

The public can call into this meeting and will be allowed to address the Town Council during "Audience of Citizens" or during the "Public Hearing" portion of the meeting. If you would like to listen in on the meeting or would like to address the Town Council please call 1-563-999-2090 at 7:00 p.m., you will be asked to punch in the access code followed by the pound sign – 269573#. The Mayor will ask for public comment. Once recognized by the Mayor, you will need to clearly state your name and address before speaking and may only speak during the audience of citizens and public hearing.

**TOWN OF BERLIN  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING (VIA CONFERENCE CALL)  
Tuesday April 7, 2020  
~~Town Council Chambers~~  
7:00 P.M.**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Kaczynski called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**C. ROLL CALL**

Those in attendance were:

Councilor JoAnn Angelico-Stetson  
Mayor Mark Kaczynski  
Councilor Brenden Luddy  
Councilor Charles Paonessa  
Councilor Peter Rosso  
Councilor Mike Urrunaga  
Councilor Donna Veach

Also in attendance:

Town Manager Aroscha Jayawickrema  
Corporation Counsel Jeffrey Donofrio

**D. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

David Evans, 1233 Worthington Ridge – Mr. Evans stated that he has seen in the budget presentations that the goal for the Town is to get debt payments down to 4%. He asks that the Council not lose sight of that goal.

He also spoke of one item in the Board of Education budget presentation that compares the average operating budget increases over the past five years in Berlin vs. surrounding towns, with

Rocky Hill being the highest at 4.2% and Berlin's average being the lowest at 1.74%. That item also asks if the growth and vitality of a town is connected to the quality of its' school system. But that item was missing some information that could be helpful for future budget discussions, such as the State's Accountability Index for towns. Mr. Evans stated that there was no evidence that increased spending is improving the accountability of our schools. He stated that it would be helpful if evidence was provided to support how increased spending is helpful.

Sam Lomaglio, 78 Hickory Hill Road – Mr. Lomaglio, Chairman of the Board of Finance (BOF), stated that the BOF submitted a very responsible budget considering the environment we are now in due to COVID-19. He also believes that the Board of Education 3.2% increase is a fair increase. He wanted to remind everyone that a lump sum is allocated to the Board of Education and they are responsible for allocating those funds.

John Richards, 239 Hawthorne Drive – Mr. Richards, a member of the Board of Finance, stated that emails received from citizens are generally in favor of the budget as presented.

E. **MEETING AGENDA** – Immediately Following the Audience of Citizens

F. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. Topic re: Approve Berlin Youth Football and Cheerleading to sell food and beverages at their home football games at Scalise Football Field, Sage Park for the 2020 season. – Parks and Recreation
2. Topic re: Approve Debra Tubbs, Ice Queen food truck to sell ice cream, snacks and beverages at the following parks, playgrounds and event: Percival Pool, Demore, Dinda, Bittner Jr. Memorial Pool, Pistol Creek on Wednesday afternoons from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., Sage Park, Little Peoples Playground, Friendship Place at Willard School and Timberlin 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in July 2020. – Parks and Recreation
3. Topic re: Approve acceptance of the donations in the amount of \$300 for the Berlin Parks and Recreation Department youth fishing derbies to be held on Saturday, April 18 and Saturday, April 25, 2020 at Sage Park Pond from 8 AM to 10 AM. – Parks and Recreation
4. Topic re: Approve the waiving of all field fees not to exceed \$630 for St. Paul School, Kensington soccer team for the use of Percival soccer field for a number of dates in April, May and June. – Parks and Recreation
5. Topic re: Accept monetary donations totaling \$33.90 for the Berlin Peck Memorial Library and deposit \$8.00 into the friends of the library miscellaneous account and deposit \$25.90 into the library agency account. – Berlin-Peck Memorial Library

Councilor Luddy moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0. (MOTION CARRIED)

## **G. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

The Town Council of the Town of Berlin will meet remotely on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of holding a public hearing on the following proposed ordinance of the Town, said ordinance being entitled as follows:

**AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$1,000,000 FOR ATHLETIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS (2020) AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$1,000,000 BONDS OF THE TOWN TO MEET SAID APPROPRIATION, AND PENDING THE ISSUANCE THEREOF THE MAKING OF TEMPORARY BORROWINGS FOR SUCH PURPOSE**

Copies of said proposed ordinance are available on the town's website [www.town.berlin.ct.us](http://www.town.berlin.ct.us) under events – Town Council Meeting - April 7, 2020.

The public can call into this meeting and will be allowed to address the Town Council during “Audience of Citizens” or during the “Public Hearing” portion of the meeting. If you would like to listen in on the meeting or would like to address the Town Council please call 1-563-999-2090, you will be asked to punch in the access code followed by the pound sign – 269573#.

Mayor Kaczynski convened the public hearing for the Athletic Facility improvements and bond ordinance at 7:13 p.m. The ordinance which is the subject of this public hearing is available to the public on the town's website [www.town.berlin.ct.us](http://www.town.berlin.ct.us) under Events – Town Council Meeting – April 7, 2020.

Mayor Kaczynski asked if there is a motion and a second to read the title of the proposed ordinance and to waive the reading of the remainder of the ordinance, incorporating its full text into the minutes of this meeting.

Councilor Luddy moved to waive the reading of the ordinance and incorporate the wording of the ordinance into the record.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$1,000,000 FOR ATHLETIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS (2020) AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$1,000,000 BONDS OF THE TOWN TO MEET SAID APPROPRIATION, AND PENDING THE ISSUANCE THEREOF THE MAKING OF TEMPORARY BORROWINGS FOR SUCH PURPOSE**

### **Public comments**

David Evans, 1233 Worthington Ridge – Mr. Evans stated that funds have been put into the upcoming budget in the amount of approximately \$140,000 for this project. If this item gets

approved during this meeting, and the budget is approved as well, all is fine. But there could be a disconnect between the two and if so, it should get resolved. Also, it would be helpful to know the details behind the bonding.

In response to Mr. Evans' statements, Finance Director Kevin Delaney added that the \$140,000 is in the budget to account for the first year of principal and projected interest payments. However, the Board of Finance appropriated \$140,000 of Fund Balance so that this would not impact the taxpayers. In the event the bonding does not occur, the Fund Balance would not be necessary and would default back at the end of the fiscal year.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Kaczynski closed the Public Hearing at 7:18 p.m.

#### **H. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Topic re: Waive Rule 7 of the Town Council Rules and Procedures to allow the Town Council to vote on the proposed bond ordinance at tonight's meeting and that "AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$1,000,000 FOR ATHLETIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS (2020) AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$1,000,000 BONDS OF THE TOWN TO MEET SAID APPROPRIATION, AND PENDING THE ISSUANCE THEREOF THE MAKING OF TEMPORARY BORROWINGS FOR SUCH PURPOSE." be adopted. – Town Clerk**

Mayor Kaczynski expressed that he is not in favor of waiving Rule 7 and feels this item should be brought up at the next Town Council meeting when more information is provided to Council members.

Councilor Rosso was concerned that, with the current pandemic situation, there's no guarantee that the Council will be able to meet in two weeks. He feels that the item should be voted on tonight.

Councilor Paonessa stated that now is not the time to put this \$1,000,000 debt on the taxpayers due to the current economic conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilor Luddy agreed that he is not in favor of waiving Rule 7 at this point due to economic conditions.

Councilor Veach agrees with obtaining clarification on this item and waiting until the next Town Council meeting.

Mayor Kaczynski stated that he feels that there is concern that the financial situation of the Town is only going to get worse due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not the time to incur more debt.

NO ACTION TAKEN

2. **Topic re: Discussion and possible action on the Board of Education and Town budgets. - Town Clerk**

Town Manager Jayawickrema stated that after the budget was submitted to the Board of Finance (BOF) the COVID-19 outbreak occurred and steps had to be taken by the BOF to make significant changes to reduce both the Town and Board of Education budgets in response to the pandemic.

The overall increase from fiscal year 2020 is 1.4% with the Board of Education budget increasing by 3.2%, and the Town budget decreasing by .3%. Mr. Jayawickrema stated that he believes this is a responsible budget that will allow the Town to maintain the level of services it provides to the community, while allowing the Board of Education to continue providing an outstanding education to our students. The resulting mill rate increase is zero.

Mayor Kaczynski stated that the BOF did a lot of work on the budget and he was happy with a zero-tax increase, especially considering the current circumstances. His only concern moving forward is that the Board of Education budget continues to receive large budget increases while the Town budget was decreased. He wonders how much more can be taken from the hide of the Town.

The Mayor also stated that he is concerned that all capital was cut from this budget and he is hoping that projected surplus from the current fiscal year can be used for those projects. The Town Manager stated that when the BOF voted on this budget they did express wanting to work with the Town Council and the Town to use some of this surplus for capital needs.

Councilor Luddy thanked the town staff, the Town Manager and the Board of Finance for working together during these unusual times to develop a budget with a zero-tax increase.

Councilor Veach also thanked everyone involved in the process. She added that she agrees with using any surplus funds toward capital expenditures.

Councilor Paonessa agreed with Councilors Luddy and Veach.

Councilor Rosso thanked the BOF for putting together this budget, especially under these circumstances.

Councilor Urrunaga agreed that he is supportive of all the hard work that went into the budget preparation and he is happy with a zero-tax increase.

Councilor Angelico-Stetson thanked the BOF for their hard work on the budget. She appreciates that they continue to fund the Board of Education and maintain town services including services for Seniors.

Councilor Luddy moved to approve the budgets as presented by the Board of Finance.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Councilor Luddy moved to authorize the Board of Finance to adopt the budget.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Councilor Luddy moved to authorize the Board of Finance to set the mill rate.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**3. Topic re: Authorize the Town Manager and the Mayor to execute the declaration of emergency in the form attached. – Town Manager**

Town Manager Jayawickrema stated that Berlin is beginning to see an increase in COVID-19 cases. In order to protect the health and safety of town residents it is prudent to declare a state of emergency. In addition, there are State and Federal financial assistance programs for municipalities and declaring a state of emergency will allow the Town to maximize their eligibility for these programs.

Corporation Counsel Jeff Donofrio explained that declaring a state of emergency is primarily for financial purposes. FEMA is offering up to 75% reimbursement for eligible expenses associated with municipal response to COVID-19. The declaration does not conflict with the State or Federal governments' declarations of emergency, or with any Executive Orders issued by Governor Lamont.

Councilor Luddy moved to authorize the Town Manager and the Mayor to execute the declaration of emergency in the form attached.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**4. Topic re: Approve the transfer of \$10,000 from the Health Insurance account and \$28,555.49 from the Pension account to the Defibrillators account pending approval of the Board of Finance and authorize the police department to utilize McKesson Medical-Surgical, State of CT Contract #16PSX0247, to purchase 14 AED and associated training and equipment for an amount not to exceed \$38,555.49, pending approval of the previous transfer. – Police Department**

Town Manager Jayawickrema explained that the current AEDs are over 10 years old. The Town has applied for a grant of \$13,000 from the Marjorie Moore Charitable Foundation but is required to purchase the AEDs first and be reimbursed. Funds are available in accounts due to staffing vacancies.

Councilor Luddy moved to approve the transfer of \$10,000 from the Health Insurance account and \$28,555.49 from the Pension account to the Defibrillators account pending approval of the Board of Finance.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Councilor Luddy moved to authorize the police department to utilize McKesson Medical-Surgical, State of CT Contract #16PSX0247, to purchase 14 AED and associated training and equipment for an amount not to exceed \$38,555.49, pending approval of the previous transfer.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

- 5. Topic re: Adopt the attached resolution making certain findings with respect to unexpended bond proceeds of the Town and appropriating said proceeds for capital purposes as outlined in the attached resolution, pending approval of the Athletic Field Improvements bond ordinance and approval of the Board of Finance. – Finance**

Town Manager Jayawickrema explained that the Scalise Field turf replacement project was completed in 2019. \$1 million was bonded for the project but \$46,535.19 in funds remain because the entire contingency was not required for the project. This motion is to reallocate these funds to the Sage Park Restroom renovations pending approval as noted.

Councilor Luddy moved to adopt the attached resolution making certain findings with respect to unexpended bond proceeds of the Town and appropriating said proceeds for capital purposes as outlined in the attached resolution, pending approval of the Athletic Field Improvements bond ordinance and approval of the Board of Finance.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

- 6. Topic re: Transfer \$98,976, as detailed on the accompanying spreadsheet, to cover higher than budgeted expenditures in identified accounts. – Finance**

Town Manager Jayawickrema explained that beginning in April monies can be moved within town budget lines to cover unexpected expenses.

Councilor Luddy moved to transfer \$98,976, as detailed on the accompanying spreadsheet, to cover higher than budgeted expenditures in identified accounts.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

- 7. Topic re: Waive the bidding requirement and approve the purchase of eight Dell laptops from Imperium Technology Group of Brookfield for \$18,054.16 using the State contract, as this is in the best interest of the Town. – Finance**

Town Manager Jayawickrema explained that due to the COVID-19 situation more employees are being asked to work from home. The Town currently has one laptop for this purpose.

Councilor Angelico-Stetson added that she hoped this would also be the first step in moving the Town along technologically. Having the ability for staff to work remotely, as well as offering more online services for citizens is important.

Councilor Luddy moved to waive the bidding requirement and approve the purchase of eight Dell laptops from Imperium Technology Group of Brookfield for \$18,054.16 using the State contract, as this is in the best interest of the Town.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

- 8. Topic re: Authorize the Town Manager, Aroscha Jayawickrema, to enter into a contract with Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc. for Design and Construction Administration Services for Sage 1 Softball Field at Sage Park in an amount not to exceed \$49,550 which includes 10% contingency. – Parks and Recreation**

Director of Community, Recreation and Park Services Jen Ochoa explained that the Town went out to bid for Design and Construction Administration Services for reconstruction of the Sage I softball field. Three vendors submitted bids for the project but in the end Kaestle Boos Associates had the experience with the Scalise Field project and had already completed the Feasibility Schedule for Sage 1 which allows them to expediate the design schedule.

Deputy Director of Public Works Jim Horbal agreed that the Town has an established relationship with Kaestle Boos Associates and at this point to get the design completed will put us in a great position for when funding becomes available.

Finance Director Kevin Delaney confirmed that these funds were approved by Town Council and the Board of Finance at previous meetings.

Councilor Luddy moved to authorize the Town Manager, Aroscha Jayawickrema, to enter into a contract with Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc. for Design and Construction Administration Services for Sage 1 Softball Field at Sage Park in an amount not to exceed \$49,550 which includes 10% contingency.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

- 9. Topic re: Approve the transfer of \$16,376 from the Senior Center HVAC account in the General Fund and \$7,809 from the ADA Improvements account in the General Fund to the Senior Center Repairs account in the General Fund and utilize the CRCOG EZ IQC job order contracting portal through the Gordian Group and enter into a contract with BMP Construction Inc. of Brookfield, CT. for an amount not to exceed \$99,185.00 which includes a**



**4% contingency for flooring, kitchen cabinets, countertops and other miscellaneous repairs at the Berlin Senior Center. – Facilities**

Facilities Director Doug Solek stated that this is a project that was in the budget this year. The Town will be utilizing the CRCOG contracting portal.

Councilor Luddy moved to approve the transfer of \$16,376 from the Senior Center HVAC account in the General Fund and \$7,809 from the ADA Improvements account in the General Fund to the Senior Center Repairs account in the General Fund.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Councilor Luddy moved to utilize the CRCOG EZ IQC job order contracting portal through the Gordian Group and enter into a contract with BMP Construction Inc. of Brookfield, CT. for an amount not to exceed \$99,185.00 which includes a 4% contingency for flooring, kitchen cabinets, countertops and other miscellaneous repairs at the Berlin Senior Center.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**10. Topic re: Approve the purchase of furniture for the McGee Blast Classroom from RED THREAD in the amount of \$14,238.20 utilizing State of Connecticut contracts No. 15PSX0041-Steelcase and No.16PSX0190-Fleetwood. – Facilities**

Facilities Director Solek stated that the Blast classroom renovation at McGee Middle School has been completed. The final part of the project is to build out the room with the necessary furniture required for the program.

Councilor Luddy moved to approve the purchase of furniture for the McGee Blast Classroom from RED THREAD in the amount of \$14,238.20 utilizing State of Connecticut contracts No. 15PSX0041-Steelcase and No.16PSX0190-Fleetwood.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**11. Topic re: Award Bid 2020-7 for the McGee School Gym and Wellness Center Painting project to Scholar Painting of Seymour, CT for an amount not to exceed \$28,368.00 which includes a 20% project contingency. – Facilities**

Facilities Director Solek explained that funding was allocated at the end of last fiscal year. Due to timing the project could not be completed during last summer's school recess. Two bids were received, and a scope review was completed with the apparent low bidder Scholar Painting.

Councilor Luddy moved to award Bid 2020-7 for the McGee School Gym and Wellness Center Painting project to Scholar Painting of Seymour, CT for an amount not to exceed \$28,368.00 which includes a 20% project contingency.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**12. Topic re: Utilize State of CT. contract no.19PSX0088 and authorize Utility Communications of Hamden, CT to install a Motorola districtwide school security radio system at the 5 Berlin Public Schools, Board of Education Central Office and Berlin Police Department for an amount not to exceed \$170,721.10 which includes a 10% project contingency. – Facilities**

Facilities Director Solek stated that this is a whole new radio system to be issued to the Board of Education Security Department which will allow them to contact the Police Department during a crisis. Currently the school security guards go between schools using cell phones. This radio system will allow communication especially in areas where there is no cell service in the buildings.

Finance Director Kevin Delaney explained that there is Competitive School Security Grant Number 3 from 2017 which would provide reimbursement up to 43% for the project but only for Berlin High School, Willard Elementary and Hubbard Elementary, although the radio systems would be purchased for all five schools and Central Office.

Mayor Kaczynski questioned the need for 150 portable radios. Mr. Solek explained that due to the timing of the grant the number of radios requested was high. He suggested speaking with the Board of Education Security Director to determine how those numbers were determined.

Councilor Veach asked if the Town is certain that the Motorola radios will have connectivity within all school buildings. Mr. Solek stated that an audit was performed at all five schools to test that connectivity.

Mr. Solek suggested that the wording of the amount requested be changed in order to keep the project moving as it must be completed by June 30, 2020 to receive State reimbursement.

Mayor Kaczynski recommended changing the amount not to exceed \$100,000 with Town Manager Jayawickrema agreeing. The Mayor also suggested making sure the current system between the Police, Fire and Schools works before installing a third system.

Councilor Luddy moved amend the item and set the budget for the district-wide school security system at \$100,000.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Councilor Luddy moved the item as amended to utilize State of CT. contract no.19PSX0088 and authorize Utility Communications of Hamden, CT to install a Motorola districtwide school security

radio system at the 5 Berlin Public Schools, Board of Education Central Office and Berlin Police Department for an amount not to exceed \$100,000.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**13. Topic re: Approve an increase to Purchase Order 200446 for Daikin Applied up to \$30,000 for additional maintenance, testing, cleaning and repairs of the Berlin High School Chillers utilizing OMNIA partners contract R150505. – Facilities**

Councilor Luddy moved to approve an increase to Purchase Order 200446 for Daikin Applied up to \$30,000 for additional maintenance, testing, cleaning and repairs of the Berlin High School Chillers utilizing OMNIA partners contract R150505.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**14. Topic re: Approve utilizing the State of Connecticut Department of Administrative Services Contracts #18PSX0309 and #19PSX0261 for the 2020 Construction Season for the purpose of reconstructing and paving roadways. – Public Works**

Deputy Director of Public Works Jim Horbal stated that Public Works is requesting the Town Council's authority to use the two State of Connecticut contracts noted, in which Public Works will use the lowest, most cost-effective vendor(s) to complete the 2020 Road Reconstruction Program. This is contingent upon funding as it becomes available.

A preliminary list of roads to be reconstructed includes New Park Drive, the last segment of Edgewood Road, Brandagee Lane, and Woodbine Court. The list will be expanded as funding becomes available. The list is available on the Public Works page of the Town of Berlin website.

Councilor Luddy moved to approve utilizing the State of Connecticut Department of Administrative Services Contracts #18PSX0309 and #19PSX0261 for the 2020 Construction Season for the purpose of reconstructing and paving roadways.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**15. Topic re: Refer the demolition of 861 Farmington Avenue to the Planning Zoning Commission for a report pursuant to section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes. – Economic Development**

Mayor Kaczynski stated that as discussed at previous Town Council meetings, this building has serious issues and saving it would not be cost-effective. It had also been determined that the building has no historical value.

Councilor Luddy moved to refer the demolition of 861 Farmington Avenue to the Planning Zoning Commission for a report pursuant to section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**16. Topic re: Authorized the Town Manager to apply for an AARP Community Challenge Grant in the amount of \$75,000 to create a recreation and fitness trail at Pistol Creek that will be accessible to people of a range of ages and abilities. – Economic Development**

Councilor Rosso requested that the trail not impede on the cross-country course used by the High School and Middle School. Economic Development Director Chris Edge stated that Parks and Recreation Director Jen Ochoa and Public Grounds Supervisor Steve Woods have been working with Economic Development Coordinator Jim Mahoney on this and they are aware of the needs of the cross-country teams.

Councilman Veach added that the Pistol Creek area is beautiful, and she is hopeful that the Town will receive this grant.

Councilor Luddy moved to authorize the Town Manager to apply for an AARP Community Challenge Grant in the amount of \$75,000 to create a recreation and fitness trail at Pistol Creek that will be accessible to people of a range of ages and abilities.

Seconded by Councilor Angelico-Stetson.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**17. Topic re: Approve the proposal from Cardinal Engineering for additional services in the amount of \$22,000, to increase the maximum contract sum to \$79,200 and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a contract amendment with Cardinal Engineering for \$22,000 to be funded from accounts, Grant Road Improvement and STEAP Main Street Streetscape Improvements, Phase II. – Economic Development**

Economic Development Director Chris Edge stated that plans for a municipal parking lot between Dairy Queen and Main Street were not successful. After discussions between Cardinal Engineering, Public Works, the Town Manager and Economic Development it was decided that the best thing to do was move forward with modifications to Main Street to make it safer and to allow fire trucks to turn from Kensington Road onto Main Street. Work will also be done on New Britain Road. The STEAP grant will be used for the new work, and the Grant Road Improvement Account for the repairs. Mr. Edge stated that Cardinal Engineering was not the original engineers for the project.

Councilor Luddy stated that he is pleased to see this item on the agenda as he knows the brick islands placed on Main Street have been an issue for residents and businesses.

Councilor Luddy moved to approve the proposal from Cardinal Engineering for additional services in the amount of \$22,000, to increase the maximum contract sum to \$79,200 and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a contract amendment with Cardinal Engineering for \$22,000 to be

funded from accounts, Grant Road Improvement and STEAP Main Street Streetscape Improvements, Phase II.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

## **I. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:**

- The Town Hall building is currently closed to the public due to COVID19, but staff has been available to residents via telephone and email. Two weeks ago, social distancing guidelines were put into place within departments by implementing skeleton crews and working from home. The Federal government's "Stay home. Stay safe" guidelines have been extended until the end of April; therefore, for the next two weeks the Town will be asking employees to spend half their work week in the office and half the week working from home. If the employee's job duties do not allow them to work from home, they must be available to come into work if called. If the employee cannot come in when called, they must use vacation or personal time.

Four clusters have been created to assist the Town Manager. Human Resources Director Denise Parsons will be the liaison with staff related issues. Director of Community, Recreation and Park Services Jen Ochoa will assist with communication with the community and posting Town service updates on Facebook. Economic Development Director Chris Edge is the business liaison, and Town Clerk Kate Wall is assisting with elected officials.

- Senior Center & Social Services – Although the Senior Center is closed to the public, Director Tina Doyle and her staff reach out to seniors in the community on a regular basis via Robo-Calls and individual phone calls. Social Services continues to provide Food Pantry items to residents via a system at Town Hall.
- The Golf Course has been reopened with social-distancing restrictions and golf cart sanitizing procedures in place.
- Volunteer Firefighters – Currently if a firefighter comes in contact with someone with COVID19 they would be tested for the virus, but test results can take two weeks. If that test comes back positive, they are then eligible for worker's compensation. Fire Administrator Jim Simmons put together a proposal that would allow a stipend of \$400 a week for a maximum of two weeks for responding to a situation where the firefighter encounters COVID19 and develops symptoms. A questionnaire would first be completed by the firefighter including information regarding their exposure, if protective gear was worn, was there actual contact with the person, and if a worker's compensation claim has been filed. Once all the prerequisites were met the firefighter would then be eligible for the \$400 a week stipend. If test results came back negative before the two-week period, the stipend would be stopped. If the worker's compensation started due to a positive test, even before the two-week period, the stipend would be stopped.

Mayor Kaczynski and members of the Council expressed unanimous support of the proposal as firefighters are on the front line dealing with this situation. The Town Manager stated that he is proposing that this be funded from the General Insurance Fund and funds are available. The proposal is attached to these minutes.

- The Governor's Executive Order 7S allows towns to defer when taxes are due by 90 days and/or charge a lower interest rate on amounts outstanding which is 3% vs. 18% per year. There is flexibility to allow for a town's governing board to adopt one or both. This would not be for all taxpayers but for those that attest to a hardship situation. Although towns are given the authority to apply it to all taxpayers, except for those whose taxes are in escrow. The period covered is April 10, 2020 to July 1, 2020 and also applies to water and sewer bills.

Both the Finance Director and Revenue Collector have been working to create a recommendation and more information will be provided to the Town Council at the April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting so that the Town can send data to the Office of Policy and Management by April 25<sup>th</sup>.

#### **J. SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

None

#### **K. COUNCILORS' COMMUNICATION:**

Councilor Urrunaga thanked first responders, healthcare workers and everyone putting themselves on the line during this time. Also thank you to Senior Center Director Tina Doyle, and Jaymee Miller and Doug Truitt in Social Services for their work with residents and seniors. He also expressed gratitude to Councilor Angelico-Stetson for her "Lasagna Project" which is helping to provide meals to seniors and residents in need. Also, Chris Edge for the "Eat Local – Win Local" program that is highlighting local restaurants for residents to visit during this time. And a big thank you to Berlin teachers for restructuring to distance-learning, keeping the children of Berlin educated. He also stated that he has a list of items for the Food Pantry and Senior Center if any Councilors wished to donate.

Councilor Angelico-Stetson also thanked Tina Doyle for keeping the seniors accessible to information and services, and to the first responders that are exposing themselves every day to the virus for the safety of town residents. She added that if anyone knows of any elderly residents, or unemployed/furloughed individuals that are having a tough time, to please provide her with their name and address and she will get a lasagna to them.

Councilor Rosso reminded everyone to follow the CDC guidelines on social interaction so we can get things back to normal.

Mayor Kaczynski has been in touch with Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz and she has offered any other assistance the Town may need from the State.

Councilor Angelico-Stetson stated that Governor Lamont has been an exemplary leader during this time. From the small-business loans he has been coordinating with banks, to communication with hospitals and first responders, to keeping the public informed.

Mayor Kaczynski asks the Councilors, as they are speaking to residents, to remind them that this is an unprecedented event and to just be patient when requesting services. Things may take a little longer, but we will get through this.

**L. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:**

**March 17, 2020**

Councilor Luddy moved to accept the minutes of the March 17, 2020 Town Council meeting.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**M. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**1. Pending Litigations – C.G.S.S. Sec. 1-200 (6) (B) strategy and negotiations with respect to pending claims or pending litigation - Coccoma Brothers Assoc LLC**

Councilor Luddy moved to go into Executive Session: Pending Litigations – C.G.S.S. Sec. 1-200 (6) (B) strategy and negotiations with respect to pending claims or pending litigation - Coccoma Brothers Assoc LLC at 9:30 p.m. Invited in: Town Manager Jayawickrema, Corporation Counsel Jeffrey Donofrio, Attorney Jennifer Coppola, Economic Development Director Chris Edge, and Economic Development Coordinator Jim Mahoney.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED).

Executive Session began at 9:49 p.m. due to connectivity issues.

Executive Session ended at 10:15 p.m.

**N. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor Luddy moved to adjourn at 10:15 p.m.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED).

Submitted by,

Kathryn J. Wall  
Clerk of the Meeting

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
BERLIN TOWN CLERK

2020 APR 15 PM 4:13

*Kathryn J. Wall*

DESIGNATED