

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 9, 2022

Pursuant to rules of Council of the Town of Westfield, the members thereof convened in regular session Wednesday, November 9, 2022, at 8:00 p.m.

Mayor Brindle made the following announcements:

“The adequate notice of this meeting, as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, was provided by the posting, mailing, and filing of the annual notice of regularly scheduled meetings of the Town Council on December 8, 2021. The notice was, on that date, posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building, mailed to THE WESTFIELD LEADER, and THE STAR LEDGER, and filed with the Clerk of the Town of Westfield.”

PRESENT: Mayor Brindle, Councilmembers: Habgood, Parmelee, LoGrippo, Katz, Mackey, Contract, Dardia, Root

ABSENT:

Invocation was given by Councilman Dardia

Salute to the flag.

APPOINTMENTS

PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Brindle presented the following Proclamation:

Town of Westfield
Westfield , New Jersey
Proclamation
The Garden Club of Westfield
Centennial Celebration

WHEREAS, The Garden Club of Westfield was founded in October 1922 by a group of women who were interested in sharing their enthusiasm for horticulture and flower design; and

WHEREAS, members of The Garden Club of Westfield constantly strive to beautify the environment, educate the public and support conservation; and

WHEREAS, the year 2022 marks the 100th anniversary of The Garden Club of Westfield; and

WHEREAS, throughout the Garden Club's history, members have volunteered their time and talents to serve the community in many ways that include maintaining downtown planters on the corners of Elm Street, donating decorated evergreen wreaths to municipal buildings, providing a weekly flower arrangement in the Westfield Memorial Library to honor veterans, and plant, clean and nurture the Blue Star Garden in Tamaques Park - a living tribute to those that have served in the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, most recently, The Garden Club spearheaded a native plant and wildflower meadow in Mindowaskin Park, to beautify the environs, support local flora and fauna and educate the general public about the benefits of native plants; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the Town of Westfield express its appreciation for the contribution The Garden Club of Westfield has made to the beautification of the community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that I, Mayor Michelle W. Brindle, on behalf of the Town Council and good citizens of the Town of Westfield, hereby congratulates The Garden Club of Westfield on the occasion its 100th Anniversary Celebration and offer the community's heartfelt thanks to all the members, past and present, for the immeasurable contribution they have made to the beautification of the Town of Westfield over the past one hundred years.

Mayor Brindle presented the following Proclamation:

**Town of Westfield
Westfield, New Jersey
PROCLAMATION**

***Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss
10 year Anniversary
National Children's Grief Awareness Month***

WHEREAS, National Children's Grief Awareness Month and Children's Grief Awareness Day were created to bring attention to the needs of children who are grieving and the benefits they obtain through the support of others; and

WHEREAS, 1 in 14 children in New Jersey, will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18; and

WHEREAS, *Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss* was incorporated in October 2011 by Mary L. Robinson and Philanthropist Dr. Gerald Glasser; and

WHEREAS, Imagine has provided a space in our community for children and families experiencing the death or life altering illness of a loved one since March 2012; and

WHEREAS, Imagine has furthered their mission from ensuring no child grieves alone to ensuring no one grieves alone by providing grief education and training for schools, community organizations, and businesses across the State of New Jersey and beyond; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that providing support for grieving children is essential for the future health and well-being of our children, our families, and society.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor Michelle W. Brindle, along with the members of the Town Council, hereby extend to Imagine Executive Director Lindsay Schambach and the Imagine Staff, Board of Trustees, volunteers, and families who have used Imagine's services, a sincere congratulations on their 10th Anniversary.

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Westfield recognizes November as National Children's Grief Awareness Month and November 17, 2022, and the Third Thursday of November annually, as Children's Grief Awareness Day, in partnership with Imagine, as part of our collective efforts to ensure no child grieves alone.

Mayor Brindle presented the following Proclamation:

Town of Westfield

Westfield, New Jersey

Proclamation

The Westfield Service League 90th Anniversary Celebration

WHEREAS, the Westfield Service League, founded in 1932 by a group of 19 young women, has actively assisted the greater Westfield community through volunteer service and charitable donations for 90 years; and

WHEREAS, in March of 1933, the Westfield Service League began managing the Westfield Thrift Shop, providing clothes to those in need and purchasing war bonds with profits; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, the Westfield Service League founded the highly successful Consignment Shop, as a compliment to the Thrift Shop, and in 1968 purchased the present home of both shops at 114 Elmer Street; and

WHEREAS, in addition to running the Thrift and Consignment Shops, members deliver weekly Mobile Meals and staff the Food Pantry at Holy Trinity Church while they continue to expand and change to meet the needs of the community; and

WHEREAS, currently, there are 175 volunteers who generously give of their time for the greater good of this community and beyond; and

WHEREAS, since 1941, the Westfield Service League has made donations of over \$2.8 million dollars to countless organizations, including Birthday Box, Children's Specialized Hospital, Contact We Care, Covenant House, Emmanuel Cancer, Family and Children's Services, Mobile Meals, Westfield Food Pantry, Westfield Historical Society, Westfield Y and YWCA of Union County; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Westfield would like to express its gratitude to the Westfield Service League volunteers of today and yesterday for their dedication and service to the community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that I, Mayor Michelle W. Brindle, on behalf of the Town Council and the good citizens of the Town of Westfield, do hereby thank the past and present volunteers of the Westfield Service League for their steadfast commitment to helping others and offer congratulations to the League on the occasion of its 90th Anniversary Celebration.

Mayor Brindle presented Certificates of Appreciation to individuals for their outstanding support that contributed to the success of the March to Yorktown Day on August, 28, 2022.

OPENING REMARKS

Town Administrator Update

The Town Administrator provided an update on the leaf collection process. Encouraged residents to sign up for Nixle Alerts as the Town was send updates every evening at 7:00P.M. as to where the crews are scheduled to be the following day to inform residents to move cars from the street and to bring leaves to the street. Reminded residents to not discard branches, pumpkins, mums, and hay bails in the leaf piles. Free leaf bags are being provided to residents at the Conservation Center.

The Town Administrator reminded residents it is the 4th quarter tax collection. Thanked the residents as 93% of taxes have been collected thus far.

The Town Administrator provided an update on road paving. The South Avenue paving conducted by Union County is completed. New Jersey American Water has completed a grid by Rahway Avenue. The next grid to be completed will be done by Elizabeth Town Gas is East Broad Street from Springfield Avenue to North Euclid and then North Euclid to Mountain Avenue. The milling portion of the project is expected to start on Thursday, November 17th starting at the Springfield Avenue side and will continue to move forward with weather permitting. The project will start earlier and end later in the day to have this paving done

efficiently due to weather. Encouraged residents to sign up for Nixle Alerts as road closure information will be pushed out.

The Town Administrator discussed the Stream Cleaning Project at Mindowaskin Park and Fairview Cemetery. Explained the dredging of the material is completed and is stockpiled with the expectation that it will be moved early next week. The Fairview Cemetery portion of this project is expected to start early next week with completion within the next few weeks.

Councilman LoGrippo asked about lane striping near the South Avenue Train trestle.

The Town Administrator stated the Town has been waiting for striping projects to be completed and the company the Town's paving contractor is using is also contracted by the County and State. There has been some ghost striping that has been put down in the interim. Town striping is expected to start next week but will follow-up with the County to ensure they complete the Central Avenue striping.

The Mayor commented about leaf collection and informed residents there is a potential heavy storm on Friday and asked residents if they are putting leaves on the street to make sure there is a channel between the leaves and the drains to let water flow smoothly.

Mayor's Update

Good evening, everyone, and thanks to all who are joining us both here in the Council Chambers and online tonight. As a reminder, public comment will be accepted in person only, and we are live streaming for viewing only via Facebook. As always, the replay will also be available afterwards on Facebook, YouTube, and TV 36.

ELECTION DAY

Thanks to all 12,888 Westfield residents who took the time to exercise the incredible privilege of voting in yesterday's election, and congratulations to [Councilwoman Emily Root](#) on winning the Ward 1 special election! This council is lucky to benefit from your community-minded approach, listening skills, and expertise as a small business owner as we all work together to continue to move Westfield forward. We look forward to having you continue to serve alongside us!

NEW BUSINESSES

I hope you've had a chance to check out the beautiful new [Akai Lounge](#) on Elm Street. We are incredibly fortunate to have the dedication of Akai owner Lillian Pien to our downtown! Lillian purchased the former Theresa's location and completed an extensive renovation that has resulted in a beautiful new space.

We received another tremendous vote of confidence from Westfield resident and business owner David Tepp, who recently opened his new location of Tepp Wealth Management at 208 Elmer Street.

In addition, we anticipate a November opening for the new AHD & Co. design showroom, to be followed in early 2023 by Mochimoly Donuts, German Doner Kebab, Fresh & Co., and of course, Millburn Deli, followed by Maize Cocktails & Cocina in early spring. It continues to be a very exciting time for Downtown Westfield!

RIALTO IMPROVEMENTS

Have you seen the amazing improvements on the Rialto property? The permanent mural installation, coordinated by The Westfield Public Arts Commission, in partnership with the [Center for Creativity at the Rialto](#), transforms and better connects the space from East Broad to the rear parking lot and is funded by a grant from Union County. You'll also see bistro lights in this alleyway, and the area will soon have public wi-fi and a bike oasis with amenities for cyclists – including new bike racks, benches, a bike shelter, and bike tool repair station to further encourage biking in the downtown.

In addition, local artist and Westfield native Ricardo Roig has established the Heartwork Non-Profit Art Space next to the theater (in the former Robert Anthony Jeweler space), representing a further expansion of the arts in our downtown.

VETERANS DAY

Please join us on Friday at 11:00 AM at Monument Circle for the annual Veterans Day ceremony. Thank you to the Martin Wallberg American Legion Post 3 for organizing this important event where the community can come together to recognize our veterans and their tremendous service to our country. As a reminder, Town Hall will be closed on Veterans Day. Also in commemoration of Veterans Day, the next round of the Westfield Veterans Banner Program is underway and accepting submissions to recognize our veterans and active duty military personnel. The banners will be displayed each year from Memorial Day through Veterans Day in a partnership between the Town and the Westfield Veterans Fund, a locally established 501(c)(3) organization. Phase 1 of this program was introduced on July 4, when the first round of banners was unveiled on poles adjacent to Monument Circle, along East Broad Street, North Avenue, and South Avenue. For submission details and an application -- or to make a donation -- visit westfieldnj.gov/veterans-banner-program.

TONIGHT'S AGENDA

To highlight a few key items on tonight's agenda, I will turn it over to Councilman Parmelee to discuss the topics from the Code Review & Town Property Committee.

(Remarks by Committee Chair, Councilman Parmelee)

Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Tonight, we will be voting on a resolution authorizing the release of funds from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to Community Options Inc. to be used towards construction of a single-family home consisting of four special needs housing units for adults with developmental disabilities at 1753 Dakota Street. Community Options Inc. is a nonprofit organization that provides housing and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

For background, our Affordable Housing Trust Fund currently has over \$2M, which has accrued from contributions we've required from developers so that this fund is not subsidized by taxpayer money. Tonight's proposed transfer is for \$192,908, and is very similar to the action we took in January of this year for the Arc of Union County to build a single family group home at 901 Morris Avenue.

Community Options Inc. purchased the property at 1753 Dakota from a private owner, and the property is located in the RS-8 Single Family Residence District. The NJ Municipal Land Use Law permits community residences for persons with developmental disabilities as a permitted use in all residential districts in a municipality. By State law, development requirements are the same as for single-family homes in the district.

As part of our continued priority to responsibly fulfill our Affordable Housing requirements, this funding transfer would help further the goal specified in our settlement agreement with Fair Share Housing Center to work with non-profit affordable housing obligations to create 20 additional homes, half for families, by the end of 2025. This goal was approved by the Superior Court, when they approved our settlement and housing plan. We have a number of group homes in Westfield already, all of which have the appearance of detached single-family homes. Beyond our actual obligations, our community is one that values diversity among our housing and our residents, and is committed to prioritizing the inclusivity that is enabled by this project. We look forward to welcoming these residents to their new home when it is completed.

Proposed Cell Tower

We'll also vote on a resolution authorizing the award of contract for construction and maintenance of a cell tower facility and ancillary support equipment to be located at the Conservation Center, following a public bidding process.

As you may recall, this initiative was first brought up in February 2021, when we originally issued an RFP for cellular providers to place a cell tower adjacent to Houlihan/Sid Fay fields based on a letter we received from a wireless carrier at the time, expressing an interest in this placement. We took the request seriously based on a number of factors, including the desire to address poor cellular reception on the south side of Town, but also because of our need to address the long-standing parking and pedestrian safety issues at Houlihan/Sid Fay field – the lack of adequate parking, a restroom, and ADA compliance at the facility. In return for allowing a carrier to install a cell tower, the Town would require the provider to pay for some of these necessary improvements – an innovative solution to solve these issues at no cost to taxpayers – in addition to annual lease payments for the use of the property.

In March 2021, at the recommendation of the Code Review and Property Committee, the Town issued an RFP to bring on a consultant, at no cost, to advise the Council on negotiations with interested wireless providers – which ultimately resulted in a bid for lease of a communications facility issued this summer to cellular providers and tower operators, which yielded no bid responses.

This fall, we received some carrier feedback that placement of a cell tower at the Conservation Center on Lamberts Mill Road would better close the coverage gap that exists in a large portion of the southwest area of Westfield with a shorter pole required. In working with our consultant, we issued a new bid for this location and tonight will vote on authorizing the agreement with AT&T for an upfront payment of \$100,000 that will be dedicated to the parking lot expansion and restroom facilities at Houlihan/Sid Fay Field. In addition, the agreement provides for an annual lease payment, as well as the potential for additional rent to be received from any co-locating wireless carriers on the tower.

Both wireless carriers and residents alike have repeatedly cited a need to improve cellular service in the southwest section of town, specifically Lamberts Mill to Willow Grove Road and Clifton Street, inclusive of Tamaques and Jefferson Elementary Schools. These areas have been identified as having wireless service gaps, specifically in the interiors of homes and buildings – a concern we hear increasingly from residents. Additionally, boosting coverage in this area would improve the reliability of our emergency response network for our first responders.

As discussed when we first explored this issue, it's important to consider that if we don't approve a location on Town property, the providers have the option to go to an alternate site on private property, either in Westfield or in close proximity in a neighboring town. This would improve the coverage BUT eliminate Westfield from being able to reap any of the investment or revenue benefits.

We understand there are many sensitivities when it comes to cell towers. However, knowing that a cell tower in the vicinity may be inevitable, it is prudent to take a proactive and engaged approach to ensure that we maximize the benefit to Westfield taxpayers AND maintain controls in the process. In this case, we have the opportunity to resolve a long-standing safety issue at Houlihan/Sid Fay field and additionally reap the benefit of having someone else cover the costs of these improvements.

Edison Fields Project

Finally, for the reason many of you are here tonight, after 16 months of input, research, and discussion, we will be voting on a resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign a shared services agreement between the Town and Board of Education to move forward with the Edison Fields Project.

Last week, I detailed the reasons for my support of this project in a Letter to the Editor so that residents would have an opportunity to hear my position well ahead of tonight's vote. Rather than recap those details again, I would like to make sure we hear from the many residents and our Council members on this topic of such vast interest, and I will weigh in when the vote is up for discussion. So, with that, let's get started so that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Thank you.

ADVERTISED HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

BIDS

MINUTES

On a motion by Councilwoman Mackey and seconded by Councilman LoGrippe, Council approved the Minutes of the Town Council Conference Session and Regular Meeting held October 25, 2022, with Councilman Contract abstaining.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

OPEN DISCUSSION BY CITIZENS

Mayor Brindle opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Jerome Feder, 789 Knollwood Terrace, wanted to make comments on the shared service agreement in relation to the Edison School Field Project. He feels the agreement is too broad and does not provide details on the artificial turf, and flood mitigation. He thinks this is a liability and has environmental and financial implications. Mr. Feder stated this is beyond what a shared service agreement should be. He feels there are large liabilities for the Board of Education to be sued for damages and would not end by the end date of the shared service agreement. He is also concerned for flooding as Robinson Branch is south and in the downstream of Edison School as he stated the area has previously flooded. He is concerned that if neighboring houses flood, the Town is subject to claims for damage. Additionally, he mentions the field drains downstream in to the Rahway River watershed and does not want runoff from the artificial turf materials to be in the water. Mr. Feder commented on the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and how they would have to be involved if the water is damaged by artificial turf. Lastly, he feels the agreement needs to be narrowed in scope with provisions added to ensure that the Board of Education and school children get priority as the primary users. Furthermore, he feels these actions should be done transparently with agreements made by the majority of residents with a full understanding of long-term financial and legal implications.

Steven Goodman, 322 Orenda Circle, has been a long-time resident of the Town of Westfield and stated he has no personal agenda as he does not live near Edison School. He stated he is a recently retired health-care provider and has treated individuals for over 41 years. While practicing, he would go by the “gold standard” to provide products and services that produce the best results with the least side effects. He feels it is a mistake to replace the grass fields with artificial turf at Edison School as natural grass fields are safe, useful, nontoxic and do not have to be replaced every eight to twelve years as artificial turf is petroleum based and cannot be recycled. He stated these products contain harmful chemicals that can get into the air, water and soil which can lead to respiratory diseases and cancers. He mentioned that many municipalities have banned the use of artificial turf. He discusses products that consumers once thought were safe in nature such as tobacco, talcum powder, chlordane, asbestos, roundup and Takata airbags were all deemed safe until people became sick. He explained it took years or decades to prove a link between the products and the effect. He is concerned with the health implications the artificial turf would cause. He stated he sent his concerns to the Council after doing research along with looking up information on the Town’s website including the CME Associates report. He feels the numbers do not add up regarding the comparison from artificial turf to natural grass fields. He voiced the citizens of Westfield cannot vote on this project as it is being done through a shared service agreement between the Board of Education and the Town of Westfield. He asked that the Council does not approve this agreement and put toxic substances in the fields as it is environmentally unsafe, expensive, and irreparable. He asked the Council to provide the gold

standard by giving the children a community that is a safe and environmentally sound playing field.

Steven McCabe, 409 Washington Street, is a neighbor of the proposed Edison School Fields Project. He disagrees with Councilman Contract's statements about the project. He stated his neighbors are in favor of this project. He wanted to mention that these are not playing fields, they are practice fields. The Marching Band, Field Hockey Team have voiced their need for this upgrade. Mr. McCabe has sent letters to the editor and believes a lot of the testimony that is given to the Council should be given to the Environmental Protection Agency, not the Town Council. He feels the EPA is going to look at water runoff and environmental factors that go into the project as permitting is needed. He ended his comments by mentioned no nation in the world and no state in the United States has ever placed a ban on artificial turf. He commented stated the Town Council should be making decisions based on what is best for the children, the students, and the athletes and feels this is the first step in improving all the fields in the Town.

Nuno Rodriguez, 1219 Boulevard, asked everyone to stop referring to the shared service agreement as unprecedented as this should be the norm and feels Board of Education property is Westfield property and is for Westfield residents. He explained that many residents in Westfield are affluent and can send their children to private schools. Oak Knoll, Kent Place, and Pingry schools all have turf fields. He would imagine that these schools with such good reputations and high cost of tuition would have the best in mind for their students as they go forward and play on these fields. He is not understanding all the opposition and would be much more respectful if people just said they do not want this project to go through because they do not like the noise and the parking. He feels the turf is a deflection. He stated the fields are needed and applauds the Council for what he hopes is the first of many relationships with the Board of Education.

Andrea Taylor, 525 Clifton Street, applauded the Mayor & Council for their past and continued efforts to enhance sustainability in Westfield as Westfield has prided itself on being a green community. Westfield is one of 64 communities that has received the silver certification from Sustainable New Jersey. The Town held a Green Fair this past weekend and provides plastic bag recycling at the Conservation Center with the purpose of reducing the amount of plastic getting into the waste stream. Ms. Taylor mentioned her son going through cancer treatment for the past five years and stated New Jersey has the third highest rate of pediatric cancer in the county and have been rising steadily over the past few decades. She stated the Town is now looking to replace poorly taken care of grass fields with artificial turf which contain known carcinogens and neurotoxins including PAHS, phthalates, Phys phenol A, and crumb rubber. She discusses a 2019 study conducted by the National Toxicology Program; a division of NIH found that crumb rubber was toxic to human cells. She further stated in July of 2022 the Council received a letter from the Children's Environmental Health Center strongly recommending a moratorium on the use of artificial turf as there are PFAs in turf which are known to cause cancer. Ms. Taylor

voiced if you have never taken a child to treatments, or seen them in the hospital, or attended a funeral for a child then perhaps the concept of carcinogens in children's environment is too abstract. She asked the Council to image it were their children or neighbor as she is a neighbor. She asked if the arguments of less expensive or longer playing hours matter when children's health is at risk. She applauds Mayor Brindle on being an environmental champion and asks for the sake of the children to continue on that path and reject the turf fields.

Maria Todaro, 758 Knollwood Terrace, read a letter sent to the Mayor & Council on behalf of her daughter. To Mayor Brindle, Members of the Westfield NJ Town Council and Board of Education Members, My name is Lauren Kretzer, a native Westfield-er and graduate of Jefferson Elementary School, Edison Intermediate School and Westfield High School. I am currently a mom to two young daughters, ages 3 and 7. I have been closely following the proposed Edison Fields Project (via www.westfieldcrafd.org) as I grew up in a neighborhood directly adjacent to the school property. I've enjoyed using Edison Field for many decades now, mostly on weekends with my children and dogs while visiting my parents, who still reside in the area. Not long ago, it was time for me to choose a permanent place to raise my children, and I wanted to consider Westfield – I have nothing but happy memories of my hometown, and it would have brought me a lot of joy to send my kids to the same schools I attended, and to play in the same parks and fields that I did as a child. When weighing my options, I was looking for towns that place a high priority on natural green spaces, and in a school district that holds their overall well-being above everything else. Suffice it to say that my heart dropped when I heard about the Edison Fields project, which is why I am writing to you today. It's come to my attention that this issue will be voted on this week. When I read the details of the proposed new field, I was devastated. Covering up my childhood field with synthetic turf? Threatening the beautiful wildlife in the area? What upset me most of all, though, was reading about the growing body of evidence that suggests a direct link between exposure to artificial turf and an elevated cancer risk. I can't fathom a scenario where anyone who claims to genuinely care about Westfield's children votes for approval of the Edison Fields Project and potentially puts young, innocent, still-developing children at risk for life-threatening chronic disease and other potential health implications – all for the sake of stadium lights and a “state of the art” facility. I should mention that I am a cancer survivor – in 2020, I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a life threatening disease that, I later learned, [has possible links to exposure to artificial turf](#). The intense fear of leaving my children motherless, the excruciatingly painful surgery, the months of sleepless nights, the days and nights of my life, lost, spent in the hospital and doctor's offices - these are just a few of the things that no one should have to endure, especially if it can be prevented. I am relieved to have made the choice to not raise my kids in Westfield, a town that no longer aligns with my values. Instead, I chose a more rural town in Northern NJ, with boundless natural green space, healthy wildlife, and – more importantly – peace of mind that my children won't eventually develop cancer after spending years of their young lives playing on artificial school fields. I implore you, please reconsider your vote for the proposed Edison Field Project. I care deeply

about the children who pass through the halls of Westfield schools – they are me, just a few generations younger. They are counting on you to be their true advocates – to vote on things that will keep their long-term best interests in mind, which is far more important than a fancy soccer field. It literally brings tears to my eyes to imagine any of them facing the devastation of a cancer diagnosis, a pain and fear that I know acutely. Please don't let them down. Maria asked why the doctors and scientists are being ignored and why take the chance that artificial turf can cause harm to children.

Susan Goodman, 322 Orenda Circle, was a pediatric oncology nurse and wanted to tell the Mayor and Council what it is like to take care of a child dying of cancer, what impacts it has on a family, staff, and siblings. She mentioned more down time, more family time, more homework time is all taken away. She spoke about the families having to go home from hospitals and staying with the children who were going through cancer treatments. She has seen children die, go through surgeries, take on treatments. She reflected on her time spent with these children and the pain they had to endure. She strongly voiced opposition on artificial turf as she knows what is in the material and feels that the children will be impacted for years. She reiterated she has worked with patients who had cancer and what the Council is proposing is horrible and disgusting. She stated as a resident if artificial turf is being installed, she wants a list of everything that is going into it. She wants to know how it is manufactured and what chemicals are involved. Mrs. Goodman discussed the chemicals that are involved in water bottles and food containers and how they are entering everyone's bodies. She does not feel people are listening to the environmentalists. She stated this would ruin everything if the votes goes through and asked the Mayor and Council to think about the implications the fields will cause.

Janet Onishi, 759 Knollwood Terrace, spoke about the Edison School Field Project and how it will create two groups of children in Westfield. She stated if the fields are developed the children of Edison School will have no natural grass while every other school in Town will have natural grass. She mentioned two public health experts have written to the Mayor and Council and have advised against the plan. She spoke about infill splash and how it can cause harmful implications if it is ingested and inhaled in the body. She briefed the Council on many articles that speak on opposition of children regularly playing on artificial turf written by health experts. She feels sports families make a choice to let their children play on artificial turf but there is no choice for the families or children who regularly attend Edison School. She agrees with the public health experts and does not think it is wise to expose children who attend Edison to artificial turf made with plastic or crumb rubber infill. She also feels with the addition to lights at Edison School it will create two groups of children in Westfield. She discussed how this will expose children who live in the area to loud sounds all throughout the day and into the late hours of the night affecting their sleep. She asked who will be setting the hours of operation for the fields as it will be used for the schools, recreation programs and events. She hopes that the Town and the Board of Education consider the needs of the residents who live near Edison School and consider natural grass fields.

Andrew Song, 361 Orenda Circle, is a student at Edison School and feels this is a terrible idea. He explained students were interviewed and asked if they wanted artificial turf and out of approximately 20 students 15% were in favor. He stated he does not want to have cancer from the fields at his school. He stated the students walk to Kehler Stadium every day for PE class and have turf particles in his shoes. He also feels this project is very expensive and the money can be used to build gender neutral bathrooms, better programs, better education services, raising teachers' salaries. He is going to express his opposition to the Board of Education as well.

Yanchun Song, 361 Orenda Circle, explained his family moved to Westfield nine years ago and has two sons, one of whom attends Edison School. Yanchun has watched a few Town Council meetings and Board of Education meetings that discuss the Edison School Field project. He feels there are two sides of this argument meaning the parents whose children play sports and the people who live in the neighborhood. He asked if the Council has heard from people who do not live near Edison. He does not feel the Council has heard all from all of the residents of Westfield. He mentioned the sports teams and organizations send communication out to the parents to have their voices be heard but the parents of students in Edison School are not fully aware of this project. He asked if the Mayor and Council would consider putting artificial turf fields on their yards in place of natural grass. Mr. Song studied the analysis conducted by CME Associates and does not feel the numbers match in different places within the report. He feels the report was sloppy. He feels with better maintenance being conducted natural grass fields would be better suited. He also suggested if a turf field must be built, it should be at Roosevelt School.

Tim Eaton, 762 Knollwood Terrace, is opposed to the Edison School Field Project. He stated if the Mayor and Council vote yes, this would expose students to carcinogens, PFAS, heavy metals and other chemicals dangerous to their health. They would be voting yes to exposing students to toxic fumes, and gases at extreme heat situations, and removing access for Edison students to natural grass during lunch recess and PE classes, increasing in non-contact injuries, abrasions, and skin burns. This would also contaminate the soil and water resources with pollution, increase traffic congestion and parking issues, increase noise and light pollution. Lastly, he feels this would affect the quality of life for the neighborhood providing no peace and quiet at night. He explained the Council has received letters from medical experts and researchers describing health risks associated with artificial turf especially in children and adolescents. He stated these experts have no skin in the game besides protecting the health and safety of the children and students. He asked the Council before voting to think about the responses they will have to the following questions, would they replace their grass with artificial turf, would they expose neighbors to toxic run off, would they want their neighbor to put artificial turf down and expose their family to lights and carcinogens. He asked the Mayor & Council to vote no on artificial turf and tower lights.

Scott Stogner, 542 Sherwood Parkway, has been a volunteer coach in Town for approximately 15 years and has children that have spent countless hours on the fields throughout the Town and other municipalities that offer turf fields which cost a lot of money and time away from their studies. He is in favor of this project and feels it is what the Town needs. He has coached in every municipality within Union County and strongly stated the Westfield fields are terrible. He sympathizes with everyone but is fully in support of these field improvements.

Terry Brennan, 862 Rahway Avenue, agrees that the Town has fields in terrible shape. He stated the Board of Education does not have the funds to maintain them and the Town does not maintain them. He grew up playing soccer on natural grass fields and coached for many seasons for Westfield Soccer Association. He feels the Edison School Field plan has been conducted in an ugly way, beginning with the Town's Parks Master Plan. He stated only 19% of residents were in favor of new artificial fields, while 24% are in favor of field lighting as he further stated sports field lighting in residential neighborhoods is grotesque. He feels a voter referendum which has taken place for other Board of Education capital projects is being avoided, backroom discussions were conducted, and reasonable dissenting opinions and facts have been squashed. He further states skewed reports were issued, the parking study, and the CME report. His children do not want this project.

Ron Feldman, 972 Woodmere Drive, is a Commissioner on the Parks and Recreation Committee and has three children who play sports. He feels it is well represented why the Town needs more playing fields for the children with more playing hours. Ron commended the Town Council and Recreation Commission for doing a lot of work on this topic including Scott Katz on what is the best way to give the schools, student athletes and the youths in Town the most playing time possible while considering the needs of all the Town members. These conversations have taken place for the past 16 months with many compromises. He wanted to remind everyone this plan as it stands was not the original plan and has been scaled back. The current plan calls for 40% of the field to remain natural grass and would like to clarify that. He sympathizes with anyone discussing terrible childhood illnesses and wanted to reiterate a previous speakers' comments that this is the responsibility of Federal and State agencies to determine what is and is not safe and trust in those government bodies. He voiced it is not practical for the Council to make the determination of what is safe because all these bodies have determined that these are safe elements. He thinks it is very important to understand that there are lots of people who do their own "research" and decide lots of things about science that they believe to be true but unfortunately have no basis. He continued to state there is no evidence that turf causes illness in children and begs all residents if it does cause illness not to oppose any future turf but to oppose the participation of all children on all turf anywhere. By implementing this plan, it will not stop most of the children in Westfield to play on turf fields. If turf causes illness in children, then the residents should not suddenly be concerned about the health of the children. He thanked the Mayor and Council and has encouraged them to vote for this proposal.

Scott Factor, 515 Colonial Avenue, explained he does not have a horse in the game, but he wishes this opportunity was available twenty years ago as his three children grew up in Westfield. He remembers the impact that Houlihan and Sid-Fey had on the community and provided an opportunity to have more children in town playing more sports. It was a great sense of the Westfield community. It showed what a great town Westfield is. He explained back then he did not have the opportunity to express the need for more children to have the ability to play sports all throughout the day, but he does now. He feels this proposal provides an opportunity for the children to be outside in the fresh air, making new relationships, and build life lessons that will carry on throughout their life and feels strongly in favor of this project.

Jen Crawford, 795 Knollwood Terrace, stated the hardest thing in the past 16 months is that everyone agrees there is a need for more fields, but have locked into a situation where this has to happen. She has a problem with this being located at the school. She stated the 40% of the grass that will remain is the fenced off varsity baseball field which is not available to Edison students. The fields where the students have recess will be turf which she thinks is not acceptable. She too would like to increase field capability but does not think its fair that half of the middle school aged students will never have access to natural grass fields again.

Aaron Taylor, 525 Clifton Street, is currently a Junior at Westfield High School and has played several sports in Town. He is no stranger to the issues that the fields present and the disrepair that some of them are in. As a member of the Marching Band he has spent a large amount of time on the Edison School Fields but is also a 2x pediatric cancer survivor. He stated no person should ever have to through any medical experience like they one he did especially if it can be prevented. He felt obligated to speak to the Council and say turf has 52 chemicals known to cause cancer, respiratory issues, and asthma. Artificial turf fields can cause someone with a small scrape seven times a higher chance to get MRSA than natural grass fields. He spoke about testing regarding artificial turf fields and the health risks including concussion and brain injuries. He discusses traffic issues, toxic runoff, and flooding issues that would also arise. He ended his comments by telling the Council while running on a field that may not be the best is better than not at all because you are on a hospital bed. He stated this vote will set a precedent for fields to come in the future.

Greg Lehmborg, 528 Grove Street, made comments in reference to the CME Associates report, stating the scope of the study was narrow by design that only focused on the Edison School property, despite pleas for a townwide comprehensive study. He feels this type of study would of benefitted the residents and all users of the fields. He asked the Council what would have been a downside of a comprehensive study. He feels the CME report has a limited scope and assumptions that was designed for a predetermined outcome. He stated the report highlighted several negatives of natural grass fields without addressing the same issues with artificial turf.

He voiced that artificial turf negatives were ignored and worst-case scenarios for natural grass fields were used as assumptions. Low Level of playing hours were assumed which were not reflective of modern field management practices. He continued to say, meanwhile, best case assumptions were implemented for artificial turf fields most notably the frequency of carpet replacement was set at twelve years while playable hours were assumed more than 50% higher than current use at Sid Fey-Houlihan. He feels those fields are already in need of replacement for the second time in seventeen years. He continued to speak on the cost differences of natural grass fields and artificial turf and feels there are many flaws in the CME report. Mr. Lehmberg explained natural grass fields would cost less and require less maintenance. He is not impressed with the report and feels it fails overall. He continues to speak about environmental issues with artificial turf. He does not understand why the Council is thinking of making this decision.

Jean Lehmberg, 528 Grove Street, commented during the Board of Education meeting earlier in the year she asked if Dr. Gonzalez, or the Edison, Lincoln, Jefferson, McKinley, or Tamaques School Principals had sent a letter to the parents of current and future Edison School students to let them know about the Edison School Field Project and the potential health risks and environmental impacts associated with artificial turf. She did not receive any answers and stated that eight months have passed, and south side parents still have not received any notification. She mentioned that sports teams and clubs have encouraged student athletes and parents to publicly support the Edison School Field Project. She reflected on an earlier Town Council Meeting where the room was full of student athletes of all ages, along with supportive parents, coaches, athletic trainers, and the athletic director. One athlete explained he and his peers are future D-1 commits who need artificial turf to get the best scouting opportunities. He then asked for a student advisory board be formed to advise the Town what students want. Mrs. Lehmberg stated that Mayor Brindle interrupted parents' public comments to thank the students that chose to leave the meeting before it ended. Later in the meeting, Mayor Brindle again thanked the athletes, commented on how much she enjoys children attend meetings. Mrs. Lehmberg continued to state nearly a year ago during a Town Council meeting, two students from the Westfield High School Green Service Community Club shared their research concerns about artificial turf fields and were not accompanied by support from teachers or a large group of peers. The student environmentalists raised many concerns about health and environmental concerns relating to artificial turf and urged the Town Council member to think about the long-term effects and implications. Mrs. Lehmberg stated Mayor Brindle did not recognize those students by name, recognize their commitment to environmental stewardship, thank them for participating in the Democratic process or invite them to be student liaisons to the Town Council, instead she lectured them. Mrs. Lehmberg mentioned comments made by Mayor Brindle about artificial turf that she feels is not true. She does not understand how the Council can vote on the Edison School Field project when the parents of the children who will be most impacted have not been told it is happening and students who have environmental concerns are too afraid to speak up.

Kyle George, 605 Short Hills Court, does not like the idea of artificial turf and feels it is not necessary. He grew up in an area where fields were natural grass and maintained through hard work and dedication. He also thinks the area of Town is highly congested and there has not been enough consideration given to how it will impact traffic in the area. He is also concerned with the lack of transparency and has heard rumors that this deal has been done for a while, agreements have been made behind closed doors with the Board of Education, and PILOT funds being dangled over the Board of Education if they did not agree with this project. He is very concerned with those rumors. He explained that many people have spoken at Town Council meetings and the Board of Education meetings and people want a fair shot to have their voices be heard.

Zoe McKelvey, 320 Harrison Avenue, does not live near Edison School but wanted to make comments on the project. She understands why the Board of Education would be interested in this opportunity since the Town would be funding the upgrades and improvements. She understands the athletes needing better fields, but she does not think it should be this proposal or nothing. She feels the CME report was flawed and would have to vote for a comprehensive upgrade to fields with a natural grass. She also does not agree with having lights in a residential neighborhood. She is also concerned with health and environmental risks with relation to artificial turf. She discussed that although the Department of Environmental Protection says it is legal does not mean it is the best situation or safest. She commented that although there might be differing opinions, she understands the Council is doing what they think is the best decision, along with the Board of Education. She also wanted to make comments on the timeline of the project and how the funds will not be immediately ready. She understands the Edison School Field project will not solve the playable hours issue and hopes the project can have grass fields instead. She urged Council if they are on the fence to vote no. She also congratulated Councilwoman Root for her election and thanked the Council for their service.

Jennifer Silva, 787 Carleton Road, wanted to send her sympathies to the previous speakers who have experienced health issues in their families or workplaces. She is in favor of the Edison School Fields project and has three children who have played sports or were in the Marching Band. She does not live far from the field and loves hearing the games, practices and children being outside. She has spoken to her daughter who has graduated already along with her friends, and they are also in favor of this project. Ms. Silva had also stated every injury her daughter had from playing sports has been on natural grass fields and feels injuries will occur no matter what the surface is. She mentioned during COVID-19 having access to turf fields was beneficial to the children and students as it provided a space to play, practice and be outside regardless of the weather. She stated Westfield is a residential Town, space cannot be created. Chatham and Summit are also residential Towns that have artificial turf and lights. Ms. Silva lives by 7-11 on Central Avenue and thought it was going to be horrific when it was going into the neighborhood,

and it was not as bad as she thought. She mentioned it was not that bad because the Town Council listened to neighbors and worked together to find the best solution. She does not think the proposed lights at the field would disrupt families due to angles, shielding, and the fact that they will turn off daily. She mentioned the dangers of children playing sports in the dark such as field hockey, track and field, and lacrosse. Ms. Silva explained with the implementation of these fields it will help create more space for the children to play without being on top of each other. It will elevate overuse and over congestion at Sid-Fey Houlihan. She stated if everyone is concerned about turf then they should not let their children play or continue to play sports because every town, college, and intermural sports play on artificial turf fields. She also feels by having artificial turf it will help the grass fields in different parts of Town the chance to rejuvenate and get to a playable condition.

Violetta Watson, 511 Edgar Road, has two children in elementary school, soon to attend Edison School. She has many concerns about artificial turf and the components from which they are made from. She feels there is a gap in the studies for turf and how it would affect an individual long term. There is no clear answer on long term effects. She did her own research on what other neighboring towns have done and commented this is an issue in Maplewood and Princeton. It is her understanding Maplewood approved installation of turf but after a petition of residents the Town put it to referendum to which it was rejected. She urges the Council to do the same. She also mentioned a lawsuit by the USA Women's Soccer Team that mentions artificial turf is a disadvantage to play on and causes more injuries. She feels Westfield is a Town that should be setting an example and not follow what other municipalities are doing and asks the Council to consider a rejection and let the residents vote on this topic.

Anthony Scaglione, 543 Washington Street, has heard comments made by other speakers regarding the Environmental Protection Agency, State Department of Environmental Protection and how they do not have any negative comments on artificial turf. Mr. Scaglione wanted to remind everyone about asbestos, DDT, smoking, and the 9/11 fund. He mentioned the government agencies let the 9/11 fund happen and the nation is now paying for it. At the time Christie Todd Whitman spoke on television there were no issues after 9/11 with the environment. Mr. Scaglione explained he has lost friends and family members after 9/11 due to the inhalation at the Trade Center. He does not agree with letting the EPA or DEP make the decisions as that is pushing it off to someone else and does not trust them. He also does not agree that artificial turf is safer than natural grass in terms of injuries. He stated it is now a known fact that turf has been identified as the main cause of non-contact injuries. Mr. Scaglione directed his comments to Mayor Brindle and stated she has not publicly answered about the details of trade studies both technical and financial and feels her research is very suspect. Mr. Scaglione then asked Councilwoman Mackey if she is to vote no on this issue the public would like to know why. Mr. Scaglione continued his comments by voicing that if people keep insinuating that the health implications are fake arguments, there will also be late night traffic, lots of noise, parking and

safety issues in an already over stressed residential neighborhood. He feels this is also very much about the neighborhood. He does not understand why the Town tries to preserve areas such as Brightwood Park and Roosevelt Middle School, but the Southside environment and quality of life is sacrificial. Mr. Scaglione asked Councilman Katz if he votes yes on this agreement, he better explain why the plan at Tamaques Park near his home was not as good as the plan at Edison Middle School. He feels this has been a scheme to bypass the voters who have previously voted down this type of project before.

Greg Kasko, 434 Everson Place, understands both sides of this issue and is very familiar with the dedication it takes for an athlete to progress in their careers. Mr. Kasko wanted to speak about transparency of the Town Council as previous speakers have commented it is lacking. Mr. Kasko has been coming to Town Council meetings for twelve years and the floodgates of transparency opened in 2018 when the current administration was sworn in. He discussed the ways the administration has been transparent including, watching meetings on Facebook, getting responses from emails, and email updates. He takes issue with anyone accusing this Town Council with not being transparent. Going back to the Edison School Field topic, Mr. Kasko does not believe lights belong in a residential area. He commented whether the Council votes for or against this, they have a tough job ahead of them as they will not, please everyone. He sympathizes with the families who have experienced cancer as he shared his family story. He stated there has been no study that shows that artificial turf has been directly related to cancer but at the same time there are athletes that have played on turf that have gotten cancer. He disagrees with many people since currently there are a lot of children playing on artificial turf currently, but no one complained when they were installed at Sid-Fey Houlihan or the High School. He feels it is a tough topic and the Town needs fields that are playable, and he hopes the Town Council makes a decision they can live with. He thanked the Council for their dedication and time.

Rich Pardo, 1109 Columbus Avenue, is the scheduler for the Westfield Soccer Association. He has been with the WSA for thirteen years and has also been working on the fields throughout that time as well. He explained that during his time, the grass fields are in the same shape they are currently in. He did recall upgrades to Sycamore Field and how it was beautiful for a short six-month window and then after constant use it was back to the way it was. He explained there are many children who play sports if not multiple sports and are on the fields all throughout the day. He explained the problem is there are not enough fields to accommodate this. In addition, Mr. Pardo is also a referee and has been on many other fields in different municipalities and can only recall a handful of fields he has been on that are not artificial turf that are in good shape. He feels natural grass fields are going to be a constant uphill climb that will never get better and the quality that is wanted. Turf provides consistency and will give the users what they want.

Brian Crawford, 795 Knollwood Terrace, stated there are a lot of fields in Town and a lot of fields that have not been maintained. He has spoken to some PAL families recently and they do not oppose grass fields, but they do not trust the Town to take care of those fields. He stated the evidence is before everyone by going to Tamaques Park and seeing the condition of the fields. Mr. Crawford has a problem with artificial turf and explained when he moved to Town the artificial fields were already in place. He stated the Town Council has a choice to make the fields better or worse. He understands the desire to do something expedient, politically he appreciates that, but his hope is that given the mountain of evidence the Council has been presented with over the past 16 months that they do the right thing. If the vote goes through Mr. Crawford is comfortable saying many residents provided a mountain of evidence to not put artificial turf and lights.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Brindle closed this portion of the meeting.

BILLS AND CLAIMS

On motion by Councilwoman Habgood, seconded by Councilwoman Root bills and claims were adopted unanimously:

RESOLVED that the bills and claims in the amount of \$1,716,864.21 per the list submitted to the members of this Council by the Chief Financial Officer, and approved for payment by the Town Administrator be, and the same are hereby, approved and that payroll warrants previously issued by the Chief Financial Officer be ratified.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Finance Policy Committee

The following resolutions, introduced by Councilwoman Habgood, seconded by Councilwoman Mackey, were unanimously adopted.

Resolution No. 252

WHEREAS, Premier Design Custom Homes LLC. placed the required cash bond of \$500.00 to cover the Road Opening Permit #16-063 for 1260 Rahway Avenue; and
WHEREAS, Premier Design Custom Homes LLC. is entitled to have this amount to be returned, and

WHEREAS the Town Engineer has inspected the roadway excavation and has found the excavation to have been properly repaired.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Treasurer be authorized to draw a warrant in the name of Premier Design Custom Homes LLC. for \$500.00 and forward to 405 Quantuck Lane, Westfield, N.J., 07090.

Resolution No. 253

RESOLVED that the Chief Financial Officer be authorized to draw a warrant in the amount of \$17.40 to the order of New Jersey Department of Health, P.O. Box 369, Trenton, New Jersey for Dog Licenses issued by the Town Clerk for the month of October 2022.

Resolution No. 254

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Treasurer be authorized to refund the following fees to the following individual via credit card:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Scott Saltzer	Withdrew	Adult Pickleball/Session 2 Patty Saltzer	\$85.00 Credit Card
Jillian McGovern	Class Refund	Youth Pickleball/Session 1	\$23.40 Credit Card
Heather Bloch	Class Refund	Youth Pickleball/Session 1	\$23.40 Credit Card
Diane Camera	Withdrew	Adult Pickleball/Session 2	\$75.00 Credit Card

Resolution No. 255

RESOLVED that the Treasurer be and he hereby is authorized to draw warrants to the order of the following persons, this being the amount taxes were overpaid for the years 2017 pursuant to the Tax Court of New Jersey:

Block/Lot

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
306/31	935 Minisink Way	2017	\$2,376.22
Valerie Hofer, Esq. Attorney Trust Account P.O Box 787 Montville, NJ 07045			

RESOLVED that the Chief Financial Officer be, and he hereby is authorized to draw warrants to the following persons, these amounts being overpaid for 2022:

<u>Block/Lot/Qualifier</u>	<u>Property Address</u>	<u>Quarter/Year</u>
4402/27	737 Norman Place	4 th /2022
Andrew Conley		\$3,921.28
4601/35	656 Willow Grove Road	3 rd /2022
Cecilia Nicolas & Thierry P Saint-Denis		\$6,120.74

Mail to:

Younghans & Burke, P.C.
Attn: Miki Leitner
141 Elmer Street
Westfield, NJ 07090

Resolution No. 256

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A.40A:4-87 (Chapter 159, P.L. 1948) provides that the Director of the Division of Local Government Services may approve the insertion of any special item of revenue in the budget of any county or municipality when such item shall have been made available by the law and the amount thereof was not determined at the time of the adoption of the budget, and

WHEREAS, the Director may also approve the insertion of any item of appropriation for an equal amount;

NOW, THERFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Westfield hereby requests the Director of the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the budget of the year 2022 in the sum of \$3,000.00, which is now available from the Plug-in America, Electrify America grant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the like sum be, and the same is hereby appropriated under the following caption:

General Appropriations
Public and Private Programs Offset by Revenues

Plug-in America/Electrify America \$3,000.00

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that one copy of this resolution be forwarded electronically to the Division of Local Government Services by the Chief Financial Officer.

Resolution No. 257

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A.40A:4-87 (Chapter 159, P.L. 1948) provides that the Director of the Division of Local Government Services may approve the insertion of any special item of revenue in the budget of any county or municipality when such item shall have been made available by the law and the amount thereof was not determined at the time of the adoption of the budget, and

WHEREAS, the Director may also approve the insertion of any item of appropriation for an equal amount;

NOW, THERFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Westfield hereby requests the Director of the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the budget year 2022 in the sum of \$10,000.00, which is now available from the Union County Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund – 2022 Greening Union County grant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the like sum be, and the same is hereby appropriated under the following caption:

General Appropriations	
2022 Greening Union County grant	\$10,000.00

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that one copy of this resolution be forwarded electronically to the Division of Local Government Services by the Chief Financial Officer.

Resolution No. 258

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A.40A:4-87 (Chapter 159, P.L. 1948) provides that the Director of the Division of Local Government Services may approve the insertion of any special item of revenue in the budget of any county or municipality when such item shall have been made available by the law and the amount thereof was not determined at the time of the adoption of the budget, and

WHEREAS, the Director may also approve the insertion of any item of appropriation for an equal amount;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Westfield hereby requests the Director of the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the budget year 2022 in the sum of \$36,477.23, which is now available from the Union County Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund – 2022 Kids Recreation Trust grant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the like sum be, and the same is hereby appropriated under the following caption:

General Appropriations	
2022 Kids Recreation Trust Fund	\$36,477.23

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that one copy of this resolution be forwarded electronically to the Division of Local Government Services by the Chief Financial Officer.

The following resolution, introduced by Councilwoman Habgood, seconded by Councilman LoGrippe was adopted by the following roll call vote:

Resolution No. 259

RESOLVED that the Chief Financial Officer be authorized to make the following transfer(s) in the 2022 budget accounts, where (S&W) refers to the Salary & Wages line item while (O/E) refers to the Other Expenses line items:

OUT

IN

CURRENT FUND

Local Cable TV Service (TV 36)

2-01-104-202 (O/E) 1,000

Collector of Taxes

2-01-105-101 (S&W) 6,000

2-01-105-203 (O/E) 2,000

Fire Hydrant Service

2-01-123-211 (O/E) 3,000

_____ _____
\$6,000 \$6,000

Yeas: Habgood Nays: Absent:
 Parmelee
 LoGrippto
 Katz
 Mackey
 Contract
 Dardia
 Root
 Mayor Brindle

Code Review & Town Property Committee

The following resolutions, introduced by Councilman Parmelee and seconded by Councilman Katz, were unanimously adopted.

Resolution No. 260

WHEREAS, the Town of Westfield along with the County of Union and the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO) encourages municipalities to participate in Operation Green Light in an effort to show support for veterans November 7th to November 13th as a reminder and commitment in ensuring that veterans know they are seen, appreciated and supported by their government; and

WHEREAS, the contributions and sacrifices of the men and women who served in the Armed Forces have been vital in maintaining the freedoms and way of life enjoyed by our citizens. Veterans continue to serve our community in the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, religious groups, civil service, and by functioning as County Veteran Service Officers in 29 states to help fellow former service members access more than \$52 billion in federal health, disability and compensation benefits each year;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Westfield joins the County of Union and NACo and NACVSO in participating in Operation Green Light from November 7th to

November 13 to honor our service men and women within Westfield to raise awareness for Operation Green Light and the sacrifices of our military men and women.

Resolution No. 261

WHEREAS, The Town of Westfield Planning Board adopted the Town's most recent Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan dated February 22, 2018, on March 5, 2018, with a 2021 Amendment adopted on June 7, 2021; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Westfield's Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan promotes an affordable housing program pursuant to the Fair Housing Act (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301, *et. seq.*) and the regulations of the Council on Affordable Housing (N.J.A.C. 5:94-1, *et. seq.*); and

WHEREAS, The Town of Westfield's approved Affordable Housing Trust Fund Spending Plan is part of the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and provides an allocation for and authorizes the use of funds from the Affordable Housing Trust fund, for among other things, use towards working with non-profit affordable housing organizations in the development of affordable housing to provide 20 additional affordable housing units, half for families, by December 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Westfield issued a Request for Proposals and Qualifications to Non-Profits Affordable Housing Organizations so those organizations could make a request to utilized the dedicated funds to help the Town reach its goal to provide the 20 additional affordable housing units; and

WHEREAS, Community Options, Inc. has requested funding in the amount of \$192,908 from the Town's Affordable Housing Trust fund to be used towards the development of a single-family group home with 4 units of special needs housing at 1753 Dakota Street (Block 5605, Lot 3); and

WHEREAS, the Town of Westfield's Housing Commission has reviewed the request from Community Options, Inc. and is recommending the award of funding; and

WHEREAS, the use of such funds as requested by Community Options, Inc. from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund is consistent with the Spending Plan; and

WHEREAS, adequate funds are available in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for use by Community Options, Inc.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Town of Westfield hereby authorizes the release of \$192,908 from the Town's Affordable Housing Trust Fund to Community Options, Inc. for the purposes set forth herein and in accordance with the Town's Affordable Housing Trust Fund Spending Plan, contingent upon execution of an agreement that the proper town officials be, and hereby are, authorized and directed to enter into with Community Options, Inc. which shall include at a minimum requirements that ensure that the property shall have 4 units of special needs housing and that there be a Declaration of Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions Implementing Affordable Housing Controls which will deed restrict the property in accordance with the Uniform Housing Affordability Controls, N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.1 *et. seq.*, which agreement shall be executed prior to the release of funding.

The following resolution, introduced by Councilman Parmelee, seconded by Councilman Dardia was adopted by the following roll call vote:

Resolution No. 262

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Westfield, County of Union, State of New Jersey (hereinafter referred to as the “Town”) has solicited bids for the construction and maintenance of a cell tower facility, and ancillary support equipment with simultaneous leasing and co-location of all qualified successful bidders at the same site, on the property known as Westfield Conservation Center, 1300 Lamberts Mill Road, otherwise known as Block 5303, Lot 1 in Westfield, NJ 07090; and

WHEREAS, the bid solicitation has been duly advertised by the Town in accordance with the provisions of New Jersey Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq., and the New Jersey Lands and Building Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12-1 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, one bid was received by the Town, from New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC (“AT&T”); and

WHEREAS, the bid documentation submitted by both bidders has been reviewed by the Town’s professional and administrative staff and found to be acceptable as to form and content; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 2022-__ (this Resolution), the Town Council of the Town of Westfield, County of Union, State of New Jersey (hereinafter referred to as the “Town”) awards AT&T, as the Lead Bidder, a five (5) year lease agreement, with four (4) additional, automatic five-year renewal periods, for the Lease of Real Property for the construction and maintenance of a cell tower facility and ancillary support equipment, with simultaneous leasing and co-location of all qualified successful bidders at the same site, on the property known as Westfield Conservation Center, 1300 Lamberts Mill Road, otherwise known as Block 5303, Lot 1 in Westfield, NJ 07090;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, this 9th day of November 2022 by the Town Council of the Town of Westfield, County of Union, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. That subject to the successful negotiation of a Lease Agreement, the Town awards to AT&T the bid as submitted, with exceptions, for the construction and maintenance of a cell tower facility and ancillary support equipment with simultaneous leasing and co-location of all qualified successful bidders at the same site, on the property known as Block 5303, Lot 1, located at 1300 Lamberts Mill Road, Westfield, New Jersey 07090.
2. The Lease Agreement shall be for no less than an initial annual rent of \$45,000, plus annual rent increases of 3 percent and such additional rent to be received by the Town from any co-locators. The term of the Lease Agreement shall be an initial term of five (5) years, commencing on the date which the Lease is fully executed by both parties. Upon expiration of the five-year term, the agreement shall automatically be extended for four (4) additional five-year terms, unless AT&T terminates it at the end of the then

current term by giving the Town written notice of the intent to terminate at least six (6) months prior to the end of the then current term.

3. The Mayor, Town Clerk and Town Administrator are hereby authorized to execute lease agreements, in a form acceptable to the Town Attorney, and any related documents, including, but not limited to, any necessary applications for the project, in accordance with the bid as accepted by the Town and the bid specifications.

Yeas: Habgood	Nays:	Absent:
Parmelee		
LoGrippo		
Katz		
Mackey		
Contract		
Dardia		
Root		
Mayor Brindle		

The following resolution, introduced by Councilman Parmelee, seconded by Councilwoman Root was adopted by the following roll call vote:

Resolution No. 262

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Westfield, County of Union, State of New Jersey (hereinafter referred to as the “Town”) has solicited bids for the construction and maintenance of a cell tower facility, and ancillary support equipment with simultaneous leasing and co-location of all qualified successful bidders at the same site, on the property known as Westfield Conservation Center, 1300 Lamberts Mill Road, otherwise known as Block 5303, Lot 1 in Westfield, NJ 07090; and

Councilman Katz Comments

First, I would like to take the time to apologize to Councilman Contract at the October 11th Town Council Meeting I made a statement regarding a meeting that took place between the members of the Finance Committee and CME Associates. I misspoke and said that we all agreed with the findings within that report, and we also did our own analysis and all came to the same conclusion. I was wrong for saying we all came to the same conclusion and meant to say that majority of the group felt that way and I apologize to Councilman David Contract speaking on your behalf.

As the liaison to the Recreation Commission, I have been a part of this project since the onset from the steering committee that was formed in February of 2020 through the latest comments that were read about the CME report. I have been a part of and have taken notes at every single meeting and presentation regarding the project. I have read all the emails pro and con, have heard all of the public comments and the public sessions and Recreation Commission Meetings, Town Council Meetings, and even went down the rabbit hole too many times online to do as much

research I could regarding this project. I have been up it and down it for nearing two years now and the decision I have made does not come hastily.

As a resident of Ward 4, I live equal distance between home plate of T2 in Tamaques Park and home plate of the JV baseball field at Edison School. I live one house away from the Robinson's Branch. I am a close neighbor of Edison Middle School. I can hear the band play, I see the creek when it rains in big storms, I hear it. I have had my basement flood three times in the past with my road being blocked many times a year for 5k runs.

I understand the concerns that residents who live near the fields have expressed, but I also know that some of my fondest memories of raising my son who is a freshman in college right now was walking with him hand in hand to flag football on those chilly fall mornings and riding our bikes to and from baseball practice at Tamaques Park when he was older. As a neighbor, I don't see these fields as being a burden or being inequitable, but rather a huge asset to our neighborhood. As I stated before, I have been up it and down, all around this project and I am a resounding yes. I do not think this will solve all our capacity needs, not by a long shot but it is a strong start.

I would like to this time to thank Jenn Gilman, Russ Howell from the Recreation Commission as they both dedicated countless hours to this project as well as Jim Gildea, Town Administrator for his thorough work in this complicated process.

Councilman Contract's Comments

I know it's not a surprise to anyone that I'm voting no on the Edison Shared Services Agreement, but I think it's important for the public, my fellow Council members, and members of the BOE to hear why with the hopes it influences their decision. Unfortunately, I do not think that is going to happen.

I was speaking a few nights ago with one of the students who spoke at the Council in late October in favor of fields and this proposal. He asked me why I was opposed to this plan. So I explained it to him:

I fully support the need for more fields. It's been way too long that the Town and BOE have not solved this issue. But picking the first shiny object that meets the town's needs without examining all viable options isn't the best path to take.

I believe that I was elected to solve town issues while being a good fiscal steward – which I reminded him is money that his parents have to pay whether its to fund the Town or school budgets. Eight to ten million dollars is a cost estimate which has been published in the CME report are ridiculously wrong. It does not matter if it is in the Council's budget or the Board of Education, it comes from the taxpayers.

And then I explained why I don't think this proposal makes good fiscal sense. There are many reasons, but these are the ones I highlighted to him:

This proposal is based on bad analysis. For example, the assumptions used in the CME report are don't pass my "smell test". For example, CME assumed that all costs would remain the same for

30 years. Seriously? They clearly forgot about inflation. Would you do an analysis at work assuming one number for the next 30 years for any cost or revenue. I think the answer is no. Why are we comfortable with this – I surely am not.

CME also didn't factor in that these fields are used every day by school groups until sundown. So, these fields don't offer as much incremental playing time as other options in town. They also conveniently forgot that there is more interest expense associated with the more expensive synthetic turf fields. There are plenty of other options in Town that cover more incremental capacity. We owe it to look at every option first and make sure these fields really do deliver.

CME also ignored that this proposal requires spending -- or more appropriately "wasting" -- \$2mm to add a turf field in the outfield of the existing JV baseball field. The reason – you have to turf the rest of this field because you can't have a part grass, part synthetic turf baseball field. This is not necessary and can pave 10-20 roads and add stormwater infrastructure the Town desperately needs.

CME also ignored the fact that part of the proposed turf fields lies in a 500-year FEMA flood hazard zone. I asked them directly if it did, and they said it didn't. I do not appreciate them not being honest with me. You might think that this isn't relevant. But a 500-year storm happened last year called Ida. And Ida caused \$150k of damages to Ridgewood's turf field and between \$10-\$20k of damages to Westfield's Sid Fey Houlihan fields. Were any of those potential costs worked into this analysis? Sadly, the answer is no. Additionally, the NJ DEP will be likely changing the state's storm water management standards in Spring 2023 which will reclassify 500-year flood hazard zones as 100-year flood hazard zones. Guess what this means? Higher stormwater mitigation requirements and costs – which weren't included in CME's analysis.

Lastly, CME's assessment ignores the giant risk of environmental contamination. If there's a storm like Ida and these turf fields flood which is a distinct possibility, the infill material could easily flow into the Robinson's Branch of the Rahway River – affectionately known as the Creek – which could cause an environmental disaster and costly clean-up. Was any cost assumption built in for this scenario? Nope again.

I could go on and on which I did in my letter to the editor two weeks ago. Honestly, CME's assessment is so shoddy, it's embarrassing, and I do not think we should pay them. If I presented it to the CEO where I work and whom I report to, he'd first laugh and then he'd probably fire me. I'm not an expert in fields (though I feel like one) but I am an expert in financial and business analysis, and I know the difference between good analysis and bad. And this is a good example of bad analysis.

So, I told the student this and I told him I want new fields as bad as everyone else in our community. But when we're talking about spending \$8 or \$9mm of taxpayer money, it better be well thought out and fiscally prudent. Which this plan isn't.

The only way for it to be is to first analyze every viable option with objective assumptions and then determine which is the best path forward. This hasn't happened despite repeated requests by the public and myself for the last 16 months.

I believe there is a far better path for us to take. Shelf this plan. Appoint a balanced and representative stakeholder group to evaluate all viable options for fields in town – including all viable locations and all viable field types including synthetic turf, newly constructed or refurbished grass fields, with or without lights. And include the appointment of a Sports Field Manager to ensure all grass fields are maintained properly.

Identify all viable options, cost them out using objective, industry standard assumptions and build a recommended plan to meet the town's full 7k+ playable hour deficit

If we did this, we might find that the town can gain more incremental playable hours at a lower cost per playable hour by building one synthetic turf field with lights in the 7 acres in Tamaques outside the oval as well as upgrading existing grass fields at several BOE locations plus hiring a full-time sports turf manager to rehabilitate all the grass fields in town. There's no way to know because none of these options were thoroughly assessed.

After explaining all of this to the student, he said "Wow, that makes a lot of sense". I hope this makes sense to you too -- the public and my fellow elected officials. And I hope your common sense tells you to vote "no" tonight so we can follow a better, more accurate, objective, thorough and fiscally prudent approach to solving our town's fields issue.

Councilwoman Habgood's Comments

I am voting yes on this tonight, I wanted to explain why. Tonight, there has been many assumptions on our lack of analysis and lack of evaluation of assumptions for this field and that is absolutely not the case. My "yes" vote tonight reflects my strong support for reliable and safe fields for kids and families in Westfield. We have all agreed that we have a deficit of fields, and for me, the magnitude of that deficit leaves us with only one right answer. The way that we achieve significant new capacity of reliable new playing hours is via turf and lights.

Turf and lights at Edison is a logical FIRST step in the many steps we will take in Westfield to add and improve fields across town. I want everyone to understand we have to start somewhere and cannot spend years doing analysis after analysis. You cannot have a professional organization prepare a report and then say you do not like it and ask for another report and more analysis because this Town needs and wants fields and we are going to start hopefully with Edison. As the Mayor mentioned in her letter we then have an opportunity to put more fields in Tamaques Park and then maybe after we have all of these fields we may have the luxury of putting grass fields in other places where we can rotate playing time on and off.

The vote tonight is to allow the Town to enter into a shared services agreement with the BOE, who also needs to vote for the same. After that there are still several steps, and I want to assure residents that in next part of the process, we will spec out the project to address the concerns that we have heard from many residents—and we will do this through the deployment of advanced turf

and light technology, by adequately addressing traffic and circulation flows, by providing for parking and drop off, and as required, by hold a stringent competitive bidding process to ensure we get the best price.

I would also like to comment on the CME report. I personally spent a significant amount of time with CME in the last few weeks asking questions about their report and seeking evidence and explanation for the assumptions they used. They provided them, but I also I looked at results of the analysis if different assumptions were used, including looking at the financing costs of the alternatives. You can close the gap between the costs per incremental hour of playing time between grass and turf, but in my opinion, there are no scenarios where grass is so much cheaper that we should choose it and ignore the importance of having those fields available for the sports that need them most—soccer, lacrosse, field hockey—the sports where the fields get a workout in every game.

Residents have helpfully provided us with lots of research on the topics of grass vs turf, and I've read them. I am comfortable that there are turf options available to us that are safe for users and the environment—made of products that aren't endocrine disruptors, have reduced rate of injury, and keep much cooler temperatures on the field. And I'd love to manage our deficit of fields by installing grass to solve the problem, but you can't get more than a couple of hundred hours of incremental play time per year at Edison with a grass solution.

The reports, if read carefully, tell us that grass works when it is part of a huge complex where there is grass and turf options and where most of the grass fields are used for baseball—a sport where you run on the dirt.....not on the grass.

I would also like to talk about some new turf options because there are options out there without polyurethane black backing. I have seen them, there are systems out there that use 2/3rds less pellets and options that do not use old tire crumb rubber. I understand the concerns that everyone has about health. I appreciate the fact that we might not know everything that is happening on the fields but why not have requirements on what these fields are going to be. We are going to spend time to make sure that the specifications that go into this process are well addressed.

I am also thrilled by the incremental opportunity for Westfield to add more fields at Tamaques as our second step. It is exciting to see the public-public partnerships that are front and center in both projects that aim to better serve our community at large through shared services and cooperative arrangements with our schools and the county.

When we soon get to our third and fourth steps in adding and improving fields in Westfield, our investment in safe and reliable turf at Edison will allow us the luxury of considering grass upgrades elsewhere in parks and school yards.

Thank you to all who have engaged in this process and help us every day make the best decisions we can for our community.

Councilman LoGrippe's Comments

My kids both grew up playing sports in Westfield. My wife and I have been on boards and coached many teams. Like everyone else has said, we do need additional field space. Just to be transparent, my children no longer go to Westfield schools. This is not involved in my decision process tonight. My son goes to Auditory Prep where they have a beautiful turf field while my daughter attends Mount Saint Mary's and plays soccer on a beautiful turf field.

This is a tough vote, but my issue is with the process and the way it was conducted over the past 16 months. I have heard both sides and have learned a lot of about turf like everyone else. I appreciate everyone's information and hard work.

This project will not produce the field capacity advertised anytime soon. CME had meetings with the Board of Education which was not conducted in public and the earliest we would see a ribbon cutting on these fields would be 2025. In addition, we have not seen the plan for the 7 ½ acres at Tamaques Park which was done by Union County in their parks study. Before we move forward, we should be inclusive and see what that plan entails.

My other concern is the resolution tonight as it does not create a shared service agreement between the Town and the Board of Education. It is just a resolution that authorizes Mayor Brindle to negotiate our requiring of our input of any oversight and transparency of the Council and public. The resolution makes no assurance that the residents' concerns raised over the past 16 months will be reflected in the agreement. None of the terms of the agreement are defined, there are no costs, no cost controls specified. Neither the scope, the materials, timeline, or any other aspect of the project. A draft agreement with more details was provided to the Board of Education which is not included in this resolution. The key question is why has this not been put forward for the Town Council to see.

These are my major concerns, and as I have stated this is a tough vote, but I will be voting no in its current form.

Councilman Dardia's Comments

First, I would like to thank all the Westfield residents who provided feedback about this specific project. I sincerely appreciate your passion, devotion and engagement in this process whether you are for or against the proposal. Many thanks, of course, to the Board of Education members and Superintendent Gonzalez, whose collaboration was not only vital, but historical. If this proposal is approved, this partnership between the Town of Westfield and the Westfield Board of Education will be the first ever for a project of this size and significance. Lastly, I would like to thank all residents, as always, for the privilege to serve this community.

So, when I started campaigning in 2017, I heard from parent after parent about the need for more recreational space for their kids. Families had moved to Westfield for our outstanding schools, but the athletic facilities didn't match the caliber of towns around us.

They were preaching to the choir. My own boys were stuck on uneven grass (and often mud) fields behind Tamaques Elementary or jockeying for time at Sid Fey Houlihan. Every away game was played on field that reminded us of what we lacked.

And, I've heard the pluses and minuses of turf solutions. There is certainly no perfect answer, but there are some good options. I learned this when I participated as a member of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee in 2018. I learned this even more when we hired experts to perform assessments and assessments of the assessments. This has all been done with 100% transparency – there's no question about it.

What we have arrived at is turf is less costly, lasts longer and will provide kids with safe and increased access and much needed capacity.

We must remember that Sid Fey Houlihan and Kehler fields are artificial turf. No one pulls their kids from the team because of it. When you send your kid to play at Ponderosa Fields in Scotch Plains or Wardlaw Hartridge in Edison, they are playing on turf and that turf also comes with an 8pm dinner and 9pm homework.

The Parks and Rec strategic plan included a vision – a vision to lead, innovate, and grow through recreational opportunities.

The Edison Fields project fulfills that vision. Moreover, better recreational facilities are a gift we give to our kids for years to come. We give them a place to perform in bands, in sports, in clubs. We give them a space to grow, participate, exercise, and socialize. It keeps our children engaged and connects all of us as a community.

Other towns around us have prioritized this because the benefits are obvious. There is no reason we cannot and should not do as well. By the way, I want to make it perfectly clear that no one forced my vote on this decision.

Councilman Parmelee's Comments

First, I would like to say that this was a difficult decision for me. On one hand, I'm the parent of lacrosse and football players. I have been on the sidelines of countless numbers of fields, both grass and turf lit, and unlit in Westfield, in other towns and states for nearly the past 15 years. I still have a few more years to go. While all that experience, travel, cuts, bruises, sprains and one broken leg has provided me with a substantial amount of firsthand experience that would recognize the benefits and detriments of both surfaces.

On the other hand, I also appreciate all the input provided by the community over the past 16 months. As I've said before I am constantly amazed by the impressive scientific and analytic talents, backgrounds, and skills of the residents of this town. I also appreciate all the various expert reports and analysis that have been provided in connection with their opposition to this project.

I have also considered and fully appreciated that this project as with any project of development here in Westfield, is going to have an impact on surrounding neighbors. So, here is where we all agree. Our town has a significant field capacity deficit and that is why I do support the Edison

Project, because based on what we need and the opportunities that are facing us right now, this is clearly the best plan. The alternative at Tamaques, the 2016 Tamaques plan was not a viable alternative as we have discussed in several times in instances before. It is ill conceived. It also involved turf and lights and only shifts the burden to a different neighborhood. So, in that reason, that 2016 plan does not make any sense.

Even Councilman Contract has said as much at the outset of our discussion about this 16 months ago that “this plan adds the most incremental field space to the Town versus other projects that were considered”. My conclusion to support this project is not based on an expert report, it is based on reality. I’ve seen and I know firsthand that turf provides substantially more playing time than grass. I do not need an expert to tell me that. That is the reality of where we live, it rains here in the Northeast, and you cannot use a wet field unless you want to destroy it. Even if it doesn’t rain. I was just at a lacrosse tournament at the Soccer plex in Maryland with all those grass fields and after a two-day tournament those fields were destroyed. Literally, after a two-day weekend tournament. That means the facility had to take those fields offline for several days to recover. We do not have that opportunity.

The other reality is that where we live in the Northeast, it is dark in our town by 7:30 P.M. That is prime practice time for about half of every year. So, if the goal is to increase capacity, improving a field currently a field that is currently underused, surfacing it with a material that can be used in all weather conditions and following all uses, lighting it so it can be used full time all while creatively dedicating some PILOT funds to benefit the Westfield Schools. It makes the only logical conclusions and the best solution for our Town right now is an artificial turf field. There is discussion of fiscal responsibility. Spending millions of dollars on a natural grass unlit field that we can only use half of the year just doesn’t make any sense. Also, unfortunately not building turf in Westfield is not going to keep our kids off it. That is also a reality. Whether practicing elsewhere, they’re practicing on turf in other Towns.

That said, among other things, this project as we’ve discussed does not cure our field deficit and I look forward to considering other field improvements in this town including possibility of the 7 acres in Tamaques Park and including installation of natural grass fields. The other thing we need to consider is the most advanced and recyclable options that are available on the market. The ones that are used recyclable plastics that are present in our everyday lives. Infill, that is safer and reduces surface temperatures and the use of recycled materials that are used as padding. We need to ensure that all the scheduling of the fields do not overlap. With traditionally well attempted competitions and events at Kelher and Edison School. We need to continue to monitor neighborhood parking issues and apply common sense adjustments to minimize the impact of the fields, just as we have done with the parking issues at Gumbert Rink. Obviously, we need to have a commonsense time to turn off the lights and we need to encourage Edison to allow kids to also play on the natural grass of the Varsity Baseball Field. There is criticism about the use,

saying it is fenced off but that proves the point that if it is fenced off to protect the natural grass of the field. If the kids cannot use it, then are you going to be able to sustain a natural grass field.

At the end of the day, ongoing analysis is another word for inaction. An inaction has just as much of an impact on residents in this town as an action may have and this is an act that I believe we need to take at this time. That is why I support the Edison Field Project.

Councilwoman Mackey's Comments

It is not always easy to make these decisions. Tonight, is not easy.

For 16 months we listened to residents express their opinions. Passionate, reasonable, researched.

There is agreement. We need more fields. We have for decades. The scaled back Edison plan is not perfect. I insisted upon a grass study field. I really wanted natural grass to be a viable option. Outreach commenced to communities who tried grass and I was dismayed that success was limited, especially after the drought this year, and could not handle our capacity issues.

I have colleagues to my left and to my right that I admire, like and respect. They have opposing interpretations of the CME report. I have had outreach from several scientists who presented differing opinions on the project. I believe that everyone involved is operating from an honest place of good intentions, but that even intelligent, researched people can arrive at different conclusions. Some of the most compelling arguments against turf was health and safety. Last week Councilwoman Habgood introduced me to a company that has a safer product w/o PFAS, a reusable carpet, is 28% cooler than traditional turf and is 100% recyclable.

I have anguished over this decision. I have spoken to numerous residents and deliberated for hundreds of hours. After 16 months of rigorous engagement and robust jousting amongst my council mates I am a conditional yes. I have already spoken with Mayor Brindle, and I expect permit-only parking for the Knollwood neighborhood. If the BOE advances this project I will take my seat and advocate to ameliorate the concerns of the neighbors. We are aligned that this project can only happen with substantial infrastructure constructed to address and correct the flooding we saw with IDA. I will continue to advocate for the holistic improvement of our parks including walking trails, bathrooms, and the addition of a dog park. I will advocate if pilot dollars are used to fund this field so will they fund the arts in the community.

I want to remind everyone that we are not just your elected officials. We are volunteers. We are residents. We are parents. I personally spent years driving my children to fields in other towns. I have listened to parents and students petition for the same in our town.

I am very grateful to everyone for participating in this process. And for me it was very influential to receive letters from 2 respected green team members, one with a PHD in chemistry advocate for the project. NO is easy. These decisions are not. We have had instances where residents approached the dais after the cameras have stopped rolling and were hostile and intimidating to the Mayor and council

members. This is NOT O.K. We are neighbors and community partners and while we may not agree on everything, we should never lose sight of that.

Councilwoman Root's Comments

It's been a difficult issue for our community for more than two decades. It's forced our children to travel all over the place just to practice. And many of us who have traveled with our children to other towns for games realize how inadequate our own athletic fields are in comparison.

Well, today that ends. Today we begin the process that will create a world class field for our children in Westfield. I understand and appreciate all the concerns that residents raised, and I want to thank them for reaching out to me over the last few weeks.

In addition to reviewing the reports provided by our own experts, I've done my own research on this topic. I've come to the conclusion that there is no perfect solution. But what we are voting on today is a good first step towards addressing the field shortages that we face in our community.

Synthetic turf gives us more opportunities for playing time that we are unable to get with natural grass. I also want to make sure that the turf we install is the most environmentally friendly available on the market today. I will ask for the reassurance that any future bid spec will include requirements to use the most state of the art environmentally sensitive materials.

So, I'm voting yes today. I know this doesn't solve all our field capacity issues, but I'm looking forward to continuing to work with the BOE to our partnership so we can provide additional capacity for our athletes and our marching band students.

Mayor Brindle's Comments

I hope everyone has seen by the thoughtful comments from the dais tonight that this has not been a decision that any one of us arrived at lightly and all of us arrived at our decisions independently. When people talk about what research we have done, as you can see, we have read all of the reports that you've read but we've also reached out to our own contacts to get a great sense of our own assessments.

We are all fiscal stewards, environmental stewards, but we are also all trying to be problem solvers. There is a reason why this has not been solved for 20 years. I laughed when someone said that this was politically expedient because if it was it wouldn't be happening. There is a reason why it hasn't happened for 20 years, because it is not a politically expedient or easy decision to make. The easiest decision to make is to do nothing. That is not why any of us are up here and that not what we're committed to doing.

It is no surprise I am a big supporter of this project. In addition to relying on the Council of my very wise and informed colleagues, I have also done a lot of research. The one thing that no one mentioned tonight which is important to me that is the partnership with the Board of Education. We talk about Tamaques, but that does not solve or deliver anything for the kids and Westfield athletes. Granted, we are the Town and we do not have an obligation to do that, but we do have an obligation to deliver the best services for our taxpayers. To the degree that we can use your

tax dollars more efficiently to deliver better services that also support town teams, the high school teams, student athletes, and the Marching Band, etc. I think its important to do that. I put a high value on the fact that this project delivers benefits to the schools as well do others on this dais.

When you look at incremental capacity, the Board of Education is already using some of it and the Town would receive whatever is left. But the fact that the school district is going to benefit from now a reliable, consistent field that will benefit their students, fantastic. Another very important point, is gender equity. This will be great for field hockey. We are the only municipality in the County that does not have turf for their field hockey. The girls field hockey program had a championship run and they are searching for night fields to play on turf in other towns outside of Union County so they can have the game experience to make sure they win in the championship. That is just wrong. I feel like we did the same thing at Gumbert with the Ice Rink. The girl's hockey exploded because of that, since girls always get the last piece of ice time and field hockey is getting the last availability of turf. I think if we have the opportunity to create some gender equity for our female athletes, we should be doing that.

This project does solve for the largest capacity issue initially. This does not solve all of our field deficiencies and that's why even waiting to see what the County is going to do at Tamaques does not matter because that's not going to solve it. Together, hopefully that will get us a good start. I also want to mention, if anything can be done at Tamaques in the seven acres of scrub brush, it will be artificial turf because of the environmental sensitives. There are other improvements the Town would like to do in that location, including a permanent ice rink, fix the parking for the weekends, put a new entrance, and exit off of Lamberts Mill Road to help the traffic circulation for safety. Whatever will be done, will be additive and hopefully enhanced to what will happen at Edison School.

I have also come to the conclusion that the notion that the Town could build and should build and maintain a high quality, multipurpose network of grass fields is not practical nor is it fiscally feasible or in my mind, responsible. I have reached out to my entire network of Mayors asking about this including Maplewood, which the Mayor wishes they had turf fields. I have not found one municipality in New Jersey of our size that has done that successfully.

There are a lot of bad municipal grass fields everywhere and there is a reason for that because municipalities are not equipped to provide the ongoing maintenance that grass fields require. One year of bad maintenance on grass fields will ruin the entire investment. In an economic downturn, when we are looking at cutting costs, and it is between police officers and maintenance on a grass field, I can tell you what decision is going to be made. For us to guarantee the public that we're going to have these beautifully maintained grass fields all over town in perpetuity, I could not tell you that truthfully. As so many have said turf fields provide consistency and reliability, which is what we need.

To Councilman LoGrippto's comment about the resolution, the resolution we are doing tonight authorizes the Mayor or administrative officials to sign a shared service agreement which is standard practice in a town. This has been done for over 20 years. The resolution for Gumbert Ice Rink is the same, it authorizes the shared service agreement. We are modeling what we have

previously done with the expectation that we are going to address the concerns for the neighbors. We have a track record of doing that successfully.

I have been very troubled by the implications and accusations by some that the information that we have received is false or biased. It is not and everyone draws their own interpretations of data to draw their own conclusions. This has been nearly a year and a half of a lengthy input process and just because we may disagree on how we interpret information we must all agree that we are all operating with good intentions. No one on this dais deserves to be discredited for the way we interpret information or data. We would be undermining our trust and respected Town professionals and I do not accept that either. We all recognize that some say more analysis is required but at some point, we need to make an informed decision based upon the tremendous due diligence that has been done. We can get bogged down by analysis, paralysis indefinitely. The time is now.

I thank everyone who has reached out and given very articulate analysis and reasons why you oppose this, we have heard you and we have listened. Your feedback has been heard and it does not mean we did not take this into consideration. I am very grateful because your feedback and input has challenged us to make sure that we are more informed as well. I promise we are going to keep the lines of communication open. All we are doing is voting on the shared service agreement tonight, there is still a lot of information about design and engineering that will help mitigate any impact on the neighborhood. I stand by the process and very much look forward to bringing new fields to Westfield that are worthy of our students and athletes and our community.

Yeas: Habgood
Parmelee
Katz
Mackey
Dardia
Root
Mayor Brindle

Nays: LoGripio
Contract

Absent:

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn, made by Councilwoman Mackey and seconded by Councilman Dardia at 11:37 p.m. was unanimously carried.