

OFFICE OF THE
FIRST SELECTMAN

Telephone (203) 563-0100
Fax (203) 563-0299

Email to: lynne.vanderslice@wiltonct.org



Lynne A. Vanderslice
First Selectwoman

Joshua S. Cole
Second Selectman

Kimberley Healy
Selectwoman

Basam Nabulsi
Selectman

Ross H. Tartell
Selectman

TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

To: Board of Selectmen

From: Lynne A Vanderslice

Date: July 15, 2022

RE: Additional information for July 19th BOS Agenda Items

The following is additional information in advance of the meeting:

- **Community Gardens:** For many years, residents have been gardening on town and state-owned property at Allen's through a Parks and Recreation Community Gardens program. We recently received notice from CT DOT that gardening is not allowed under the State's lease with the Town. This prohibition is not unique to Wilton. They have agreed to work with us as we develop an alternative location for the gardens, but shared a concern about the continued use of pesticides.
Fortunately, we have other town-owned land, which can house the gardens. We are working on a proposal for a future meeting. In the meantime, we have informed the current gardeners they are no longer able to use pesticides. Recognizing this is a change in approach for some, we waived this year's \$45 fee. The fee offsets water usage. Allen's has been a good home to the gardens, but we expect ultimately a less congested property without the sports related traffic and activity is ultimately a better and more attractive site for the community gardens.
- **Proposed Amendment to American Paving Contract:** The current contract with American Paving began on March 31, 2021 and is for an estimated tonnage of asphalt at a cost based on a fixed cost for Bituminous Concrete installation of \$115 per ton. Our process in awarding the contract has been to consider vender proposals from the State's bid list and American Paving's bid. American Paving has historically been under the state bid price. Our experience with American Paving has been very favorable, including the fact that they both mill and pave.
The state bid contracts include +/--escalation clauses. Our contract with American Paving does not. As Frank will discuss and in the materials provided, American Paving is requesting a +/- escalation clause for all work remaining on the open contract and for any new contract. The escalation formula would be the same as the state bid contracts. American Paving is requesting a price of \$135 per ton with +/- escalation. The state bid price is \$153 +/- for July 1.
- **Proposed Amendment to Verizon Lease:** Verizon is finalizing their application to the CT Siting Council and has requested a slight location change, approximately 30 ft, for the location of the tower.
- **Discussions with the Board of Finance:** I attended Tuesday's Board of Finance meeting to encourage them to provide targets for the FY2024 budget and to remind them, as

discussed with them during their April 24th meeting, that debt service would be increasing over the next couple of years.

Over the last several years the Board of Finance has targeted mill rate increases of +/- 1.5%. During those same years, debt service has been decreasing helping the BOF to achieve those targets. One goal is reminding them was so they consider the impact of no longer having that favorability.

Debt service decreased because 1-new debt was borrowed at a lower interest rate than retired debt and 2-and more impactfully, the dollar amount of retired debt exceeded new debt as we managed down debt in anticipation of the police headquarters project and others. Over the last 5 years, outstanding debt has decreased by \$11.6 million from \$81.9 million as of June 30, 2017 to \$70.3 million as of June 30, 2022. Unfortunately, some members didn't remember this. It led to remarks, reported in news coverage, implying that debt over the next couple of years would be unusually high. I plan to clarify this at Tuesday's meeting.

- **Possible Economic Relief for Small Businesses:** With rising costs and our desire to attract and maintain our small business retail and restaurants, I'd like to discuss the idea of possible fee waivers. If amendable, I will prepare a proposal for a future meeting.
- **Possible COLA for Retires:** Under the Town's retirement plan consideration of a COLA must be discussed at least once within a four-year period. This was last discussed in 2020. With high inflation, it seems appropriate to discuss now.
- **Reissuance of CRU Proclamation:** Proposing the proclamation be reaffirmed and reissued with each change of Board of Selectmen membership.
- **Discussions with Housing Committee:** I attended this Tuesday's Housing Committee to present the ideas discussed at our last meeting. The ideas were enthusiastically received by the members. Further details on Tuesday.

Have a good weekend.