer there is a good idea. As the Chief said, he’s not looking to run this. If somebody else wants to do it, we could outsource it. I don’t know what the savings would be. I don’t know who you are going to hire to do that. You would have to find somebody who has parking authority experience. You could certainly outsource it. I don’t know whether you would do it as a subcontractor or with an employee. We have the person on site.

Ms. Hamlin:  
You know that Deputy Chief Koskinas is not down there patrolling. He is doing administrative work. Somebody else is doing patrol on overtime basis, a purely overtime basis. No regular shift. The entirety of the patrolling that’s being done there is done to the tune of $270,000 of overtime and $48,000 of overtime for traffic control for a total of $318,000 of overtime. None of the work being performed for patrolling or for traffic control is being done on straight time even though it can be. Are you aware of that?

Mr. Conrad:  
I am aware of that. It depends on what the administration wants and how they want to run the department. The Police Department has been in charge of this for many years. It runs very successfully. It runs better than any of the other ones I’ve seen. I’ve gone to the Fairfield train station. I’ve commuted out of there. I could tell you, I don’t want to be at the Fairfield Metro Station at night. There is no security. There is no police around. There are no cameras. There’s not even a restroom. There’s a lot more to be compared when looking at what you have here compared to other Towns. I also worked in New Canaan. They do not have a police presence there. They had quite a few problems. They have two train stations. They had quite a few cars broken into, people have lost everything from laptops to phones; it was a commonplace event, looking at the paper. I haven’t heard the level of complaints in Westport. I really can’t comment on changing without having someone else do it.

Ms. Hamlin:  
Well, I don’t have any more questions for you. Fairfield is a city and it’s got two colleges there and it’s got pockets of poverty so there is higher crime. The statistics don’t support the argument that there’s more crime in the train stations in New Canaan or Darien. New Canaan’s crime index including property crimes is 89, ours is 78. Weston’s is 96. Wilton is 90. Easton is 95. Greenwich is 85. Darien is 96. So, we’re not doing well from a safety standpoint and the cost associated with having the Police Department run this given the loaded pensions, etc. is far more expensive than if we had this function brought in-house or outsourced as other Towns have who do it for half the value.
I would like to make a motion that the $318,000 of overtime that is being spent for patrolling. In other Towns, the patrolling is done out of the Police Budget. What I would like to see here is that the patrolling and traffic control be handled the way it used to be handled through Police Budget. It’s very clear from the numbers in other Towns that we’ve got a very heavy head count. There’s absolutely no reason we can’t do this with straight time. It will save us $318,000 that we could then use for other functions. So, my motion is to require that all patrolling be done on a straight time basis instead of overtime.

Ms. Flug:
If you want to move that the budget be cut, you need to say that but we can’t make decisions about how the Police Department runs its business.

Ms. Hamlin:
I would cut $270,000 worth of overtime and have the patrolling done by the Police budget as it is in every other Town where their safety record is higher and also have the $48,000 be done on straight time as opposed to overtime, as well.

Ms. Flug:
Are you saying you’d like to move to cut $270,000 from the extra help and overtime budget?

Ms. Hamlin: That’s not extra help. It’s pure overtime.

Ms. Flug: I’m reading what it’s called.

Ms. Hamlin:
It’s $270,000 of pure overtime. It can be handled as regular time as it used to be.

Ms. Flug:
Without advocating for it right now, I just want to make sure I understand your motion.

Ms. Hamlin:
I’m moving to cut $270,000 of overtime. We have a separate $1.2 million in the Police budget. We don’t need to have $270,000 for just 77 hours a week in the railroad budget.

Ms. Flug:
Which line item of the budget are you taking it? Which page of the budget are you looking at? Page 281. It’s under the Extra Help and Overtime line of the budget. It’s the 03 line of the Railroad parking budget.

Ms. Hamlin:
We had confirmation today that it is pure overtime. There’s no straight time. I established how…

Ms. Flug: We are not going to get into the advocacy now. I’m trying to formulate your…
Ms. Hamlin:
I just want to make sure you understand so it’s not misstated. This can be scheduled as straight time which would save $270,000 of overtime.

Ms. Flug:
I’m sorry. You’ve spent your 10 minutes on advocating for the position.

Ms. Hamlin:
I don’t want it to be misstated. I’m not saying cut the patrolling. I’m just saying have it done as straight time so that we can save $270,000 in overtime. So, cut it as overtime, not straight time.

Ms. Flug:
What we can do is cut a dollar amount from a line item. What you’d like to do is cut $270,000 from the Extra Help and Overtime line of the Railroad Parking Fund.

Ms. Hamlin: It doesn’t say overtime.

Allen Bomes, district 7:
If we are cutting money from one budget, aren’t we adding it to another? That’s something we can’t do.

Ms. Flug:
No. We would not be adding it to another budget. It would require a cut in the Police Force. We don’t have a motion on the floor. It has not yet been seconded. The motion has not yet been stated by the Moderator. At this point we’re discussing the wording on the motion. If we have a second and once I state the motion, we’ll go to the public for comment and then to the RTM.

Point of order, Ms. Hamlin:
I also want to move to cut $48,000 which is listed below that, traffic control. I don’t know if you want them separate or as one motion.

Ms. Flug:
You’re wanting to cut a total of $318,000 of the Extra Help and Overtime Budget. Do you want them voted on together or as separate motions?

Ms. Hamlin:
I would want to lump them together because we have had confirmation that they are both overtime.

Ms. Flug:
You would like to move that the RTM cut $318,000 from the Extra Help and Overtime line budget of the Railroad Parking Fund budget.
Ms. Hamlin: But it’s not extra help. It’s just overtime.

Ms. Flug:
I understand that but the line item in the budget that you would be cutting it from is 03 which is called Extra Help and Overtime. That’s the item of the budget that you would like to have cut.

Ms. Hamlin:
You know what; I’m going to do it separately because of the extra help issue with the $48,000 so $270,000 is my first motion for the patrol officer which is pure overtime.

Point of order, Mr. Wieser:
I just want to be clear because you made the point earlier and I just want to make sure that we’re working here is that all we’re doing is cutting dollars. We can’t say we’re cutting dollars to take away overtime. All we’re doing is taking away money. You keep saying because you want to get rid of extra help or overtime or you don’t want to get rid of overtime. All we can do is cut dollars.

Ms. Hamlin:
What Mr. Wieser doesn’t understand is…well, there’s another thing Mr. Wieser doesn’t understand that I’m attacking the police when I come from three generations…

Ms. Flug: Will you please answer the question.

Ms. Hamlin:
So, $270,000 is a pure overtime charge and that’s the amount I’m trying to cut, not patrolling. That can be done out of the regular budget and on regular time. It’s just $270,000 of overtime and that’s what I’m moving to cut.

Mr. Wieser:
My point is you can’t say “that $270,000”. You can just say “$270,000.”

Ms. Flug:
Let me clarify here. The RTM can cut from a particular line item of the budget but we cannot get into the detail of how the cut is made. You are looking to cut $270,000 from 03, Extra Help and Overtime but your comment of how you would like that cut to be made is part of the record. It would reduce the $616,486 by $270,000 if it were to pass.

Mr. Bomes:
The Railroad parking is one number, $1,801,974. We don’t know any more about what makes up that number. All we are doing is addressing that number.

Ms. Flug: The details are in the budget book.

Mr. Bomes: We are approving one number for Railroad Parking.
Ms. Flug:
The example I would make here is the Board of Finance cut $20,000 of marketing dollars from the Transit Committee so they were specific about which $20,000 they were cutting. That’s the same type of thing we’re doing here. The proposal is cut a specific amount from the Extra Help and Overtime line of the budget. That’s the analogy I’m going with. We can be as specific as the Board of Finance was getting specific.

**Motion: To cut $270,000 from the 03 Extra Help and Overtime line of the Railroad Parking Fund.**

Mr. Suggs: As did John Booth, I second.

**Members of the Westport electorate** – no comments

**Members of the RTM**
Lois Schine, district 8:
I’d simply like to say that we don’t know if the Police Department can cover that out of their own schedule. Before they had patrol officers there, my son had a car stolen from the Westport railroad station.

Mr. Knight:
This thing has come out of a bolt out of the blue. I am very sympathetic to the idea of cutting $270,000 of extra help and overtime. I’d like to ask the Chief to comment. He may not wish to but I’d like to ask the Chief his perspective.

Chief Call:
I don’t have any problem at all commenting on that. The $270,000 funds the 4,015 hours of security patrol at the train stations. It’s as simple as that. If the $270,000 is cut, what we will do is what every Police Department along the New Haven line does which is tell the patrol car in that area to drive through the train station as part of their normal patrol which, in point of fact, is what they already do. The 4,015 hours of overtime coverage is somebody who is assigned only to the train station. He can only work the train station because the funding is for that from railroad parking. He can’t go and do other things. Mind you, it does give the Town the advantage of an extra car in an emergency because they are still police officers. In a major event, they still can respond to it if we need them to. The difference is it’s not funded through the tax supported Police Budget. Quite simply, cut the $270,000 and we just won’t have a dedicated patrol down there. It’s as simple as that. That’s really the decision that’s there. We kind of roll with the punches with the budget. We’ve been here before. Things have been cut before. We will make do however we will but you will not see the dedicated patrol of 4,000 hours.

Ms. Calise:
I’d like to say that I am absolutely not in favor of cutting any money from the Railroad Parking budget. I have very high regard for our policemen and firemen, the people who help keep our community safe. There was a time when there were break-ins in cars at
the Westport train station. Our policemen have worked very hard to keep that area safe. We need them. They do a great job. You really can't compare us to a Town like Weston with the number of police officers that they have. Weston is very rural. It doesn't have nearly as much commercial space as we have. I don't believe they have a dedicated train station other than Branchville or Wilton. So, there are Weston people who come to Westport to use the train station. Recently, in the news a few months ago, I heard of a rash of break-ins of high end luxury cars in places like Greenwich and Darien at the railroad. We need our police there. They need the money in their budget to keep our Town safe.

Mr. Bomes:
The Railroad Parking, Wakeman Farm and the Sewer Fund have no effect on our tax rate. So, if we cut this money, it's not going to reduce taxes at all because it has no effect on the tax rate.

Jimmy Izzo, Chair, of Public Protection Committee:
Number one, I'd like to thank you guys for the good job you do. Thank you. I have a question for Dale or Foti. How much money do you generate for the Town in fees?

Deputy Chief Foti Koskinas:
This year we are approaching the $2 million mark. As of now, we are approaching $1.9 million for the year. We are anticipating going over $2 million. Going into next year, because of some permit changes, some income coming in, we are hoping to be around $2.3 million.

Mr. Izzo:
I think a lot of this stuff we can do at committee meetings beforehand, before budget season. We always have a lot of questions early in the season. I went to the budget workshop. I found it very informative and really interesting because it's so laid back. You can ask any question you want. You're sitting in a nice room. They have a nice spread out there too. Then you can take it to another level. I find everybody is accessible. If I have questions for Bobby and Andy, I get them answered right away. If I have questions for downtown, Dewey gets back to us. We do have accessibility. These people work with us. They don't work for us. They work with us. I think we have to look at these pre-meetings and go from there. Then sit down. We can sit down in groups. We can sit down in our committees. Go over these numbers so it's not complicated to all of us. I think the one thing we cannot do is complicate simplicity and make something out to be something that is not there. I think our budgets are clean. I really believe it. The overtime, a lot of it is contractually obligated because guys do get days off. It's hard to do things on straight time.

Mr. Mandell:
I think a lot of money from Railroad Parking has been spent very wisely over the last several years. The northbound depot has been beautifully redone. Luciano Park has a new fence around it. I know that railroad parking lot one is going to be resurfaced and raised up and spending good money. So, the amount of money that's spent on the
Deputy Chief’s salary is being spent wisely. My question is, if there is salary being paid for by the police and also being paid for by Railroad Parking, where is the credit in the budget? I’m trying to figure it out.

Mr. Conrad:
If you look in the salary pages for the Police Department, you’ll see a credit at the very end after you see all the salaries listed. If you look in the Finance Department, at the end of the salary listing that has all the employees and part-time people, there’s a credit item there that shows the money. That reduces the budget on the General Fund with the effect of having a lower tax rate. Money is being paid for by the users. Most RTM and Board of Finance members feel that if you can assess a user fee by the people that are using the facility that is a wiser way to do it than to tax the general population.

Mr. Mandell:
So the money does move from one place to the other and it shows up. Excellent. For Chief Call, what would it take to have the patrols at the station not be overtime, instead be regular time? What would that take?

Chief Call:
I don’t want to confuse what Kristan is saying. I think when Kristan is saying straight time, and you can correct me if I’m wrong, what you’re referring to is off the normally assigned patrol staff. Am I correct or am I mistaken in that?

Ms. Hamlin:
Actually Dale and I know you said today, when we were having this correspondence, that you had not reviewed some earlier correspondence I was having with Foti so I assume it’s just a misunderstanding but Foti and I had some correspondence over the last several days where I showed him you could have police officer a, police officer b, police officer c, police officer d and here’s how you could assign them. What happens, as you know, police officers work a day shift and police officers are assigned to a night shift so you could cover that time with their regular shifts with regular time. Then you wouldn’t have that $270,000 of overtime. When I talked with Foti by email, he agreed that you could assign people at certain hours but he wouldn’t want to do just the four guys he’d want to have more guys involved in terms of taking them off their shifts. The bottom line is there is a way to do it. Obviously, we’re disproportionately high on overtime compared to any Town, even Fairfield high crime Towns so we don’t need to rely on overtime as much as we do. I’m just talking about making sure you make this assignment on somebody’s regular assigned shift, not as an overtime expense. You can say that it doesn’t save the Town money but we can’t fix parking if we don’t have access to these funds and we need access to these funds and there needs to be a delta leftover at the end of the year.

Mr. Mandell:
My question was does it require one more person to do it, so there is a savings?

Chief Call:
To answer Matthew’s question, if we have to bring another person in to do it, contractually, we have to pay time and a half if they’re coming in as additional. They can’t be told you’re only going to do this for straight time. We’d have to negotiate that. If we have to bring somebody else in, if we don’t have adequate staff to cover that, we’d have to pay them time and a half. That is contractual. We’d have to negotiate them to work straight time. I doubt our bargaining unit is going to agree to something like that. They haven’t before. As far as using our existing staff to cover that which I think is what you’re talking about, if we have eight people working, can’t one of those eight people cover the train station? That works fine and well unless we don’t have eight people working. If we go down below the staff we need to cover the patrol areas of Town, without pulling them from other areas of Town, if you live in Saugatuck Shores, they don’t patrol there because they are going to be at the train station; if you live in the northwest part of Town and we have to reassign them to cover the train station, they are not going to be covering that. If we run below that, we are still hiring overtime to cover those patrols. The difference is it is not coming out of Railroad Parking any more. It is coming out of the Town Police Budget.

Mr. Mandell:
Mr. Izzo has really the right point. This is a complicated issue for us to start figuring out here from the floor and for this particular period of time, I am comfortable moving forward and then looking at this in committees. Maybe over the next year, if we can find a way that it is not overtime, then we can figure it out. But doing it here at 11:30 at night here fresh when I’m reading emails is very difficult from my perspective. For the most part, I think Railroad Parking is being run pretty efficiently.

A vote on the motion, yes is to cut budget. By show of hands, the motion failed 2 – 29. Hamlin and Knight in favor. Ms. Feller left, Ms. Rea left, and Ms. Moore left.

Mr. Conrad: The total budget for the railroad is $1,801,974.

By show of hands, the Railroad Parking Budget passes 30-1; Hamlin opposed.

The secretary read item # 3 of the call - Town Sewer Fund. By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.

Presentation
Steve Edwards, Director of Public Works:
The Sewer Fund is just that. It is a stand-alone fund paid for by the sewer users. There is a contribution from the Town to the sewer fund to cover the cost for the schools and other Town buildings. For the most part, it is a self-funded budget for the sewer use. The overall budget for the sewer is broken down into two areas, one for treatment plant and one for collection systems. The overall budget is $1,751,218 for an overall decrease of $11,000.

Ms. Flug: The number I have is $4,739,320.
Mr. Edwards:
I’m sorry. We had an adjustment on that. The total budget, the actual change on that was .2 percent. It was an increase of $8,465.

Ms. Flug: Mr. Conrad, would you confirm the total budget for the sewer fund…

Mr. Edwards: $4,739,320.

Ms. Flug:
That’s what I have. Thank you. We already heard the report from the Finance Committee.

Dr. Heller read the resolution and it was seconded by Ms. Schine.
RESOLVED: That the Town Sewer Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting, be adopted and the sum of $______________ is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments.

Members of the RTM – no comments

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.

Ms. Flug:
It is now after 11:30. To go on to the next agenda item requires a vote of 2/3 of the members present. What I would like to do is to review item #8 of the agenda so Mr. Edwards does not come back tomorrow night. Let’s just do the Wakeman Town budget tonight.

Motion to continue the meeting passes 29-1. Bomes opposed. Dr. Ashman left.

The secretary read item #4 of the call - Wakeman Town Farm budget. By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.

Presentation
First Selectman Marpe:
Mr. McCarthy has clearly retired, at least for the evening. As I mentioned at the outset, the Wakeman Town Farm is self-funding. This is an accounting exercise primarily. We track the funds in and out through our accounts and that way we keep control of what is going on at the Town-owned farm. Again, I would request your approval of this budget primarily as an accounting procedure that we follow.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments.
Dr. Heller read the resolution and it was seconded by Ms. Schine.

RESOLVED: That the Wakeman Town Farm Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting, be adopted and the sum of $___________ is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures.

Ms. Flug:
It has been moved and seconded to approve the resolution just read. Mr. Conrad, can you confirm the dollar amount for the Wakeman Town Farm budget is $115,016.

Mr. Conrad: I confirm.

Members of the RTM – no comments.

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.

There was unanimous consent to continue with item #8 of the call.

Mr. Bomes left.

The secretary read item #8 of the call - To approve an appropriation in the amount of $950,000 to the Capital & Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund (C&NEF) Account to purchase five dump trucks to replace five 2002 trucks. By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.

Presentation
Mr. Edwards:
While I do treasure these moments, I do appreciate your acting on this so I don’t have to come back tomorrow night.

The request here is to continue the procedure that we put in place in 1988. At that point in time, we had a fleet of all mixed models, ages and three mechanics. It was determined at that point in time that we could reduce the number of mechanics that we needed if we had a standardized fleet. At that point, we went out and purchased 10 1988 Mack Trucks. Those gave us 14 good years. And in 2002, they were retired and we continued that model and went out and purchased 10 2002 Sterling Trucks. Sterling is a Ford product. Now 13 years later, the Sterlings are no longer being supported by their product line. We are looking to go out and purchase 10 2015 trucks to be determined. At this point in time in 2015, we are seeking funding for the five. The intent is to purchase five out of this fiscal year and come back in October/November when the new ones are delivered and come back and purchase five at that time. The intent here is to request an appropriation of $950,000 for the first five of 10 trucks with the understanding that we will be back in October/November for the other half of the fleet. When these are traded in, there will be money coming back. We anticipate that there will be probably about $100,000 coming back as a trade in. That money will go back into the Capital and Non-Recurring Fund to offset the $950,000.
Committee reports
Public Works Committee, Jay Keenan:
As always, Steve pretty much explained the whole thing. You have the report. We met on April 9. We had eight out of nine members there. We voted eight to zero to recommend to the full RTM.

Finance Committee, Mr. Wieser:
Same thing. We voted 6-0. Lois was winging her way somewhere around the world. Everybody else was around.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Dr. Heller read the resolution and it was seconded by Ms. Schine:
RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, and a request by the Director of Public Works, the sum of $950,000 to the Capital & Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund (C&NEF) Account to purchase 5 dump trucks to replace five 2002 trucks is hereby appropriated.

Ms. Flug: It has been moved and seconded to approve the resolution just read.

Members of the RTM – no comments

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.

Ms. Flug:
Thank you. We’ll deal with items #5 and #6 tomorrow night.

The meeting adjourned at 11:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia H. Strauss
Town Clerk

by Jacquelyn Fuchs
Secretary
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