

Town of Plymouth

80 Main Street, Terryville, CT 06786
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Board of Finance

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1. Call Meeting to Order: Jim Kilduff, Chairman called the scheduled Public Hearing -Plymouth Board of Finance Presentation of Proposed General Fund Budget Monday, April 17, 2023 meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. in the Community Room, Plymouth Town Hall.

Roll Call: Present were Town Councilman Nate Brown, Town Councilman Dan Gentile, Town Councilman Joe Green, Mayor Joseph T. Kilduff, and Town Councilwoman Roxanne McCann, Ron Tiscia, Town Councilman. Also present from the Town of Plymouth were Town Attorney William A. Hamzy, and Director of Finance Grace K. Zweig.

Present from the Board of Finance were Jim Kilduff- Chairman, Vicky Carey-Vice-Chair, Board of Finance Member Eugene Croce, Board of Finance Member Barbara Rockwell, Board of Finance Member Briana Brumaghim, and Board of Finance Member Jennifer Brunoli.

Present from the Board of Education were Plymouth Board of Education Superintendent Brian Falcone, and Plymouth Board of Education -Business Manager Matthew Tencza.

Plymouth Board of Education Members: Walt Seaman-Board Chairman, Karen E. Kulesa, Vice-Chair, Michelle Lucian- Plymouth Board of Education Secretary, Cindy Candrea-Florenciani-Plymouth Board of Education Member, Richard Foote-Plymouth Board of Education Member, Kelly Tilton-Plymouth Board of Education Member, Patrick Perugino-Plymouth Board of Education Member, Gregory Showers-Plymouth Board of Education Member, and Louis Zbuska-Plymouth Board of Education Member.

2. Pledge of Allegiance: James Kilduff led the group and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Fire Exit Notification: James Kilduff noted the Fire Exits for the record.

3. Presentation of Proposed FY 2023-24 General Fund Budget

Jim Kilduff, Chairman welcomed everyone to the Board of Finance meeting.

Jim Kilduff, Chairman read into the record:

LEGAL NOTICE - TOWN OF PLYMOUTH PUBLIC HEARING ON BUDGET

The Board of Finance, Town of Plymouth, CT, will hold a Public Hearing at the Plymouth Town Hall Community Room on Monday, April 17, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. to consider the recommendation of the Board of Finance relative to the Town Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. Electors and qualified taxpayers of Plymouth will be heard at the Public Hearing. Immediately following the Public Hearing on the budget proposal, there will be a Joint Meeting of the Board of Finance, Board of Education, and the Town Council.

PLYMOUTH, CT
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
RECEIVED FOR RECORD
2023 APR 25 PM 3:30
Shirley K...
TOWN CLERK

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Noted: Copies of the budget, as recommended by the Board of Finance, have been and are available from the Office of the Town Clerk at the Plymouth Town Hall during regular business hours and the Budget has been posted on the Town Webpage.

The Budget Presentation included the following:

Welcome -Town of Plymouth, CT -Public Hearing on General Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024 dated April 17, 2022

Hearing Agenda

- ❖ Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance
- ❖ Legal Notification
- ❖ Presentation of the General Fund Budget
- ❖ Public Comment/Q & A
- ❖ Adjourn to Joint Meeting of Town Council, Boards of Finance & Education

Jim Kilduff, Chairman - Board of Finance introduced, Vicky Carey – Board of Finance Vice-Chair, Board of Finance Members: Eugene Croce, Barbara Rockwell, Briana Brumaghim, and Jennifer Brunoli.

Jim Kilduff Chairman -Board of Finance introduced Grace K. Zweig - Director of Finance and Roxanne McCann, Town Council Liaison.

The Budget Presentation included the following:

1. Budget Highlights
2. Summary of Revenues & Expenses
3. Tax Impact & Closing Comments

Jim Kilduff, Chairman discussed in detail the following included in the presentation:

Budget Goal

To prepare a balanced, responsible budget under the current economic conditions. Why?

Tax Foundation

Budget Highlights

- ❖ **Capital Project - Town Aid to Roads (Road Program) maintained at \$1,000,000**
- ❖ **Increased the Board of Education's budget from 2.13% to 3.0%**
- ❖ **Additions to Town Hall staffing**

- ❖ Find the Midpoint - What's Right & True - Stay Balanced
- ❖ Revenues Pie Chart
- ❖ Expenditures Pie Chart %
- ❖ Expenditures Pie Chart \$

- ❖ Expenditures Graph
- ❖ Summary of Total Expenditures
- ❖ Capital Projects - FY 2023-2024 – Highlights – Noted some ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funded
- ❖ Budget Totals
- ❖ Commentary & Observations
- ❖ Public Comment

4. Public Input – Question and Answer Session

Round 1 Public Comment

Gerry Bourbonniere, 6 Fairmount Ave, Terryville, CT - Noted a 3.64% increase in the budget, and 3% budget spending cap in the town charter, and inflation of 4.98%. Addition by subtraction does not make sense, the education department is the foundation, noted options, charter schools, magnet, private or home school. Suggests going to a referendum and letting townspeople decide - market properly.

Cathy Paskus, 4 Arrow Drive, Terryville, - worked closely with the school system, Leo, and different school organizations, they have improved our school system and noted programs that are benefiting our students and town.

Melanie Church, 328 Main Street, Terryville, CT -Take back revenue, special duty, revenue, lower taxes, accountability, time studies, and Charter.

Chief Karen Krasicky spoke as a department head noting the reasons for the Administrative Police Officer position and read into the record the following:

Administrative Police Officer Position

Added mandates have been placed upon our department as a result of House Bill 6004, the Police Accountability Bill, including the Mandatory Accreditation Program which we began in February 2022, requests for Body-Worn/Dashboard Camera footage which must be redacted before it is released, obtaining Risk Protection Orders, and an increase in the number of reports and mandated reporting procedures. Filling Extra Duty Jobs and maintaining the Work Schedule, monitoring equipment and technology, and many other tasks can no longer be completed by the Patrol Officers and Sergeants. If the Sergeants and Officers are in the department working on administrative tasks they are not thoroughly and properly patrolling our Town, acting as deterrents, being proactive, conducting motor vehicle enforcement, which is prevalent throughout the Town, practicing community policing, and devoting and focusing their time to protect and serve the citizens of our community.

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We are in desperate need of an Administrative Position. I am requesting a Police Officer position and not a position of rank such as a Sergeant because a Police Officer position is the most cost effective for the Town and will have the least financial impact on the hard-working taxpayers of our Town. House Bill 6004, the Police Accountability Bill that includes the Mandatory Accreditation Program is an unfunded mandate that was forced upon our Town and all the other Towns and Cities in the State of Connecticut. The State does not care how we financially comply with the mandates they dictated to us that must be fulfilled.

Accreditation is a very arduous, intricate, and time intensive task. It requires a tremendous amount of focus and dedication. Tier 1, which we are presently working on and is due for completion by December 2023, consists of 188 standards. Tier 2 or Advanced Accreditation which must be completed by December 2026, consists of 482 standards. Each mandate contains approximately five individual requirements in order for compliance to be achieved for that particular standard. Initial Accreditation takes three years to complete and must be completed every three years thereafter in accordance with State law. Our Service Consultant Accreditation Manager is working to help us gain compliance and has been seeking proofs for the standards from various officers who must take time from their daily activities, which is placing a strain on their productivity. While she is working here now, she needs to train an Administrative Police Officer so he will be able to handle the Accreditation Process for the foreseeable future.

The Administrative Police Officer will assist with creating and filling the work schedules and Extra Duty Jobs, when needed. This task alone frequently keeps the Sergeant and the Shift Supervisor inside the department for the majority of the first shift because Extra Duty jobs that need to be filled has increased and come into the department on a continual basis. These jobs bring thousands and thousands of dollars of revenue to our Town which truly helps reduce the financial burden on our taxpayers. The Administrative Police Officer will assist with the fleet management for our cruisers which remains consistent with needed repairs and recalls and will assist with fingerprinting individuals seeking temporary pistol permits and employment which has also increased. He will help to coordinate the Field Training Officer Program, help to ensure CISS/CJIS early arrest notification is completed, assist with NIBRS reporting and ensuring department compliance, assist with monitoring the Guardian Tracking and PowerDMS tasks that are completed by the officers, act as the Information Technology Liaison for the Town and Litchfield County Dispatch and work with various Information Technology (IT) personnel from the Town and the Communications Aided Dispatch (CAD) vendor to ensure the information technology systems function properly, assist with redacting body/dashboard camera footage, when needed, assist with transporting paperwork and/or prisoners to court, when needed, assist with grant writing, and assist the Captain in overseeing training and ensuring department employees are current in all aspects of training and certifications due to the marked increase in mandatory training. Please be advised this list of job duties may not be all inclusive. He will also assist with backfilling shift openings, when possible, in lieu of officers being ordered to work, which will help boost morale and save overtime, and complete any other duties that are assigned by the Chief of Police. This "Jack of All Trades" position will require a flexible work schedule that will be determined and recommended by the Chief of Police based on the operational needs of the department.

If the department does not add an Administrative Police Officer Position, we may not be able to keep up with the current mandates and requirements, and those that continue to emerge and be placed upon us,

thus causing us not to be in compliance with State law, which could ultimately cause potential liability for the Town of Plymouth.

Chief Karen Krasicky spoke as a department head noting the need for the Wellness Canine for the Plymouth Police Department and Town of Plymouth - read into the record the following:

Wellness Canine

In light of all the added pressure and stress that have been placed on the Officers for almost three (3) years by House Bill 6004, the Police Accountability Bill, and now Mandatory Department Accreditation, and the increase in the line of duty deaths of Officers in the nation which occurred right on our door step in the Bristol Police Department when two (2) Officers were killed and another one wounded on October 12, 2022, Officer Wellness has become more important than ever before. Many Departments have added Wellness Canines to their work force which have helped support the Officers with their mental health after the Officers experienced serious critical incidents and on a day-to-day basis as a morale booster for all Department employees. The Wellness Canine would be trained and donated to the Department from the nonprofit organization known as Puppies Behind Bars so there would be no cost to the Town. This is an ADA certified service dog that is trained to assist with PTSD and anxiety following a trauma but will also be utilized for first responder wellness, community relations, and victim services. Police Officers, Fire Fighters, Emergency Medical Services Personnel, Town Hall Personnel, Board and Commission Members, students and school staff, and community members would significantly benefit from the services of a Wellness Canine.

Police Officers, Fire Fighters, and Emergency Medical Services Personnel face very stressful, personally challenging situations on a daily basis as a result of the oath they took to protect and serve their communities. Over the years, the stress level for Emergency Responders has increased due to the amplification of their duties and responsibilities and added pressures placed upon them. There has been a significant increase in PTSD for all disciplines but there has been a noticeable increase in the profession of law enforcement. More than ever before, Police Officers have become the target of society's anger, which is causing them not only physical harm by the senseless, baseless targeted attacks on them, but by inflicting psychological harm on them causing officers to perform their duties and responsibilities every day with thoughts of the public's antagonism towards them. These added pressures do not mean they need to seek professional counseling, it means they need the support of our department, our Town Officials, Boards, and Commissions, and our community, to provide them with avenues to reduce their stress levels. A Wellness Canine is one of those ways we can support our Officers and all our First Responders.

There has been an increase in our community of children and young adults who are experiencing added pressures, stress, and traumatic situations, and an increase in Police Officer encounters with autistic children and young adults. There are more individuals who are expressing thoughts that they want to harm themselves, thoughts of suicide, three alone in February in one of our schools. There has also been an increase in domestic violence cases where children are involved or present, and drug overdoses. A Wellness Canine would be an invaluable tool in all of these types of situations and could have a profound positive effect in helping to calm and stabilize these individuals. For most people, when you pet a dog,

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hug a dog, and talk to a dog, a feeling of calmness, peace, and tranquility is experienced. Imagine how much more a person who is experiencing a crisis would benefit from a Wellness Canine who is carefully trained to key in on and handle these sensitive matters.

The Officer receiving this Wellness Canine would be an existing Officer who is part of the minimum manpower in Patrol so no backfill Officer is needed. The Department was approved to increase the Fleet from sixteen (16) to seventeen (17) cruisers during this fiscal year so another cruiser for the Officer and Wellness Canine would not be needed, however, the cruiser would have to be up-fitted for the Wellness Canine. This new line item would be for the cost of food, vet bills, and supplies for the Wellness Canine each fiscal year and for start-up costs for a cage for the cruiser, heat alarm, bed, toys, etc. which will be approximately between \$5,000.00 and \$6,000.00 for start-up costs and \$2,000.00 annually thereafter for food and vet bills. Due to the backlog of other police departments implementing a Wellness Canine, obtaining a dog is expected to be in the upcoming Fiscal Year, 2023-2024, but not until about February 2024 which would then require the Officer to attend the training program. It is most likely that community donations will help fund this program annually as they did when the Department had Canine Magnum. As I stated in the March 27 and March 30, 2023 Board of Finance Meetings, if the Town will not fund the \$5,000.00 to \$6,000.00 start-up costs, I will pay for them out of my own pocket because that's how important and how much this project means to me, my officers, and my community.

At the March 27, 2023 Board of Finance Meeting, concerns regarding overtime were raised. As the Chief of Police, it is my responsibility to manage the budget, to remain within the line item amounts in the budget, and not to exceed the overtime line item. As long as I stay within my budget and implement the overtime as effectively and efficiently as possible, barring any unforeseen circumstances, for the officers, for the proper management of the department, and for our community members, then if a small portion of the overtime has to be utilized for a crisis for the Wellness Canine Officer, why should this be an issue? The invaluable benefits a Wellness Canine will provide to the Police Officers, Fire Fighters, Emergency Medical Services Personnel, Town Hall Personnel, Board and Commission Members, students and school staff, and the citizens in our community should totally out-weigh the minimal start-up costs, annual maintenance costs, and overtime. Should we really put a price tag on mental health wellness for those who protect and serve, because they protect and serve you and the ones you love?

Round 2 Public Comment

Gerry Bourbonniere, 6 Fairmount Ave, Terryville, CT - Explained "Addition by subtraction" getting rid of services to save money, re. staff members, retiring do no refill to save money, get rid of dispatchers replaced by outsourcing, and saved money. All savings are one time in that fiscal year. Noted the importance of marketing/advertising of referendum and briefly elaborated.

Cathy Paskus, 4 Arrow Drive, Terryville - Thanked the Mayor, Town Council, Board of Finance, and Board of Education for all the work done, noted the need for Police Officer, and complimented the Plymouth Police Department.

Melanie Church, 328 Main Street, Terryville, CT - Time study needed, additions, unaffordable taxes, noted ARPA

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Marty Sandshaw, 7 Richmond Drive, Plymouth, CT – Thanked the Board of Education, Town Council, and Board of Finance for a job well done! Unfortunately, this town does not qualify for some grants that other towns and municipalities due to our size. The only gain we have in the foreseeable future and even mid-term is our Board of Education is the only thing that is going to bring people into our town. Noted Industrial Park 95% full, a referendum is a waste of money and briefly elaborated.

Vinnie Klimas, 5 Coral Drive, Terryville, CT – Accountability - Noted 27 Boards and Commissions in town committees and special interests noted -all worthy groups, thanked the Board of Finance, Town Council, Mayor, and Board of Education noted meetings to give great accountability for the citizens. All of these interest groups, and volunteers gave time – are dedicated and devoted.

5. Adjournment to Joint Meeting with Town Council and Board of Education

(See Plymouth Town Council Joint Meeting with the Plymouth Board of Finance and Plymouth Board of Education)

Vicky Carey made a motion, seconded by Eugene Croce to adjourn at 6:55 pm to the Joint Meeting with the Town Council & Board of Education.

Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Yokubinas

Michele Yokubinas
Recording Secretary