

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

West Hartford to Adopt Revised Schedule for Budget Review and Adoption

WEST HARTFORD, CT (April 20, 2020) -- In light of the global pandemic of COVID-19, Mayor Shari Cantor announced today that she would propose a new budget adoption schedule at a meeting of the Town Council on Monday night. The new schedule will include two public hearings, as required by the Town Charter. Because community spread of COVID-19 has made it unsafe to hold in-person events, the public hearings will be held using a virtual format.

“West Hartford is committed to the principles of open and transparent government,” said Mayor Cantor. “Public input on the budget is critical, and the new format will allow us to receive comments in a manner that protects the health and safety of residents and taxpayers.”

Deputy Mayor Leon Davidoff, who is chair of the Finance & Administration Committee, and Minority Leader Lee Gold, are co-sponsors of the new schedule.

Deputy Mayor Davidoff said the challenges presented by COVID-19 would not stop the committee from engaging in a robust budget review process. “Adopting a budget is the most important thing the Town Council does,” said Davidoff. “The economic fallout from COVID-19 creates an unprecedented budgetary challenge, and we will carefully review every aspect of the budget to find savings and ensure our residents receive the services they need.”

Davidoff said he expects the committee to hold at least two “workshops” to engage in a department-by-department review of the proposed budget.

Councilor Gold said he looks forward to working with his colleagues. “The Town is going to face some very difficult decisions as a result of COVID-19, and we must work together to solve our fiscal challenges. We must also be forward thinking about how the Town will reopen for business.”

In keeping with tradition, there will be both afternoon and evening public hearings. The public hearings will be held on April 27, 2020 at 2 PM and on April 30, 2020 at 6 PM. Residents and taxpayers will have the opportunity to either call-in or submit written comments. Detailed instructions for participating will soon be posted on the Town’s website.

At Monday night’s Town Council meeting, Town Manager Matt Hart will present amendments to the budget, which he initially proposed on March 10, 2020. At Tuesday night’s Board of Education meeting, Superintendent of Schools Tom Moore will present amendments to the budget he proposed on March 3, 2020. The public hearing and workshop on the Board of Education budget will be held on Tuesday, April 21st at 6:30 PM, details on how to participate are on the WHPS web site.

(more)

“The pandemic has presented enormous challenges for our school system,” said Board of Education Chair Deb Polun. “I am so proud of how our administrators, teachers, school employees, students, families and community members have responded to these challenges so far. The Board will work with our partners to ensure that West Hartford continues to provide the best public education in Connecticut.”

Under the new schedule, the Board of Education will have until May 17th to send its final budget proposal to the Town Council. The Town Council will have until May 26th to adopt the Town budget.

Both Mayor Cantor and Chairwoman Polun said they expect to complete their work ahead of those deadlines. “We are not going to put off making tough decisions,” said Mayor Cantor. “Residents need stability and to know what to expect. In partnership with the schools, we will engage in a thorough and efficient budget adoption process. We must be thoughtful but decisive.”

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