

TO: The Honorable Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Arosha Jayawickrema, Town Manager
DATE: March 15, 2022
SUBJECT: Tax Abatement for KevKai Properties LLC

Summary of Agenda Item:

KevKai Properties LLC has submitted an application for the construction of a 10,000 square foot building at 239 Christian Lane in Berlin. This new building will become the home of Ambiance Stone, which will be moving to Berlin from an adjacent community as well as provide additional industrial space for Berlin businesses. This abatement would be based on the increase in assessed value resulting from the real property improvements using the following schedule: 50% in year 1, 40% in year 2, and 30% in year 3 per the Town's tax abatement policy. The Economic Development Commission recommends that the Town Council approve the tax abatement for KevKai Properties LLC.

Actions Needed:

Move to approve a tax abatement for KevKai Properties LLC for the construction of a 10,000 square foot building at 239 Christian Lane of 50% in year 1, 40% in year 2, and 30% in year 3 per the town's tax abatement policy.

Attachments:

- 1) A copy of the tax abatement application
- 2) Estimated taxes and abated taxes
- 3) A copy of the letter to abutters

Prepared By: Christopher Edge, Economic Development Director 

Town of Berlin

Department of Economic Development

Tax Abatement Application

Name of Operating Company: Kev Kai Properties, LLC

Name of Parent Company (If applicable): _____

Name of Entity that will own the real estate: Kev Kai Properties, LLC

Mailing Address: 50 Progress Circle, Newington, CT 06111

Project Address (If applicable): 239 Christian Lane

Company Number: _____

Phone Number: 860-798-0521 Email: SarinaLisa@yahoo.com

Description of the business to be located in the facility including the types of products manufactured or distributed:

AMBULANCE STORE - STONE FABRICATION

Project Description – Please include square footage of building to be constructed or renovated, a general description of machinery and equipment and other personal expected to be added to the grand list, expected project start and completion dates. Attach an additional sheet if needed.

10,000 sq ft new construction

Visit our Web Site <http://www.town.berlin.ct.us>

Town of Berlin, Connecticut • Chris Edge, Economic Development Director
240 Kensington Road • Berlin, CT 06037 • (860) 828-7005 • Fax: (860) 828-7180 • Email: cedge@town.berlin.ct.us

Town of Berlin

Department of Economic Development

Estimated Value of Real Estate Improvements: \$250,000 (land) + \$750,000 (buildings)

Estimated Value of Additional Personal Property: TBD

Number of Jobs to be Retained in Berlin: N/A

Number of Jobs to be Created: 5

Additional Details (If needed):

2-18-22
Date

[Signature]
Signature of Company Representative

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PRO FORMA - KEVKAI PROPERTIES LLC

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimated Assessment Increase</u>	<u>Mill Rate</u>	<u>Real Estate Taxes</u>	<u>Personal Property Taxes</u>	<u>Total Taxes</u>	<u>Tax Abatement</u>	<u>Net Taxes</u>
1	700,000	33.93	\$ 23,751	\$ 2,375	\$ 26,126	<i>\$11,876</i>	\$ 14,251
2	700,000	34.27	\$ 23,989	\$ 2,399	\$ 26,387	<i>\$9,595</i>	\$ 16,792
3	700,000	34.61	\$ 24,228	\$ 2,423	\$ 26,651	<i>\$7,269</i>	\$ 19,383
4	700,000	34.96	\$ 24,471	\$ 2,447	\$ 26,918		\$ 26,918
5	700,000	35.31	\$ 24,715	\$ 2,472	\$ 27,187		\$ 27,187
6	700,000	35.66	\$ 24,963	\$ 2,496	\$ 27,459		\$ 27,459
7	700,000	36.02	\$ 25,212	\$ 2,521	\$ 27,733		\$ 27,733
8	700,000	36.38	\$ 25,464	\$ 2,546	\$ 28,011		\$ 28,011
9	700,000	36.74	\$ 25,719	\$ 2,572	\$ 28,291		\$ 28,291
10	700,000	37.11	\$ 25,976	\$ 2,598	\$ 28,574		\$ 28,574
11	700,000	37.48	\$ 26,236	\$ 2,624	\$ 28,859		\$ 28,859
12	700,000	37.85	\$ 26,498	\$ 2,650	\$ 29,148		\$ 29,148
13	700,000	38.23	\$ 26,763	\$ 2,676	\$ 29,440		\$ 29,440
14	700,000	38.62	\$ 27,031	\$ 2,703	\$ 29,734		\$ 29,734
15	700,000	39.00	\$ 27,301	\$ 2,730	\$ 30,031		\$ 30,031
16	700,000	39.39	\$ 27,574	\$ 2,757	\$ 30,332		\$ 30,332
17	700,000	39.79	\$ 27,850	\$ 2,785	\$ 30,635		\$ 30,635
18	700,000	40.18	\$ 28,128	\$ 2,813	\$ 30,941		\$ 30,941
19	700,000	40.59	\$ 28,410	\$ 2,841	\$ 31,251		\$ 31,251
20	700,000	40.99	\$ 28,694	\$ 2,869	\$ 31,563		\$ 31,563
	Total		\$ 522,973	\$ 52,297	\$ 575,271	\$ 28,739	\$ 546,531

March 28, 2022

Dear Berlin Property Owner,

The Town of Berlin Economic Development Commission has received an application pursuant to its Tax Partnership Program. This involves a phase in of increases in real property taxes resulting from the construction of a 10,000 square foot industrial building at 239 Christian Lane in Berlin. The applicant, KevKai Properties LLC has requested a 3-year tax abatement on the increase in assessment. This abatement will allow KevKai Properties to move a business into town as well as help a Berlin business expand at 239 Christian Lane.

This tax abatement will not increase your taxes, but will give KevKai Properties LLC a small tax abatement over the 3 years following the approval.

This matter is **scheduled** to be considered at the Town Council meeting on **Tuesday April 5th at Town Hall, 240 Kensington Road at 7:00 PM.** The meeting will also be broadcast on Zoom if you are unable to make it or unwilling to do so due to the COVID pandemic. Details for the meeting can be found on the town's website at www.town.berlin.ct.us. I am providing you this notice because you are the owner of record of a nearby property. The Town Council has requested that all property owners within 500 feet of the subject property be notified that this application will be considered at the meeting on November 10, 2020.

Please call me at 828-7005 if you have any questions in this regard.

Sincerely,

Christopher D. Edge
Economic Development Director

Agenda Item No. 13
Request for Town Council Action

TO: The Honorable Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Arosha Jayawickrema, Town Manager

DATE: March 21, 2022

SUBJECT: Small Cities CDBG Grant/ Fair Housing Month

Summary of Agenda Item:

As a recipient of a Small Cities Community Development Block Grant for 2012 Small Cities funding, it is a Department of Economic and Community Development Program requirement that our community actively evidence its commitment to and support for the principles and practices of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. April is designated as Fair Housing Month and as such is an ideal time for our community to reaffirm its commitment to Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. The Town must readopt the Fair Housing Resolution, Fair Housing Policy Statement, Affirmative Action Policy Statement, and Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Action Needed:

Move to readopt the Fair Housing Resolution, the Fair Housing Policy Statement, Affirmative Action Policy Statement and the Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Statement.

Attachments:

1. Fair Housing Resolution
2. Fair Housing Policy Statement
3. Affirmative Action Policy Statement
4. Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Prepared By:

Arosha Jayawickrema, Town Manager



TOWN OF BERLIN

Office Of the Town Manager

FAIR HOUSING RESOLUTION

- Whereas, All persons are afforded a right to full and equal housing opportunities in the neighborhood of their choice; and
- Whereas, Federal fair housing laws require that all individuals, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, be given equal access to all housing-related opportunities, including rental and homeownership opportunities, and be allowed to make free choices regarding housing location; and
- Whereas, Connecticut fair housing laws require that all individuals, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, learning disability, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression be given equal access to all housing-related opportunities, including rental and home ownership opportunities, and be allowed to make free choices regarding housing location; and
- Whereas, The **Town of Berlin** is committed to upholding these laws, and realizes that these laws must be supplemented by an Affirmative Statement publicly endorsing the right of all people to full and equal housing opportunities in the neighborhood of their choice.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOVED, That the **Town of Berlin** hereby endorses a Fair Housing Policy to ensure equal opportunity for all persons to rent, purchase, obtain financing and enjoy all other housing-related services of their choice on a non-discriminatory basis as provided by state and federal law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the chief executive officer of the **Town of Berlin** or his/her designated representative is responsible for responding to and assisting any person who alleges to be the victim of an illegal discriminatory housing practice in the **Town of Berlin** and for advising such person of the right to file a complaint with the State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or to seek assistance from the CT Fair Housing Center, legal services, or other fair housing organizations to protect his or her right to equal housing opportunities.

Adopted by the Town of Berlin on _____.

Arosha Jayawickrema, Town Manager

Town Seal

240 KENSINGTON ROAD • BERLIN, CT 06037
TELEPHONE (860) 828-7002
FAX (860) 828-7068



TOWN OF BERLIN

Office Of The Town Manager

FAIR HOUSING POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Town of Berlin to promote fair housing opportunities and to encourage racial and economic integration in all its programs and housing development activities.

Programs funded and administered by the Town of Berlin must comply with the provisions of Section 46a-64c of the C.G.S., and with related state and federal laws and regulations that prohibit discriminatory housing practices.

The Town of Berlin or any subrecipient of the Town will carry out an affirmative marketing program to attract prospective buyers or tenants of all majority or minority groups, without consideration of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, creed, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, lawful source of income, disability, age or because the individual has children in all programs and housing development activities funded or administered by the Town of Berlin.

The municipality's Town Manager, Arosha Jayawickrema, is responsible for the enforcement and implementation of this policy. The Town Manager can be reached at 860-828-7002 or by e-mail at ajayawickrema@berlinct.gov.

Complaints pertaining to discrimination in any program funded or administered by the Town of Berlin may be filed with the Town Manager in the Town Manager's Office. The municipality's Grievance Procedure will be utilized in these cases.

Complaints also may be filed with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity, Special Enforcement Unit, 21 Grand Street, Hartford, CT 06106, telephone 860-541-3403 within 180 days of the alleged violation by submitting a notarized complaint and/or the Boston Regional Office of FHEO, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., Federal Building, 10 Causeway Street, Room 321, Boston, MA 02222-1092, telephone (617) 994-8300 or 1-800-827-5005, TTY (617) 565-5453. A complaint may be filed with HUD within one year after an alleged violation. Additionally, an individual may file suite, at his/her expense, in Federal District Court or State Court within two years of an alleged violation. If the individual cannot afford an attorney, the Court may appoint one. A suit can be brought even after filing a complaint, if the complaining party has not signed a conciliation agreement and an Administrative Law Judge has not started a hearing. A court may award actual and punitive damages and attorney's fees and costs.

A copy of this Policy Statement will be given annually to all Town of Berlin employees, and they are expected to fully comply with it. In addition, a copy will be posted throughout Town of Berlin.

Revised 4/7/2022

Date

Arosha Jayawickrema, Town Manager

**THIS STATEMENT IS AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT OR ON AUDIO TAPE
BY CONTACTING AROSHA JAYAWICKREMA, 240 KENSINGTON ROAD,
BERLIN, CT 06037 OR BY TELEPHONE AT 860-828-7002.**



TOWN OF BERLIN

Office Of the Town Manager

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY STATEMENT

As Town Manager of the Town of Berlin, I recognize the need for Affirmative Action and I pledge my commitment to undertake positive actions to overcome the present effects of past practices or barriers to equal employment opportunity and to achieve the full and fair participation of minorities, women, people with disabilities, older persons, and all other protected groups found to be underutilized in the Town of Berlin's work force or affected by policies having an adverse impact. In the spirit of Executive Order 11, signed by Governor Ella Grasso November 21, 1975, and Executive Order 9, signed by Governor William A. O'Neill on January 3, 1984, I further state that the Town of Berlin will comply with the anti-discrimination provisions of the state and federal laws and regulations listed at the end of this section.

I recognize the hiring difficulties experienced by minorities, people with disabilities and by many older persons and, where appropriate, I have set goals to overcome the present effects of past discrimination, if any, to achieve the full and fair utilization of such persons in the work force. I further pledge that the Town of Berlin will affirmatively provide services and programs in a fair and impartial manner.

Where adverse impact is identified, the Town of Berlin will: (1) review its personnel policies and procedures to ensure that barriers, which unnecessarily exclude protected classes and practices, which have an illegal discriminatory impact, are identified and eliminated; (2) explore alternative approaches to employ minorities and members of protected classes; (3) administer all terms, conditions, privileges and benefits of the employment process in an equitable manner; and (4) establish procedures for the extra effort that may be necessary to ensure that the recruitment and hiring of protected group members reflect their availability in the job market.

It is the policy of the Town of Berlin to provide equal employment opportunities without consideration of race, color, religion, age, sex, marital status, national origin, genetic information, past/present history of mental disability, ancestry, mental retardation, learning or physical disabilities, including but not limited to, blindness, sexual orientation, political belief or criminal record, unless the provisions of Section 46a-60(b), 46a-80(b) and 46a-81(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes are controlling or there is a bonafide occupational qualification excluding persons in one of the above protected groups. This policy applies to all aspects of the employer/employee relationship including, but not limited to, recruitment, hiring, referrals, classifying, advertising, training, upgrading, promotion, benefits, compensation, discipline, layoff and terminations.

The Town of Berlin will implement, monitor and enforce this Affirmative Action Policy Statement in conjunction with the applicable federal and state laws, regulations and executive orders listed below: 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments of the United States Constitution, Civil

Rights Act of 1866, 1870, 1871, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VI and VII of the 1964 United States Civil Rights Act, presidential Executive Orders 11246, amended by 11375, (Nondiscrimination under federal contracts), Act 1 Section 1 and 20 of the Connecticut Constitution, Governor Grasso's Executive Order Number 11, Governor O'Neill's Executive Order Number 9, the Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Law (46a-63-64), Discrimination against Criminal Offenders (46a-80), Connecticut General Statutes, Connecticut Code of Fair Accommodations Law (46-63-64), definition of Blind (46a-51 (1), definition of Physically Disabled (46a-51 (15), definition of Mentally Retarded (46a-51 (13), cooperation with the Commission of Human Rights and Opportunities (46a-77), Sexual Harassment (46-60-(a) Connecticut Credit Discrimination Law (360436 through 439), Title I of the State and the Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.

This policy statement will be given annually to all Town of Berlin employees and will also be posted throughout the Town of Berlin. I also expect each supplier, union, consultant and other entity (s) with which we do business to comply with all applicable State and Federal Equal Opportunity laws and regulations. The Town of Berlin will not knowingly do business with any entity debarred from participation in any federal or state program or found to be in violation of any state or federal anti-discrimination law.

I have assigned the responsibility to achieve the successful implementation of our goals and objectives to
Arosha Jayawickrema, Town Manager of the Town of Berlin, who can be reached at 860-828-7002 or ajayawickrema@berlinct.gov.

Date

Arosha Jayawickrema, Town Manager

**THIS STATEMENT IS AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT OR ON AUDIO TAPE FROM
THE ADA-504 COORDINATOR BY CALLING 860-828-7115.**



TOWN OF BERLIN

Office Of the Town Manager

COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

The **Town of Berlin** does not discriminate in the provision of services, the administration of its programs, or contractual agreements. The **Town of Berlin** seeks to fully carry out its responsibilities under the Title VI Regulations.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Title VI provides that No person shall on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any programs covered by the Regulations.

This policy is effectuated through the methods of administration outlined in the **Town of Berlin's** Fair Housing Plan and is fully implemented to ensure compliance by the **Town of Berlin**, as the recipient, and by subrecipients. The cooperation of all **Town of Berlin** personnel is required.

Arosha Jayawickrema, Town Manager

Date

Pamela Bannon

Town of Berlin | Generated 3/17/2022 @ 11:40 am by OnBoard2 - Powered by ClerkBase

Status

Name

Pamela Bannon

Application Date

3/17/2022

Expiration Date

3/17/2121

Status

Received

Board

Visiting Nursing Association Board (VNA)

Vacancies

2

Status

Pending

Basic Information

Name

Pamela Bannon

Contact Information

Address

70 Bannan Lane
Berlin, CT 06037

Resident

Yes

Phone

8607985648

Email

pbannon1213@gmail.com

Occupation

Employer

Trinity health of New England retired

Job Title

Home care coordinator

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
BERLIN TOWN CLERK

2022 MAR 17 AM 11:43

Kathy G. O'Neil
BERLIN, CT

Other Questions

Question #1

Number of years in Berlin

9 months

Question #2

Educational Background (optional)

Register nurse St Mary School of nursing

Question #3

Current and Past Civic/Community Involvement

School volunteer, Cub Scout leader, Hospice volunteer, Food share, Red Cross

Question #4

Tell us why you feel qualified for this appointment

I worked at St Francis hospital for 45 yrs with the last 28 years in the Home Care department I retired 11/12/21

Question #5

Can you think of any reason that a conflict of interest could arise if you were appointed?

No

Question #6

Are you a Registered Voter? (To apply, you must be a Registered Voter in Berlin)

Yes

Political Party

What is your political party affiliation?

- Democrat



Additional Information

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://berlinct-gov.zoom.us/j/83128485822?pwd=aDBMTmdDbG95d0ZJS0M0ZlIKcFJQZz09>

Meeting ID: 831 2848 5822

Passcode: 460865

Call in

1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
TOWN COUNCIL
AND
BOARD OF FINANCE
Board of Education Conference Room
Tuesday, March 8, 2022
7:00 PM

A. Call To Order

Mayor Kaczynski called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Attendance:

Town Council Members Present: Jack Fazzino, Brendan Luddy, Charles Paonessa, Peter Rosso, Mike Urrunaga, Donna Veach

Town Council Members Absent: None

Board of Finance Members Present: Sal Bordonaro, Raul Fernandes, Tim Grady, George Millerd, Gerald Paradis

Board of Finance Members Absent: Mark Holmes

Staff Present:

Mark Kaczynski – Mayor

Arosha Jayawickrema – Town Manager

Kevin Delaney – Finance Director

Chris Ciuci – Deputy Chief of Police

Kate Wall – Town Clerk

Michael Ahern – Town Engineer and Public Works Director

Doug Solek – Facilities Director

B. Pledge Of Allegiance

C. General Discussion concerning Capital And Bonding Strategic Plan

Finance Director Delaney said the multi-page capital plan was whittled down into a one-page document for review and the focus is just on the areas identified at this stage for bonding looking out over the next 5 years, FY23-FY27. Then the remaining 6-10 years aggregated together. For FY23 the proposal as of right now is not to bond anything. Total Existing, is the existing capital plan and the next section is Potential New Items. These are a number of larger items, some of which have been costed out and some are to be determined. As we look in the existing in FY23, one item was identified that was tabled for the Town Council meeting and we discussed it at the Board of Finance meeting, was using the ARPA grant to move forward with at least substantial funding towards the HVAC upgrades at Willard school.

Moving across on the existing, the next items are Town Hall and Library roofs, so replacing those. It has been a number of years and over the last couple of years we have appropriated money to replace leaking roofs. We are trying to get ahead of that especially because of the damage and health matters that could happen at the library, town hall with so much public going through. The \$950k is the 4th of the 4 vehicles that were identified on the fire department strategy plan. We already have one that is due this month or next and two more were ordered with savings appropriations. Those are on order and this would be the 4th. Also, looking out in FY24, the idea would be to either do Griswold or Hubbard, but not both. It is one or the other, but the determination would be there and that \$5M is a placeholder right now for each of those.

Looking out a little bit further there is the library community center chiller, replacing that and doing work on Paper Goods Pond dam. There was some dam work done a few years ago. This would be the other dam in town. Over the next two years from there, looking at the pool buildings for Percival and East Berlin. The senior center roof is a little bit further out because obviously there is a big question mark as to whether we will be in that senior center, given the community senior center work that is undergoing right now. Then you start to get into the boilers and windows at the different schools. The high school is not on the list for work. That was already done with the major renovation project. Then as we get out to FY28, the next 5 years, those are kind of lumped together. Because it is a challenge to say where you'll be in 5 plus years. There are obviously some unknowns out there, but we start to look at again resurrecting the fire vehicles in the next cycle of replacements. During that period as well, as we are 3 years into Scalise, by that point we will be in the neighborhood of 13 years of having the turf and it is 10 to 15 years normal expected life. Scalise will start to come back around. That is sort of the existing, what we looked at from the existing capital plan. From a staff standpoint we don't project out in the actual capital plan major new items like community center or new police station. Those are major endeavors that the town would need to have substantial input on. These are really the major capital bonded items, those identified for bonding of existing.

Getting out of the potential new, we have the police station renovations. The \$5.2M is off of the presentation Architect Humes did at the last Town Council meeting. Along with that, it would move the Board of Education storage area. There is a TBD as to what is the impact of both Board of Education to move and replace that storage area at another location, as well as potential

town impact because it is projected to go into the food pantry area downstairs as well. The Community senior center, when we met there was a lot of talk about \$36M being the number there and then a discussion about that number potentially being closer to \$40M as you get out to when the construction would happen. It is split over 2 years because it is expected to take a period of time so the bonding would be roughly split evenly. That would be determined based on how we expect the project to progress. Then there are some other items that have been discussed, whether they would be approved, they are on here for making awareness. One is discussion about golf clubhouse either renovation or new at Timberlin Golf Course. Also, portable classrooms at Griswold and roads. There is a StreetScan study that Town Engineer and Public Works Director Ahern is initiating and from that we would be able to identify the roads that need considerable work and there could be bonding requests from there. The town has 37 bridges and a lot of work has been done. We are trying to roll bridges so that as we complete one and are reimbursed, that money rolls to the next one to avoid, or at least minimize bonding, so that is why the TBD at end of year is out there.

The next section is trying to give everybody an impact based on the current grand list. One mill is \$2,438,139, so assuming if we borrow, for every million dollars we borrow and a 5% interest rate. If you borrow for 10 years it is worth about .055 mills. If you borrow \$10M that is about half a mill increase in isolation not absolutely retiring other debt or anything else, but in isolation. The last piece at the bottom is pulled from the town charter. What is required if we do seek to bond \$5M or more. There is an automatic referendum that needs to be held.

The next two pages, the first one is from the budget and looks at existing debt no new borrowing, where will we be. The town has done a great job of paying down considerable debt over the last several years and is on track to be targeted as a \$40M ceiling. The debt ceiling is designed to get the town to a position where within an operating budget, about 4% of the operating budget would go to debt service, so that is where the \$40M is and it is considered to be sort of a ceiling. That is your sweet spot of where you would ideally want to be at a peak. The town is progressing there quite nicely.

The next page looks at if these existing items and the new items that have been quantified will be put in there and where your numbers would fall. If you were to do this and borrow at the pace that is outlined on the first page, you would peak out in fiscal year 2024, so the next budget cycle at just over \$125M. Then begin to come back down on the idea that we are going to continue to retire some of that debt. Debt service would represent a pretty substantial amount of your budget at that point. It is trying to give you a picture of where the debt load would be if everything on the front-page summary was done. This is not a proposal to do those things, but at least an opportunity to make everybody aware and start the conversation.

Mayor Kaczynski said we have a lot of projects on hand and we have accomplished a lot of projects over the last few years. There are some important ones here, but we also have difficult times for everyone in the town today, in the state, the country and the world unfortunately. No one knows what will happen next, but hopefully we are past the worst of COVID. The town has come through things very well compared to a lot of places. We've done a good job and funded a lot of projects. We've fixed a lot of roads and bridges and given a lot of good increases to the Board of Education to bring them up to a nice point. If you look at the charts and for per pupil

spending. They are higher than almost everybody in the surrounding area. Glastonbury was a couple hundred higher than Berlin and that is one of the measures that they use. Mayor Kaczynski asked each Town Council member to speak and see if they can work through some of these things. Local government is one place that we could impact our town, residents, students, seniors and really accomplish and get things done, but also be responsible. Mayor Kaczynski said the debt was very high when he first took office, dangerously high per the auditors and not where it should be, which is around a \$40M budget. We are getting there and working through it. We've been responsible, but there's more things that the town needs and wants. We have done a pretty good job of funding most of the projects in town up to this point. We've been buying vehicles, buying fire trucks. There were some legacy issues that were left, we bought 7 new trucks in total so that was a big expense. Public Safety, we replaced the fire and police radio which were inoperable almost, so we have done a lot in the last few years. There is always more to do.

Mayor Kaczynski added that we have the school budget and also the police station, there are some good renovations that are on tap to be done and need to be done with the police accountability bill. The price is a little bit higher than some of us thought, but compared to a new police station that is pretty reasonable. The HVAC system has been on-tap for a long time, starting with Willard. The Community Center we talked about, as soon as the advisory group finishes stuff up hopefully in a month or so we will get that to the Town Council and have some more discussion on that. That is probably at least a \$40M bond, which would put us well over what we started with 6 years ago, which is not a good place to be, but we will see what happens. There are options there. The portable classrooms, we toured the school a few weeks ago and it is obvious that portable classrooms are past their useful life and we have to figure out what to do with those, either get rid of them, replace them, or figure out some other things. Also, the roads and bridges and upgrading things which need upgrading at town hall. Being responsible during those 2 years without a tax increase for residents was important. Mayor Kaczynski said if we could do it, do a very minimal tax increase and if no tax increase can occur that would be great. There is some room to accomplish that and the Board of Finance has a lot of work to do with that, as does Town Council. The only way we can help folks is to do the best we can with our budget and watch their pockets the best we can. Also, we are re-visiting a new pension plan for the police department. That would not hurt our finances too much, a little bit, but it should be pretty neutral switching from a 401k to a pension plan, but we still have to discuss that and we are studying that, if it becomes a retention problem. We are finding out it is a recruitment problem and the first question asked is about a pension plan, that speaks volumes. Most of the Police Departments in the state have pension plans. Mayor Kaczynski added there are some ways we could work in this budget and get to that zero-tax increase. It would be nice to do that for our residents.

Chairman Bordonaro said it is great to lay something out like this so we know what we are up against. Looking at the last chart, we definitely don't want to get back to the same level that we were a few years ago with the \$107M. We need to look at the highest risk areas and what are our priorities for the town. The police station needs lockers and other things, but if you look at things incrementally. Chairman Bordonaro would be okay with some funding to do some of these projects, but clearly taking on a \$40M loan this early in the stage is really difficult from the

Board of Finance view. The other stuff we can probably work with, but we would have to look at it. Responsible borrowing is needed for things that are long term.

Chairman Luddy said he liked that Finance Director Delaney highlighted some of the bigger projects out there. We are a small town with a lot of buildings, so we have a lot of recurring things that have to get done. Some of the things that crept out here and that were never seen before was the window replacements projects. That is something new. Also, the boilers are creeping up on there even though they are down the line and of course Scalise Field which we just had done and all of a sudden we are starting to think about that already. Chairman Luddy said he is in line with what Mayor Kaczynski and Chairman Bordonaro said, we can work through some of these things and get us to 2026 before we start thinking of another major project.

Mr. Grady said we had 2 years of COVID and it was tough on people. The current gas prices are going to affect food prices and heating oil. It is out of control and we can't come back and hit the people now with a tax increase. Mr. Grady said he has taken a 90 degree change in how he feels about this. We are going to have to figure something out.

Councilor Paonessa said the chart puts things in perspective and we have to decide what the priority is. This is going to be a crazy year, construction quotes are only being held for 10 days in his business and parts are exponentially higher. The police station proposal is the most logical and economical he's seen around Town Council for a long, long time. With the iteration from a brand new building, all kinds of ideas. Mr. Paonessa said he's a big fan of re-use and saving the environment. This helps to reuse an existing building and thinks it is a great plan all the way around and would like to see that go forward, but at the same time he does not like to spend money. Somewhere we are going to have to. Mr. Paonessa added that he does not know what the school ventilation HVAC project will cost, he has heard \$20M, but does not know especially the way prices have been changing, but hopes it will generate some more state funding. Also, we have to hold the line on a tax increase because people are really getting whacked. Hopefully we can move forward with a couple of projects.

Mr. Millerd had a couple of questions and comments. Was there any cost benefit analysis done on the windows and boiler, whether timing of these would have an impact? A 20-30 year old furnace is not very efficient. Are there potential large cost savings with the boilers? Same with windows, technology has changed a lot. Facilities Director Solek said looking at the life cycle of the boilers we are able to put that out a little further compared to new technology the savings on electricity is incremental and it is less of a priority. The biggest factor for the HVAC is the energy consumed during the summer months compared to what we would save. Certainly the windows when its colder or hotter out, you use more energy. We have seen that impact over the last few years in our bills. It is certainly something that you want to do for the building, but it is not as high as the mechanical performance of the building.

Mr. Millerd said in regards to holding the line, the line is not even held no matter what we do. We can have a zero mill increase, but the line is not held because of the motor vehicle implications that are out there. Mr. Millerd's said he is receiving an equivalent 2 mill tax increase on his motor vehicles and property tax. Also, where is this 29-mill thing heading and if

it has any chance passing legislature? Would they use last year's figures for figuring out the reimbursement, 29 mills on last year's assessment which would be great for the taxpayers, but that is all baked into the grand list increase from the new numbers. Commissioner Veach said I don't think we know quite honestly, there are several pieces that were looking good in terms of grants available for school construction, HVAC in particular. Something was sent over today to bonding for the pump station. Commissioner Veach received something from Senator Lopes that said we are not sure where we are going with any of this right now, but he will put it through. Things are not looking good right now, they have a big problem with school construction which of course is all over the news. If you think that is just going to disappear, it has got to come from somewhere. So to answer Mr. Millerd's question, Commissioner Veach said she wishes that she had an answer, but she doesn't have an answer and they don't know to be quite honest.

Finance Director Delaney added that Mr. Millerd is right, the motor vehicle is embedded within the grants. Finance Director Delaney said he thinks the reference to prior year was in the calculation of the state grant, so if they do establish a 29 mill increase. The Governor, along with that proposal, OPM produced a run by every town as to what would be a grant provided to the town to help offset the impact of going to the lower mill rate, as for example today, the motor vehicle is 33.93. If we drop that to 29 because of state law, that is money on all the motor vehicle grand list value that is lost by the town. The problem you have is because there is such a growth in the motor vehicle this year as compared to last year, the grant does have a substantial offset, but it would leave a gap and that gap effectively, assuming no spending no spending difference when you do the budget, would have to shift to real estate and personal property. Mr. Millerd said if they do this, we want to fund the budget as it has been requested and we actually need more than \$2M, because there is a gap, not a lot, but we would not have enough to fund it. Finance Director Delaney said that you end up with is a greater than 2 mill number for real estate and personal property and then a reduction in motor vehicle.

Commissioner Veach said Finance Director Delaney's 2-page summary was easy to follow and thanked him for that. Obviously, we have many priorities that we can and can't do. There has got to be give and take clearly, because we just can't do all of this. Commissioner Veach thinks the police station is certainly a priority and the presentation they gave to Town Council was very good. Perhaps there are some things that we could live without in that to bring it down to a more affordable scenario. We just had the first go around of it last week so it was refreshing to see some of those changes and some of them are going to go back to the police accountability law that are required in terms of certain education pieces they have to do. We have to bring our police officers up to snuff and have the best of the best. As far as education for the children goes, mental health is a huge issue and the state is talking about it a lot and Commissioner Veach said I think there will be some additional funding that comes through from the state, but does not know when or how much, but is hoping we will get some funding. There was a legislative informational session held yesterday, Commissioner Veach left a copy for Town Manager Jayawickrema to share with Town Council and Board of Finance. It is on school construction grants and reviews and how they are going to proceed going forward. Its informational and Commissioner Veach doesn't think they know what they are going to do with some of this because there is so much that needs to be done, even from the state level, it's not just us. We are coming out of a pandemic like we have never seen before, there is war that is surging across in Europe, the price of gas is through the roof and will continue. The trickle out and around is just

going to be earth shattering. Commissioner Veach thinks there will be some additional funding come through but does not know how much and hopefully we can use it for maybe some of these programs in terms of education, HVAC, but would like to think that there will be some funding that is available.

The other piece, it is a minimal ask, but we just can't fund everything, and we need to tweak. Education is a priority, there is no question, but maybe what we need to do is take a look and try to shift into some other areas within the education budget. Commissioner Veach thinks there will be some money coming from mental health too. The pump station was applied for today, Economic Development Coordinator Mahoney did that. Hopefully we will be able to apply some additional grants. When and if we look at this window replacement at the schools, there should be some energy assistance grants that might be available for that. Economic Development Coordinator Mahoney would know that and look into that. When and if we get to that point. There are incentives, write-off's whatever.

Mr. Fernandes said public safety is number one, if you have seen the police station, you can't unsee it. Also, if we cut the teachers that would be a big disservice. Mr. Urrunaga said he echoes the concerns in some of the issues that we are having with the way prices are going. The one thing that I did want to point out is when you look at the budget to try and figure out what to pay for and how we do things. We all know that we have a hard time agreeing on doing certain projects and figure out where we are going to spend our money. When we agreed to pay for the HVAC, with the COVID spending, Mr. Urrunaga thinks it is a good project to spend it on. Ultimately we will have to decide where that money is going to go, but because we all sat down to figure out that is something we would want to use that money for. It is a project that has long been in the running and it is something that we should kind of commit to. Secondly, I understand the need for budgets and not hitting the towns people with extra money and extra taxes, that type of thing and completely understand that. Who wants to pay extra taxes? Not me, that is for sure, but we also have to understand that if we don't fund contracts with the town, namely with teachers and people that work in the town hall, we will be putting people out of work in an economy like this and that is not something that Commissioner Urrunaga wants to do. That is something we all need to consider when we are looking at these budgets. If we are not going to fund positions and people that are working currently in town. Those are things to consider when looking at the numbers and the budget.

Mr. Paradis said he had a couple questions with the different variables. Was the \$90M program for school construction a competitive type of grant or using an allocation? The one that the Governor just talked about. Commissioner Veach said that is going to be a competitive and they are not going to be able to do everybody's project. We were told this news about a week ago and a half ago that he was introducing this and we have clearly shown interest, talked about it and even thought about maybe trying to shift some of that ARPA money to do other stuff, if we were eligible for that HVAC money. There are no promises. Mr. Paradis added that is an important consideration, but no guarantees. Commissioner Veach said even with the bonding grant that we just put in for the pump station, it is a thank you, we will put it in and it is one of your priorities, but there are no promises. Also, we have to match whatever that project is costing us, it is a 50% match.

Mr. Paradis also asked about some mentions of the police accountability act and the relationship to this project and what costs specifically in this \$5M project are being addressed by the rules of accountability? Deputy Chief of Police Ciuci said there is training, with different trainings and all the laws that have changed. We don't have adequate space at our facility and do not have a training room, so this renovation plan addresses that with multi-purpose community rooms similar to the Board of Education conference room space. That can be used for training and to host training, commission meetings. The current conference room for police commission meetings is very tiny without a caucus room area, things like that. Also, one of the things that we want to do more of is the community engagement piece and that training multi-purpose room will help us do that, citizen police academies, open houses and allowing members of the community to utilize that space for birthday parties or other events that they want to do at the police department. Finance Director Delaney said when Architect Humes was presenting he mentioned the second sally port and safety for both prisoners and the officers. Is that police accountability? Deputy Chief Ciuci said I don't think the accountability, he was speaking to accreditation standards and things like that, so there are standards applicable to our holding facility. Officer safety wise, I think Architect Humes was talking about that is a huge concern, but if you pull a car into the sally port and try to get a prisoner out of the car, there is no room especially if they are fighting and it is dangerous. The dual sally ports address that. It was a unique opportunity with the Board of Education giving us that space. We have been talking about locker room renovations for years and we can't renovate where the locker rooms are now, so because the Board of Education gave us that space where the locker room can be moved. Architect Humes did a fantastic job utilizing the remainder of these spaces to address the training room, bureaus and lumping offices by divisions so our investigations are all in one area now and not split off throughout the department. Deputy Chief Ciuci thinks we are getting a lot of bang for our buck and knows it is not cheap, but compared to where we were \$21M a few years ago and this is not a stop gap. Architect Humes said this is a 20 plus year solution for us. There are a lot of competing interests going on here, but if there is any way we can finally move this one past the goal poles, it is going to help us with our recruiting and retention. Mr. Paradis said we have been talking about locker rooms since he got on the Board of Finance, 4 years ago. In piecemeal we did the communications, jail cells, meeting rooms and then started talking about locker rooms, which I was surprised to see a \$5M number. Mr. Paradis said he will have to do his homework and look at what the specifics are. Commissioner Veatch added that Architect Humes did break it out in terms of over a period of years so it is not all a one-time thing. It would be spread out over fiscal years. Mr. Paradis asked if anyone knows if there is a police accountability act on that, or any grants available? Commissioner Veatch said there are a lot of unfunded mandates. Mr. Paradis added when we had our first joint meeting in January or December, there was a lot of support for the ARPA grant and HVAC systems. It was a good idea then and I still think it is a good idea, to take that money and use it towards something that would otherwise be funded to get more payback.

Mr. Fernandes asked if host training means we would charge other towns for training here? Deputy Chief Ciuci said a lot of times what happens is you are a host agency, you get free seats for the training and everyone else would pay the outside agencies that are coming into your training. We don't have space to do that, so we are the ones that are paying to attend. The other agencies are getting it for free.

Commissioner Fazzino said this is obviously a lot of hard work, with this being his first budget process. It has been very eye opening to see how much work goes into it and Town Manager Jayawickrema for taking the Town Council on all the tours in the facilities. Also, Finance Director Delaney has spent a lot of long nights in this and Town Manager and Public Works Director Ahern and Facilities Director Solek as well. Commissioner Fazzino said having the visuals of this is where our budget money goes to was probably the most helpful part of the process for me. So starting back in December, seeing the police department with their open house was extremely helpful because in the presentation last week when they were speaking about the sally port expansion, I had been in that sally port before. It is very tight and fortunately the door was open, but it is getting a sense for what facilities we are working with right now and what our needs are long term. That was extremely useful as kind of a touchstone for me. Likewise with Town Manager Jayawickrema organizing school tours and talking through some of the long-term issues that need to be addressed in the next couple of years, that was great as well. Commissioner Fazzino said the one thing on his mind right now is something that has been addressed a couple of times in Town Council meetings, it is having that long term vision for setting priorities for not even just thinking in terms of this fiscal year, but two, three fiscal years from now. It is just kind of boiling it down to what my priorities are and what I think a lot of our priorities are. Just taking it all into context in terms of what are the institutions that have been most intimately impacted by the last two years. Public safety and education are really the two things that go hand in hand in a community. It is what makes our particular community extremely attractive to a lot of people. We want safe streets and good schools. Those two particular institutions are being addressed to the extent that they should be addresses, but thinking with the mentality of with some of these projects, if you don't address them with some degree of urgency and immediacy, we run the risk that it is going to get more expensive later on. You've seen this with the HVAC project, the cost looked a lot more favorable a couple of months ago, then it does now. Commissioner Fazzino said he thinks having those funds in hand at least to address it on a very conservative level starting with Willard School seems like a responsible option and is looking forward to learning more about the additional projects. The senior community has also been intimately impacted by COVID especially and just having that population in mind as we have the conversation about that and what those needs are obviously is important too.

Commissioner Rosso said he is most concerned with the school and we have to make a determination. Town Manager Jayawickrema said as Commissioner Urrunaga stated, nobody wants to pay higher taxes and this will be the 3rd year that we hold the line on taxes. The fear is that at the same time when we are reducing the debt service, we have not added anything to the annual capital replacement budget, \$300M in capital. Ideally, we should have at least 1% or \$3M in capital and build that gradually. You can knock out the police station in 2 -3 years. For every year that you pick something, a boiler, chiller, roof, you have to \$3M at least. Just a 2% increase in the Board of Education and a 2% in the town, you will see what it does to the mill rate. Town Manager Jayawickrema just worries that by pushing some of these we may have to go out and borrow more. Also, one of the things we have not talked about is what is it that you want to take off the table? Mr. Millerd spoke about motor vehicle, even if you don't increase the numbers, you are paying more same. That is the same way with the town, we are paying more for items such as gasoline, electricity, insurance coverage, grass seed and fertilizer. Something has to be taken off, we can't do everything. Are there things that are not as important that we

have to take off completely? Commissioner Veach said she suggests visiting the things that are on the table and see if there are areas within those proposals that can be reduced or eliminated. We need to start there as opposed to eliminating one whole thing. Town Mayor Jayawickrema added that incremental budgeting from one to another, you are assuming your base is correct. It would be good to set some parameters to say your funding needs to be compared to your peers at a certain level, whether it is the median or 50th percentile. You can't get there overnight, but by planning for it you know where you stand. Chairman Bordonaro added that we did have an increase in the grand list because of revenue and we should do both sides to display in the same one we are looking at, costs associated with bonding. We should do a 5-7% projection of how our grand list is going to grow. It was close to 3% growth. We used \$1.2M of funds leftover from the high school last year and used some of the rescue funds, so we used almost \$2M for us to get to the zero rate and that was a one-shot deal, so we are trying to make that up this year. We are already \$2M short. We should be focusing on the \$300M that we have to sustain or maintain and have to look really hard to get to a reasonable level. Chairman Bordonaro said he told the Board of Education they have to sharpen their pencil on something and frankly did not get anywhere. They have to look deep and say how are we going to contribute, because we can't go with those kinds of increases. They had surplus from the last few years, one year they did not spend \$1M of the Open Choice grant funds because they did not need it. We want to have a high quality education system, but have to dig deep a little.

Finance Director Delaney said one of the things is you evaluate where you are and what you are doing and sometimes to grow in one area, you decline or exit another area, a market or product. Berlin has some great assets and investments. The community senior center is beautiful and the police station looks fantastic, but ask yourself are there any assets the town has that are maybe not what the town wants to be in, or dealing with, as you look forward. Director Delaney said there are 3 to put on the table, but he is not saying do it, or don't do it. We talked about education and public safety being essential, but do we want to continue to own Berlin Water Control and own our own water and sewer? Other communities have sold theirs. Avon Water Company had the largest water source in the state and sold it. It is an option and a one-time element if you are looking to avoid bonding, but accomplish some of these, that is something to consider. These companies that own them privately, or companies like MDC are charging money and investing in their capital revenue because that is all they do. Second one to consider would be Pistol Creek. A few years back the town took a \$3.5M taxable piece of property off the tax rolls and spent \$5.5M to buy it, which we are still paying on. It is a great facility, used for a number of purposes and a lot of passive recreation. It is a wonderful spot, but the town is not only paying for that, we are foregoing potential tax revenue there. We could consider trading that out for something that we have. The third one is does the town want to be in the municipal golf business? Are there things the town is in that maybe you want to get out of for the benefit of other things that going forward are more appealing. Just something to consider as an alternative. If we wanted to remove the VNA that would be charter provision with a lot of signatures, the other is 2/3 of the authorizing body, so if 5 of the 7 Town Council members said we want to call a charter revision, you can call the charter revision and put it out there. The VNA is in the charter and responsible for the VNA Administrators and the school nurses, so it is a duel. Mr. Millerd said he was on the charter revision commission and we were not actually trying to get rid of the VNA per se, but the subtle wording in the VNA says thou shall do this, thou shall do that. If you worded it differently to you can do this, that subtle change would give

you a lot more flexibility. Most people who walk into a hospital don't know that the VNA is available to them. Mayor Kaczynski added that with the VNA you have to realize that because we have the VNA worded as it is in the charter, we do have state statutes that apply to it as well. We have to be careful what charter change is made because it would violate the state statute since we have that entity already. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as us just changing the language. It is a very difficult road. Mr. Paradis added that not that many years ago there were probably 50 or 60 municipal VNA's, now there are 2, so it is not impossible to get rid of them. To look at it, I'm sure they do great work, but is this something that should be provided, or must be provided by the town, and in my mind it is not. In our case, I do not think the townspeople understand there is a \$800k-\$900k budget gap that it creates every year. Mr. Paradis said we are really talking about looking long range and encourage the Town Council to call for a charter revision commission. There are other things within our governmental setup that also need addressing. Those things take quite a bit of time to accomplish too.

Mayor Kaczynski said one thing everyone mentioned was a plan. I think we have a plan, the plan was certainly to pay our debt down and by paying our debt down obviously it frees up more money from the budget, because the debt payment goes down. Every year we had this whole debt payment here of \$6M or \$7M, it was \$8M before. That is a lot of money to fund a lot of things. That is the plan we are working forward to which will free up some money and everybody understands that we are still funding things that are important to the town and thinks we made a lot of improvements. We are also saddled with pension debt which was a huge chunk of money, millions of dollars to buyout people that were retiring under the old plan. That is the plan that the town had went with, but we are stuck with it, not being funded for many years. It was 12-15 years to get to that amount of debt and not fix things, you can't get out of it in 6 years or 8 years, a few more and we will almost be out of it. That is the plan and we are working on it. The 3 schools are now \$15M-\$20M, so that was kind of astounding for that. Also, the public will write letters that we are cutting the education budget, but we have never cut their budget and can't cut their budget for state statute. We have always given it a much higher increase than it needed under statute to keep it running. We lowered the increase they asked for, as with the town budget. Everybody still receives increases, it just the degree of the increase. Mayor Kaczynski asked everyone to educate the public and continue educating the public. Berlin is a great town and it is doing well, but it is difficult times. No one wants to see the schools falter and they haven't, they have grown. We have raised them up to where they are very competitive. Not everyone is going to agree on things, but at least conceptually agree and go forward and do the best we can. We are headed in the right direction as far as how we run the town and what gets fixed in the town. There is \$100M of investment in the town over the last 5 years and we created 790 jobs. The Board of Finance has some work to do and the Town Council should dig into the budget.

Commissioner Rosso said I think we are getting close to being too late to get something on the ballot in November for the charter. Town Clerk Wall said that some changes are very quick and others are very intense, but the issue is you have to have some hearings, some meetings, especially with this election the questions have to be formalized and set by the beginning of September for the questions for the ballot for November. So it is a very tight window that I don't know if I can knock it out for you, but would suggest if you want to do charter revisions, is to maybe start now and know that it will go on the missed election if that is what you want. There

will be a much bigger turnout during the governor's election. Mr. Millerd added that you do it as open ended. Town Clerk Wall said you can suggest that these are the target areas. Mr. Grady asked if we had something targeted could we have this by November? Do one or two changes and that is it. Town Clerk Wall will check the calendars and speak with Town Attorney Donofrio.

Commissioner Paonessa asked if selling an asset requires a charter change? Finance Director Delaney said no he doesn't think so, but it depends on what the asset is. Those are all options that the town can consider and not being promoted to sell off. Mayor Kaczynski added it hard to get everyone's opinion on what they really want. Town Manager Jayawickrema asked if we have consensus on doing the police station and the HVAC project? Mayor Kaczynski said he things next years budget, FY23. Commissioner Paonessa asked if you avoid the referendum that way? Finance Director Delaney said yes, doing that you would be automatic. If you chose to bond it you could look at the fund balance, or look at a combination of that. A question for the next Board of Finance meeting is what is the best way to do that. If it is bonding, we need to add debt service to the next budget, that is not embedded in there. If you go a different direction, there may be other ways to do it. Chairman Bordonaro said he would like a little more information on the police station and it is necessary to upgrade those areas. Commissioner Fazzino said it doesn't seem like there is a fixed deadline before figuring out the timetable for the police station. We would like to do this sooner. Commissioner Veach said the project contingency is 15% and good for 6 months. Chairman Bordonaro requested a copy of the presentation. Town Clerk Wall said she would email the link and the minutes. Town Engineer and Public Works Director Ahern said he can send the whole package as well, the needs assessment, the actual plans, the phasing and the process taken. But I encourage you to watch if you haven't seen the actual presentation, Architect Humes goes in to how the phasing works and actually has pictures and a diagram. It is actually pretty well done. Commissioner Veach added it is late summer of 2022 in terms of the start. Town Manager Jayawickrema said he recommends doing phase 1 now and a year later do phase 2. Commissioner Fazzino said it is prioritizing officer safety, especially if there are standards. Finance Director Delaney added if your project costs a certain amount of money, then that may be where the ordinance has to land. Phasing it in is how you go about spending that money, so if the project is \$5.2M, that would be an automatic referendum, which would require putting it on the November. Which would be the first time before you do anything. It would require approval from the voters to be able to move forward. That is if the ordinance has to encompass the whole project. Town Clerk Wall said it has never been done that she knows of, that you have an ordinance that, maybe changes are done periodically, but other towns such as Wallingford where Town Clerk Wall had worked before, do it piece meal saying here is an ordinance for \$1M for study and design of a new high school. Then they would go in 2 years later and say now we need \$10M, whatever it is. They did it in segments. That is not anything that Berlin has done here. When you change the charter where you have that \$5M cap before you go to referendum. We have to talk to Town Attorney Donofrio, but Town Clerk Wall thinks it is going to be on the whole project, unless you are willing not to do another thing to the project. Commissioner Paonessa said we might fund phase 1 and phase 2 and then worry about the carport down the road. Finance Director Delaney said the PBC would have oversight of this and you would typically direct them to be in charge and they would handle it so you are not getting invoices and things coming in, similar to the high school project. The borrowing happened in 4 tranches, but the entire \$83M was approved, even

though money was coming from the state for the higher amount. Deputy Chief Cuici added that phasing would work for him, they would get the locker rooms done in the first phase and then we work from there. Finance Director Delaney said in order to do the locker rooms we have to clear out the storage space. Where does that go?

Mayor Kaczynski said we stand at 1.98 mill rate increase as of this meeting. We had a great discussion and all want the same things, it is just how do you get there. Finance Director Delaney said for the ARPA grant do you want to sit on the motion to appropriate the money? Because it will come back to the Town Council. Mayor Kaczynski said with the final rule that gives us more options, but we should just do it as we go through the budget. Commissioner Veach added that maybe we will be in a better position over the next couple of weeks in terms of what the governor's plan is. Mayor Kaczynski said we should wait a little bit further. Town Engineer and Public Works Director Ahern said the design is done, but lead time for the HVAC, we would need the chiller and not sure if we could get that by summer, they could start the work, but it might trickle into the next calendar year.

The police station phase 1 is about 4 months once go ahead is given from the Town Council for the funding. Then 5 months from now we can go out to bid.

D. Adjournment

Mr. Paradis motioned to adjourn at 8:58 p.m.

Seconded by Mr. Grady

Submitted by:
Alina Brown

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://berlinc-t-gov.zoom.us/j/81556468556?pwd=L0U2SnFURVFjUkNmQkjdGUyV1htdz09>

Meeting ID: 815 5646 8556

Passcode: 634636

By Phone:

1-929-205-6099 (New York)

**TOWN OF BERLIN
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, March 15, 2022
Town Council Chambers
and Remote Meeting
7:00 P.M.**

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kaczynski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

C. ROLL CALL

Those in attendance were:

Councilor Jack Fazzino – *arrived at 7:05 p.m.*

Mayor Mark Kaczynski

Councilor Brenden Luddy

Councilor Charles Paonessa

Councilor Peter Rosso

Councilor Mike Urrunaga

Councilor Donna Veach

Also in attendance:

Town Manager Arosha Jayawickrema

Corporation Counsel Jeffrey Donofrio

D. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

George Millerd, 1231 Orchard Road – Mr. Millerd suggested that language be added to Consent Agenda Item #2 to include an additional condition for appropriate signage to be placed at the various entrances to the park to alert people as to which trails the racers will be using during the bike race as a matter of safety.

E. MAYOR'S UPDATE

Councilor Luddy stated that the Community/Senior Center Advisory Committee met yesterday, and they are continuing to compile the data they have collected. They intend to present their findings to the Town Council by April or so.

Mayor Kaczynski inquired about the balance of the grant funds received for the planning stages of the Community/Senior Center project and if those funds could be used to reimburse salaried Town employees for their time spent on visiting other centers. Atty. Donofrio stated that typically grant funds are not used for that purpose.

F. MEETING AGENDA – Immediately Following the Mayor’s Update

G. CONSENT AGENDA:

- 1. Topic re: Approve the request by the CT Trailmixers for a trail running race to take place at Ragged Mountain on May 21, 2022, with the conditions that the applicant works with Town staff regarding logistical and safety measures and with the Conservation Commission on trail maintenance after the event. – Planning and Zoning**
- 2. Topic re: Approve the request by the Berlin High School Riding Redcoats Cycling Club and the Connecticut Cycling Advancement for a Bike Race to take place at the Hatchery Brook Conservation Area on June 5, 2022, with the conditions that the applicants work with the Conservation Commission to assure that the trails are in a condition to accommodate a bike race and that the trails will be fully restored after the race; noticing given to surrounding properties, as described; traffic management be coordinated with the Police Department; and the associated fee waiver for the police services provided for the event. – Planning and Zoning**

Consent Agenda item #2 moved for additional discussion.

- 3. Topic re: Accept the donations of \$425.00 and appropriate the funds to the Supplies Expenditure Account. – Police Department**

Councilor Luddy moved to accept Consent Agenda items #1 & 3 as presented.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Consent Agenda item #2 moved for additional discussion regarding signage.

Town Planner Maureen Giusti stated that the event organizers provide monitors at various points along the race route to warn of racers in the area and she is certain they would also make accommodations for signage in the area possibly in advance of the race date.

Language was added to item #2 to reflect appropriate signage.

Councilor Luddy moved to approve the request by the Berlin High School Riding Redcoats Cycling Club and the Connecticut Cycling Advancement for a Bike Race to take place at the Hatchery Brook Conservation Area on June 5, 2022, with the conditions that the applicants work with the

Conservation Commission to assure that the trails are in a condition to accommodate a bike race and that the trails will be fully restored after the race; noticing given to surrounding properties, with appropriate signage of trail usage as described; traffic management be coordinated with the Police Department; and the associated fee waiver for the police services provided for the event.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

H. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Topic re: Authorize the Town Manager to schedule and advertise for April 5, 2022, at 7:00 pm to hold a Public Hearing and to consider and act upon an ordinance entitled “An Ordinance Amending the Voting Districts of the Town of Berlin.” – Registrars of Voters

Registrar of Voters Joan Veley, speaking also for Registrar of Voters Christy Miano, stated that due to the 2020 Census results the Connecticut Legislation has redistricted Connecticut towns based upon revised population data. This change splits Berlin in half horizontally with the northern portion being in the 30th House District and the southern half being in the 83rd House District. In compliance with State Statute the Town must redistrict their voting districts in accordance with the new district maps sent by the State.

The Registrars have been updating their voter list and determined that creating just two voting districts for Berlin based on those House Districts would not be ideal but suggest creating a more manageable three voting districts utilizing Hubbard, Griswold and Willard Elementary Schools. Ms. Veley added that moving to three voting districts from the current five districts would also aid the Registrars with staffing those locations as there has been difficulty finding poll workers.

Mayor Kaczynski stated that change is difficult for some, and he is especially concerned with losing the Senior Center polling location. Town Clerk Kate Wall added that voting districts in Berlin have been changed in the past and it has led to confusion for residents, but redistricting must happen based on the Census and there are things that can be done to inform residents. Ms. Wall stated that she, along with the Registrar of Voters, will hold an informational seminar on June 9th at the Berlin-Peck Library to provide information to residents. Information regarding the poll location changes will be published in the newspaper as well as on the Town website.

Mayor Kaczynski added that he was also concerned with the number of voters at each polling location if the number of locations is reduced. Registrar of Voters Miano stated that, for example, 1,065 voters were removed from the Senior Center polling location which currently has 2,654 voters.

Ms. Miano stated that the polling location changes must be implemented by the August 9, 2022 Primary. Councilor Fazzino asked if any locations other than schools had been considered and Ms. Miano stated that the Town currently utilizes the VFW and American Legion buildings, but they are small, and the larger cafeterias and gyms of the schools are needed.

Town Clerk Wall added that if the current five districts were kept then each district would have two different ballots and there is a chance that a voter could receive the wrong ballot. Ms. Veley stated

that in essence that would be creating ten districts which would require hiring additional poll workers which will be difficult to do.

Mayor Kaczynski suggested that signs be placed at those closed polling locations directing voters to the new location, however Ms. Miano stated that a voter's new polling location is dependent on their address therefore a generic sign would not work. Town Manager Jayawickrema suggested having a person with the voting list at the closed locations who can direct voters to their new voting location.

Town Clerk Wall reminded the Council that redistricting is affecting the entire State, and these changes have been made every ten years, but it is the way of the law and it must be done.

Councilor Luddy moved to authorize the Town Manager to schedule and advertise for April 5, 2022, at 7:00 pm to hold a Public Hearing and to consider and act upon an ordinance entitled "An Ordinance Amending the Voting Districts of the Town of Berlin."

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

2. Topic re: Refer the matter of conveyance to the Town of 1.01 acres of MBL 1-4-10-1 north of West Lane for the purposes of conservation area parking to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review and recommendation per Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes. - Planning and Zoning

Town Planner Maureen Giusti stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission has an application for a Planned Residential development at the south end of Shuttle Meadow Country Club property with access off of West Lane.

It has been recognized that parking for the heavily utilized Ragged Mountain Preserve Trails has been an issue along West Lane. The applicant has proposed to convey a 1.01-acre portion of the property on the north side of West Lane to the Town for development of a parking area that will serve users of the Ragged Mountain Trails. The area would accommodate approximately 45 cars including handicap parking spaces and include an entrance separate from the new development.

The parking area has been discussed and endorsed by the Conservation Commission. The applicant has requested that the Town Council forward an 8-24 review to the Planning and Zoning Commission so that the acquisition can be considered simultaneously with its review of the development application.

Councilor Luddy moved to refer the matter of conveyance to the Town of 1.01 acres of MBL 1-4-10-1 north of West Lane for the purposes of conservation area parking to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review and recommendation per Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

3. Topic re: Approve awarding the contract to MHQ Inc. for the transfer, purchase, and installation of equipment for four police vehicles under State Contract # 12PSX0194 for an amount not to exceed \$46,896.57. – Police Department

Deputy Police Chief Chris Ciuci stated that the four police vehicles previously ordered have been delivered. MHQ Inc., who the Town has worked with for a number of years, viewed the vehicles to determine what equipment they could transfer from the vehicles being replaced and what equipment needed to be purchased for the new vehicles.

Councilor Luddy moved to approve awarding the contract to MHQ Inc. for the transfer, purchase, and installation of equipment for four police vehicles under State Contract # 12PSX0194 for an amount not to exceed \$46,896.57.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

4. Topic re: Accept the \$25,000 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) into the JAG revenue account and appropriate the funds to the Miscellaneous Equipment account. Also waive the bidding requirements for the \$12,739.38 purchase of the mapping system with Faro Technologies and the \$12,125.00 purchase of a license plate reader (LPR) with Selex ES, Inc., as this is in the best interest of the Town. – Police Department

Deputy Police Chief Ciuci stated that the Berlin Police Department was awarded a \$25,000 grant through the federal Justice Assistance Grant program. Towns will be given 50% of their funds at the beginning of the grant period and will be given the remainder once the grant is reconciled during closeout.

The five mid-state Police Chiefs agreed to utilize \$12,739.38 each towards the purchase of a FARO Mapping System which will be utilized by the regional crash reconstruction team during their investigations. The department will use the remainder of the funds to replace the current ten-year-old vehicle mounted license plate reader (LPR).

Deputy Chief Ciuci added that in the current budget they had allocated \$29,000 for these items which can now be removed from the budget.

Councilor Luddy stated that there is concern as to how the LPR could affect privacy and added that he requested that the Police Commission review the retention policy for images not being used in criminal investigations as well as confirming that the images stay within the law enforcement agency. Councilor Rosso also expressed his concerns with the software.

Deputy Chief Ciuci explained that the LPR catches an image of a license plate and compares it to a database returning only those hits related to wanted persons, unregistered vehicles, stolen cars, etc. Officers then need to type in the plate information in order to receive detailed information.

Councilor Luddy moved to accept the \$25,000 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) into the JAG revenue account and appropriate the funds to the Miscellaneous Equipment account.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Councilor Luddy moved to waive the bidding requirements for the \$12,739.38 purchase of the mapping system with Faro Technologies and the \$12,125.00 purchase of a license plate reader (LPR) with Selex ES, Inc., as this is in the best interest of the Town.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

5. Topic re: Update from the Advisory Committee for the Affordable Housing Plan – Economic Development/Planning and Zoning

Town Manager Jayawickrema introduced this item by stating that the Affordable Housing Plan Advisory Committee has been working for the past few months along with Economic Development Coordinator Jim Mahoney, Town Planner Maureen Giusti and Corporation Counsel Jennifer Coppola. Before the Council is presented with the final report an update is being provided this evening.

Mr. Mahoney stated that with George Millerd as a strong leader of the Committee, members faithfully attending meetings, and Atty. Coppola working with Berlin and other towns on the Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) a draft plan has been developed. The Committee plans on giving a clean draft plan to Town Council at their April 5th meeting along with a more detailed presentation. He recommends that the Council review the information given this evening and provide comments particularly on the goals, strategies, and actions so changes can be made as soon as possible.

It is recommended that the Town Council schedule a Public Hearing which would require the AHP be published 35 days before that hearing. Therefore, the Committee recommends holding the Public Hearing on May 17, 2022 and if there are no substantial public comments that need to be addressed, the AHP could possibly be adopted at that meeting or a Special Meeting will have to be called as the Plan is due to the State by June 1, 2022.

As an update Mr. Mahoney stated that the Committee developed and distributed the Affordable Housing Plan Survey, met with developers, bankers, realtors, mortgage brokers, Town departments and the Health District to gather information. A joint meeting was held with the Planning and Zoning Commission and another meeting is planned for Monday March 21st as the Committee is a sub-committee of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Both the AHP and POCD are compatible in concert with each other, and they are striving to achieve that through joint meetings early on in the process.

The Committee has identified the need for affordable housing in two particular areas: seniors and households with 50% of median income or less. However, typically these projects require significant State and Federal subsidies and the like.

The Town has made substantial progress in affordable housing increasing from 2% 20 years ago to over 9% today with a 10% target rate. Of the 138 towns in Connecticut that have not met the 10%

target Berlin is fourth closest to achieving it however in the past year Berlin has had a reduction of 18 CHFA financed units however that is not something the Town has control over. Berlin is now 80 units short of the goal of 10% and that figure is expecting to increase to approximately 125 units once the 2020 Census numbers are received. The good news is that there are 178 units that will qualify that have been approved but not yet built with the first of those being 88 units at Deming Ridge on Deming Road.

The Committee has learned that the median sales price of both single-family homes and condominiums in Berlin is below the CHFA maximum house price however buyers with incomes in that level were having a difficult time competing in the housing market that we are in today.

Some of the key survey responses received included supporting the need for additional senior housing as well as the need for more affordable home ownership opportunities which will be addressed in the AHP.

One of the things the Committee looked at was how Berlin located affordable housing in the past. Some of the characteristics identified include public sewer and water, minimizing impact to neighborhoods, good transportation, and proximity to goods and services.

Mayor Kaczynski thanked all involved for all their hard work developing the Affordable Housing Plan. Town Manager Jayawickrema added that this is the third time that Mr. Mahoney has been involved in the AHP and he has been of tremendous value.

NO ACTION NEEDED

- 6. Topic re: Allow any person who is a citizen of the United States of the age of eighteen (18) years or more who, jointly or severally, is liable to the town for taxes assessed against him/her on an assessment of not less than one thousand (\$1,000.00) on the last completed grand list of the town to vote in the budget referendum on April 26 and May 24, 2022. – Town Clerk**

Town Clerk Kate Wall stated that this request is made every year to allow those taxpayers liable to the Town for taxes assessed on an assessment of not less than \$1,000 on to vote in the upcoming budget referendum(s).

Councilor Luddy moved to allow any person who is a citizen of the United States of the age of eighteen (18) years or more who, jointly or severally, is liable to the town for taxes assessed against him/her on an assessment of not less than one thousand (\$1,000.00) on the last completed grand list of the town to vote in the budget referendum on April 26 and May 24, 2022.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

I. APPOINTMENTS:

- 1. Board of Ethics - Alternate – Vacancy** - Term would be until January 31, 2025. Can only be filled with a D or U.

2. **Cemetery Committee – Alternate – Vacancy** - Term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
3. **Commission for Persons with Disabilities – Vacancy** - Term would be until January 31, 2025. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
4. **Conservation Commission - Alternate – Vacancy** - Term would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with an R or U.
5. **Constables – Vacancy** - Term would be until December 2023. Can only be filled with D or U (with no more than a bare majority to be from one political party (Section 8-6)).
6. **Constables – Vacancy** - Term would be until December 2023. Can only be filled with D or U (with no more than a bare majority to be from one political party (Section 8-6)).
7. **Constables – Vacancy** - Term would be until December 2023. Can only be filled with D or U (with no more than a bare majority to be from one political party (Section 8-6)).
8. **Historic District Commission – Vacancy** - New term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
9. **Housing Authority – Vacancy** – John O’Brien (R) term expires on 3/31/2022. Reappointment or replacement term would be until March 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R, or U.

Councilor Luddy placed in nomination the name of John O’Brien (R) of 12 Vineyard Drive for appointment to the Housing Authority.

Mayor Kaczynski asked if there were any further nominations. There being no further nominations, he declared the nominations closed.

Vote being 7-0 in favor of John O’Brien (R) to serve on the Housing Authority. Term ending March 31, 2027.
10. **Inland Wetlands & Water Courses Commission – Vacancy** – Term will be until January 31, 2024. Can be filled with a D or U.
11. **Parks and Recreation Commission – Vacancy** - New term would be until January 31, 2025. Can be filled with a D, R, or U.
12. **Plainville Area Cable Television Advisory Council (PACTAC) – 2 Vacancies** – New terms would expire on June 30, 2023. Can be filled with a D, R or U. There are only two members from Berlin for this board.
13. **VNA – Vacancy** - New term would be until January 31, 2025. Can be filled with a D, R or U.

14. VNA – **Vacancy** - New term would be until January 31, 2025. Can be filled with a D, R or U.

15. **Water Control Commission –Alternate - Vacancy** -New term would be until January 31, 2023. Can be filled with a D, R or U

16. **Water Control Commission –Alternate - Vacancy** -New term would be until January 31, 2023. Can be filled with a D, R or U

17. **Water Control Commission – Alternate - Vacancy** - New term would be until January 31, 2024. Can only be filled with a D or U if both of the above are R.

18. **Zoning Board of Appeals - Alternate – Vacancy** – Term would be until January 31, 2024. Can be filled with D, R, or U.

J. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

- The Berlin Historical Society is celebrating their 300th Anniversary this year and they would like to design and hang lamppost banners showcasing the Town along Main Street and Farmington Avenue. They are asking for support from the Town. The Town Manager will provide a formal agenda item to the Council shortly. He also stated that the new Flag Flying Policy may need to be reviewed by Corporation Counsel.
- The family of former Berlin residents has a small piece of land at the intersection of Ledge Road and Savage Hill Road that they would like to donate to the Town. The Town Manager consulted with Public Works, and they would like to have that piece of land for site line or roadwork improvements at that intersection.

The Town Manager asked the donors to do an Environmental Level One report to show that the property is clear but the cost for that report would be about \$4,000 so he is uncertain that they will do that. However, he did suggest that they reach out to neighboring property owners to see if they are interested in the property. The Town Manager will return to the Town Council with an agenda item if needed.

- As the VNA Administrator/Clinical Supervisor will be leaving her position has been posted. There is no interest from the current staff due to the uncertainty with the VNA as well as the additional education required for the position.

Within 48 hours of the Supervisor's last day, which is April 1st, the Department of Public Health (DPH) must be notified of her departure and the Town's plan to refill the position. The DPH will accept an interim plan however, if the VNA continues with someone in the position without the proper qualifications the DPH can fine the Town, put the Town on probation or close the VNA.

The Town Manager's job is to enforce the Town Charter as much as possible beginning with attempting to fill the position.

- 2022/2023 Budget – The Board of Finance met on Wednesday March 9th for a Budget Workshop. The Town Manager and Finance Director were given a charge, along with the Board of Education, to make changes to decrease the proposed mil rate to half a mil.
- Berlin Police Department Pension Plan – Numbers have been received from the actuaries for four pension plan scenarios. The Town Manager suggests that the ad hoc committee get together in the next week to review and determine where to go with the Plan.
- There has been difficulty negotiating a contract with Text My Gov, the software system that can be used by residents to receive text notifications from the Town. The company has not been very accommodating regarding the Town's requests. Therefore, the Town Manager will be looking into other products.
- Some Council members have been trying out lapel mics during Town Council meetings and they seem to be working out well especially for those listening remotely. If Councilors are comfortable with them then they will move in that direction for all Council members.

K. SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:

None

L. COUNCILORS' COMMUNICATION:

Councilor Fazzino stated that an Inter-Faith Prayer service for Ukraine will be held at the United Methodist Church of East Berlin located at 139 Main Street on Friday March 25th at 7:00 p.m. Donations will also be collected.

M. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

March 1, 2022

Councilor Luddy moved to accept the March 1, 2022 Town Council Meeting Minutes as presented.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 6-0-1 with Councilor Rosso abstaining. (MOTION CARRIED)

N. 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 – Kensington Fire District and Worthington Fire District

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 – Kensington Fire District and Worthington Fire District at 8:33 p.m. Invited in: Town Manager Jayawickrema, Corporation Counsel Donofrio, Public Works Director Mike Ahern, Water Control Manager Ray Jarema, and Deputy Director of Public Works Jim Horbal.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Executive Session ended at 9:23 p.m.

O. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Luddy moved to adjourn at 9:23 p.m.

Seconded by Councilor Rosso.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Submitted by,

Kathryn J. Wall
Clerk of the Meeting