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**REGULAR MEETING**  
**August 17, 2015**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, August 17, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Hemmann, Hurley, Kotkin, Martino, Manousos, Rell, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Barry, and Chairperson Montinieri.

Also Present: Mike Turner, Town Engineer, Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, Chief of Police, James Cetran, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk

Councilor Hurley led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**HEARINGS**

None

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

**PUBLIC**

Paul Copp, 100 Executive Square, speaking as Chairman of the Independence Party said the party will be running a full ballot with Bob Young as Campaign Manager. They will meet at 11am in the library on August, 21<sup>st</sup>. He encouraged anyone interested to come to the meeting, or see himself or Bob Young. He stated he was concerned about the agenda item regarding the temporary use of the parcel of land between the church and Rite Aid. The last time this land was discussed was when the town was going to sell it. At that time the neighbors were concerned about the safety of the area with children walking to and from the middle school and Corpus Christi school. He believes it would be an eyesore. On the issue of the Board of Education needing more room for their transitional space, every time he has been to the Pitkin Center, it has not been full.

John Miller, 45 Highland Street, commented he objects to the tax abatement for builders of the Ridge Road apartments. He does not understand why the Town is doing it and thinks there would be plenty of builders willing to do this work without incentives. He asked if the neighbors on Ridge Road know that the plan is to build a 70-unit apartment complex and asked if the plan is in the town hall somewhere. He thinks there is a lot more to do before talking tax abatements. He doesn't think this is a good location for a 70 unit apartment complex which could only be served by a driveway on Ridge Road. He urged the Council to proceed with caution on leasing

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town land on the Silas Deane for temporary construction purposes. Rules need to be in place as to where contractors can drive, what equipment will be allowed and what hours, etc.

Philip Arghmann, 26 Stillman Walk spoke about a traffic situation on Hartford Avenue around Standish Park and between Nott Street and the school administration building. Vehicles have been parking half on the shoulder, half on the street, or entirely on the street which makes Hartford Avenue a one-way street. He has seen cars parked on the sidewalk. The grass is destroyed and the curb worn down. There is no need for the vehicles to park in this area because there is plenty of parking on Garden Street and behind the school administration building. The people who park in this area do not live in Wethersfield, they live in south Hartford. When he was walking on Hartford Avenue sidewalk going from the administration building toward Nott Street one day, a car suddenly came up on the shoulder, stopping about a foot from the sidewalk. If someone were to be struck, the Town of Wethersfield could be held culpable because an accident would not have happened if the Town did not allow parking in this area. He thinks 'No Parking' signs on the lampposts would be the easiest way to do this. This is supposed to be a neighborhood park; you don't have to provide parking to it.

Debbie Watson, 635 Nott Street, has been a resident for 30 years and asked that the Council consider something other than mulch sealing the next time roads are due for repair. She stated that it has ruined the air quality on Nott Street, especially those with asthma. All the dust is keeping her and her neighbors inside.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, commented that at the last meeting the Council stated that the work being done by the MDC would be inspected by someone from the town. MDC did work in front of his house for about a week and a half and did a great job. The MDC had their own inspector but he never saw someone from the town inspecting the work they were doing. Spoke regarding the stop sign on Morrison Avenue. The last time they did a traffic study, 85% of traffic went 35 mph, which means 15% went above 31mph. The intersectional site distance, after the sidewalk construction, on Morrison looking west to Tifton is now 232 feet which doesn't meet the requirements for 25 mph. Hillcrest Avenue has half the amount of cars as Morrison Avenue and they have 2 stop signs.

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Road, spoke about the Dial-a-Ride service. Every March, people from Dial-a-Ride, Social Services and the Disabled Committee liaison meet. Suggestions were made at this year's meeting and nothing has been done. He spoke to Social Services about a suggestion from seniors to move the BigY shopping trip day from Wednesday to Tuesday because on Tuesdays seniors get 5% off at BigY. If the Town Council liaison can't be at a meeting, he would like to see a representative be appointed to take their place. He also spoke about sidewalks. On Wells Road near Gus's barber shop there was a chip in the sidewalk last year which is now missing completely, causing people to ride in the street to get by. This should have

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been addressed. There used to be a sidewalk inspector who would mark areas of concern so the town could take action, he hasn't seen these marks in a long time.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, said he agrees with Mr. Miller regarding the 70 proposed units on Ridge Road. He doesn't know if the 70 units are viable long-term in Wethersfield with all the people who are leaving the state. Regarding Savage Park, he did not see anything on the agenda about a legal binding contract between the Town and the contractor or that Planning and Zoning had reviewed and approved the proposed use. He also did not see anything on the agenda about a rental fee, digging, scheduling, environmental reviews, or posting a bond to protect the Town and stated he hopes the Town Manager will address these questions. He thinks using this land is just as bad as selling it. He suggested the land near Ocean State Job Lot is already being used for construction vehicles and this contractor should go someplace like that. The same contractor rented the Kezia Farm and left stones on the property when they left. The Board of Education is asking for rental space on the Silas Deane Highway for approximately 10 students. The cost of the lease for the first 3 years is \$48,750 per year, in years 4 through 6 it is \$63,750 per year and in years 7 through 10 is \$75,000 per year. This is a lot of money when we have many buildings in town we could put students in (e.g., Town Hall, school administration building, Keeney Center). Urged the Mayor to vote no and turn this down.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, stated that it would be a good idea for Councilors to speak into their microphones so people watching at home can hear them. He went to the Town website to find out where to watch the meetings and could not find the information. Also stated that he Commissions and Committees are not current on the website. The Nature Center's website still has the name of the previous Director listed. The Town website is hard to use and is not effectively communicating information.

## COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Martino reported that the Economic Development Committee met last week. The former convalescent home on Jordan Lane was discussed. Also discussed Church Homes on Ridge Road 75 units (1 and 2 bedroom), which is on the agenda tonight. Final language on the demolition of the former Weight Watchers building is with the owner's attorney and will be moving forward soon. The signs for Heritage Walk have been staked out and granite delivered; finish date scheduled by October 1<sup>st</sup>. Bids for the intersection of Church and Main St. have closed and staff is reviewing.

Councilor Martino reported that the Infrastructure Committee met last week with State engineers and architects about the overpass on Route 5&15 and their revised drawings are in the packet tonight. Due to a rollover accident that occurred there, the knee wall will be taken down and replaced with a fence; utilities will be moved to another wall.

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Councilor Martino reported that Public Works Committee met with the energy savings consultant. Bids were received from 3 vendors. The committee asked staff to go let them know at the September meeting which buildings should be audited.

Councilor Hemmann reported that the Shade Tree Commission met in August. There is interest by the town's Bud and Blossom Club, through a state grant, to plant a donated oak tree in town.

Councilor Hemmann reported that the Housing Authority meeting has been postponed. A grant was received for the Devlin Housing renovation.

Deputy Mayor Barry reported that the Building Committee met. Significant progress has been made; have been assured the cafeteria and kitchen areas will be open as well as administration and guidance. Science, English and Chemistry classrooms will be on-line. Plan for open house before school starts but may be the week after that. Pool air quality came back negative with additional tests that came back negative today. There were 3 change orders from the PCB contractor for abatements on 3 separate floors.

#### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Kotkin complimented town staff for work on Mill Woods, the swimming area engineering that prevents sand run-off during storms seems to be working. He complimented the lifeguards at the pond - they are doing regular drills and paying attention to what is going on, particularly the head guard. The Webb courts are getting a lot of use, complimented town staff who worked on this.

Councilor Martino stated that Farmington Bank and Old Wethersfield Country Store both held business after hours and there is one scheduled for tomorrow night at Chips. A couple weeks ago the Youth Employment graduation was held in the council chambers. Erica and Colleen Keene did a great job with the kids and should be commended. The children went to various businesses to learn what they do as well as learn how to write resumes and get a job. A couple of the graduates have since gotten jobs. There was a retirement party for Officer Brent Bowman, wish him well in his retirement. He commended the police and fire departments on a super job with the National Night out; it was very well attended. The playground at Hanmer School looks great.

Councilor Roberts stated last Thursday there was a dedication of a memorial bench in front of the police station for Officer Dave Scales who passed away last year. Lieutenant Scales was well loved in town and this is a very nice addition to the front of the police station for people to have a quiet moment.

#### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

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Town Manager Bridges stated the town received a grant for rehab of the Devlin Senior Housing project. Kate Forcier of the Housing Authority has been very motivated and done a tremendous job with the buildings in town.

A speed study was done again on Morrison Avenue at the end of July. There were 2,305 cars in the study, average cars per hour was 22 cars. Average speed was 19.7 mph, there was one car that went 53mph during the study period. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile was 26 mph.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation did a presentation on the upcoming rehab of the bridge on Ridge Road. As Councilor Martino stated, the knee wall is a traffic hazard and will be taken out.

#### TOWN CLERK COMMUNICATION

Town Clerk Sassano stated the election is November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

#### COUNCIL ACTION

##### ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS FOR ACTION

Councilor Hurley moved to “**APPOINT JENNIFER WOLF, 345 WOLCOTT HILL ROAD, TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMITTEE EFFECTIVE 8-17-2015 TO 6-30-2017, TO FILL A VACANCY**” seconded by Councilor Rell:

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

##### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

##### OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Martino moved to “**GRANT A TAX INCENTIVE OF A 100% ABATEMENT (ABOVE CURRENT TAXES ON THE PARCEL) THROUGH CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROJECT AND CONTINUING TWO YEARS FROM THE DATE OF FIRST ALLOWED TENANT OCCUPANY PER THE TAX INCENTIVE POLICY OF THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD AND CONTINGENT UPON THE COMPLETION AND ACCEPTANCE OF A TAX INCENTIVE AGREEMENT IN FORM AND SUBSTANCE ACCEPTABLE TO THE TOWN MANAGER AND TOWN ATTORNEY**”, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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Town Manager Bridges stated that this is the first application in quite a while for an apartment complex. It is located behind the condominiums on Ridge Road. The project will have to go through Planning and Zoning to get the proper permit approvals, notice and hearings. What is happening tonight is about the upfront economics and interest of the project.

Town Planner, Peter Gillespie came up to speak on the proposal. He displayed the site plan with the layout of the property. Mr. Gillespie stated that the property has been vacant for about 15 years. It has been subject to at least 3 different approvals by the Planning and Zoning Commission, most recently about 5 years ago for an assisted living project. The property currently can be described as blighted; it is located behind a condominium building so cannot be seen from the street. It is zoned for multi-family. The proposal would consist of about 70 (two-thirds 2-bedroom and one-third 1 bedroom) residential, multi-family, market rate units. Amenities would include a fitness center and multi-purpose room for the residents. The building is 3 stories, about 80,000 sq. ft. and he anticipates it taking a year and a half to develop. The last market rate apartments built in town were the Village apartments, 25 years ago. A feasibility study was done by the developer which shows a positive market response to the project. Based on the tax assessors' analysis, it is believed the project will generate more than \$190,000 in property taxes annually, which would put it in the top 10 taxpayers in the community. The developer's request is for a 2 year tax incentive at a rate of 100% for each of the two years. During the construction phase taxes would remain at their present rate, about \$14,000 per year. The value of the tax abatement for the two years is estimated at \$380,000. Analysis done for the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> year estimate the property taxes generated in that period to be \$1.7 million with motor vehicle taxes of approximately \$120,000. There is a town committee which consists of the Town Manager, Finance Director, Assessor, Town Planner and Economic Development chairman that reviews these types of proposals. The committee met twice to review this project and unanimously agreed to support the recommendation in front of the Council today.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there has been any outreach to the residents of Toll Gate Road, as this property is in their backyards. Mr. Gillespie stated that the outreach to date has been to existing condominium owners. Homeowners on Toll Gate have been involved historically in the development proposals for this property and have had some concerns. The site layout of this building would be closer to the Berlin Turnpike and Village apartments. There will be a public review process through the Planning and Zoning Commission, Design Review Commission and Wetlands Commission.

Councilor Kotkin asked about traffic onto Ridge Road. Mr. Gillespie stated there is a semi-circular traffic route around the front of the building. This development will utilize the northern existing curb cut on Ridge Road which will have to be expanded to accommodate the traffic generated.

Councilor Kotkin asked if this will be sub-divided from the condominium. Mr. Gillespie stated

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it would be sub-divided as part of the project. This development will have its own access onto Ridge Road.

Councilor Kotkin stated that we are short quite a lot of money on back taxes on this property and asked what guarantees we have that we will be collecting back taxes. Mr. Gillespie stated that existing tax policy requires all back taxes be current before entering into an agreement. The outstanding tax balance on this property is approximately \$30,000-\$31,000 (about 2 years' worth of taxes), which the existing property owner is responsible for.

Councilor Kotkin stated that he went to look at the property and the cottages are missing windows, doors, roofs are collapsing and weeds are growing 8 feet high; it is public safety and health hazard in its current condition. He thinks the residents in this area would probably welcome the development as opposed to what is there now.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the previous developments that fell through were looking for state subsidies. Mr. Gillespie answered that there have been several previous projects including apartments, condominiums and most recently an assisted living project, which fell through because they could not find an operator on the development side. The condominium owners and residents are supportive of this project.

Deputy Mayor Barry asked how many structures are there now. Mr. Gillespie answered some buildings have been demolished or partially demolished but estimates there are 4-5 structures. Town Manager Bridges said there was a building torn down about 2 years ago. Mr. Gillespie stated these buildings formerly were retirement homes for priests.

Councilor Hemmann stated that the Council takes giving tax abatements seriously, with the last one given in 2009 to the assisted living facility proposed on this same property. Mr. Gillespie stated there was a small tax abatement of a few thousand dollars given to the dental lab on the Silas Deane.

Councilor Hemmann asked if it is the normal process to grant tax abatement prior to the plan going through Planning and Zoning and being purchased. Mr. Gillespie answered yes, the development group is determining if this is a project they want to pursue and need to know if the community is going to support their request for a tax incentive or not so they can decide if they are going to move forward.

Councilor Hemmann asked if it is in the best interest of the Town if it turns out there is not public support for this project after Council has already given abatement. Mr. Gillespie answered that this development group has presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission to get their feedback and see if the project would have support. Mr. Gillespie has been working with this development group for 5 or 6 months and stated they have already done a lot of their own due diligence to get to this point but feel the margins on this project are such that they need

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some financial support from the community for the first couple of years.

Councilor Hurley stated he just heard about this project last week, and it would be nice to hear from the community surrounding this area to see what they have to say before deciding to give tax abatement.

Councilor Rell stated that the traffic coming out of a 70 unit commuter apartment complex would probably be substantially greater than traffic coming out of an assisted living facility and more traffic study may be needed. The one entrance/exit from the existing horseshoe-shaped driveway may need to be re-worked. Having also just heard about this project less than a week ago, he would like to hear the concerns of citizens.

Mayor Montinieri stated that this group has met with the Town for some time and started out with a much more significant request for abatement, which was negotiated down to this current proposal. This group has a stellar reputation on work done around the state. He supports this motion; it is the first step in letting the developer know the town supports the abatement in making the equation work for them so they can proceed. One reason he supports this is to make Wethersfield more attractive to young adults. The issue he hears about from other developers looking at Wethersfield's demographic, is that post-college age students do not have a place to come back to. Public input will happen but only after the Town makes a commitment for tax abatement. The area is terribly blighted and this group is 100% committed to the project but need this commitment up front from the Town. The tax advantage for the Town is significant and does not pose significant risk to the community. The Town Manager, EDIC, Planning and Zoning all support this and he urged the Council to support it.

Councilor Manousos said there has been lack of discussion and transparency on this project. If abatement is voted on tonight without input from residents it is like saying we don't care what they think. He asked what the original abatement the developers asked for. Town Manager Bridges stated it was 100% for 7 years. He questioned if 100% abatement is actually necessary because he hasn't seen a development or operating pro forma to be able to make that determination. He is all for development but four days' notice is not enough to determine if this is a good deal or a bad deal. He suggested withdrawal of the motion until proper vetting with input from neighbors.

Town Manager Bridges stated the project will go through all the Planning and Zoning requirements, but the Council's responsibility tonight is to decide if an incentive should be granted to encourage the developer to do the project. Destruction and clean-up of the site will be costly. He can understand that, on the Planning and Zoning side, public hearings are critical but from the economic development side this is the recommendation.

Councilor Martino stated he didn't know much about this project either but he went to look at the

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area today. It is definitely blighted property. He thinks the residents in the area would be more than happy to see a change over what is there. The only thing being done tonight would be giving the developer our approval to go through the process; there is no guarantee that the project will go through. Planning and Zoning does a good job and will take care of listening to resident's concerns, traffic studies, etc. He is going to vote for this because he thinks it is good for the tax base.

Deputy Mayor Barry stated he is in favor of the abatement. Transparency will be hashed out through Planning and Zoning. This is an exciting opportunity to develop an extremely blighted property.

Councilor Kotkin asked if, under the agreement being voted on, the taxes are fixed at \$14,000 during the development period. Right now we are collecting nothing, if this project is approved, we would collect the back taxes and \$14,000 per year during development. Upon completions, we would continue to collect the \$14,000 per year, plus motor vehicle taxes. Mr. Gillespie stated that, after the 2 year abatement period, the taxes would go from the \$14,000 to approximately \$205,000 per year based on the numbers we have.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Council's role is to look at the economics of this, not the site plan. Mr. Gillespie stated there is a lot of work, such as design and layout of the building, traffic and parking, that still needs to be done. That process is a public one and subject to at least 3 Boards and Commissions. Councilor Kotkin stated this is in the best interest of the Town and he will be supporting it.

Councilor Hemmann asked if the tax abatement becomes effective once the building reaches full occupancy. Mr. Gillespie stated it becomes effective once they have been issued a Certificate of Occupancy, whether or not they have full occupancy.

Councilor Hemmann stated she feels pressured to make a decision when she just received the information packet on Thursday evening. She is disappointed we didn't act on the blight conditions or have the Health Department take a look at it. She is not comfortable with five days' notice.

Councilor Manousos asked if there is a reason the Council has to rush this through on four days' notice. Mayor Montinieri stated that the developers are sitting here and this has been discussed for many months.

Councilor Manousos said we really haven't. With other properties, such as Savage Park, we had hearings, and then when the public was invited to speak, it was discovered that the neighbors were against it.

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Mayor Montinieri clarified that, as public officials, we are all interested in having public input and will have plenty of public input on it after the abatement. We also have an obligation as elected officials to give the public an opportunity to have development which brings tax dollars back in.

All Councilors present voted. The motion passed 5-4-0, with Councilors Hemmann, Hurley, Manousos and Rell voting NO.

Councilor Martino moved to **“AUTHORIZE VMS CONSTRUCTION THE TEMPORARY USE OF THE PARCEL KNOWN AS SAVAGE PARK FOR MDC PROJECT NO. 2014B-26 UNTIL DECEMBER 15, 2015. TIME CAN BE EXTENDED WITH THE APPROVAL OF TOWN COUNCIL”**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Mayor Montinieri stated that the Council received feedback voicing concern over this project and invited Victor from VMS Construction to clarify his thoughts on why he was considering this location.

Town Engineer, Mike Turner explained that, as part of their capital improvement program, MDC is replacing water mains on Bird Road, Chamberlain Road, Somerset, and a portion of the Silas Deane from Nott Street north in front of the police station. Victor Serrambana’s firm, VMS Construction, was the low bidder on the project. Victor reached out for help looking for a storage area for the pipe that was somewhere near the middle of the project. The Savage Park area is one that would work for him and he has submitted a letter requesting to use that area.

Victor Serrambana from VMS Construction came up to speak. He stated that on the Kezia Farm project, his company kept their end of the deal, they restored the property and vacated on the agreed upon date. The Kezia’s are happy with the work done. For this current project, the Savage Park site was ideal because it is adjacent to Somerset, where a third of the work is being done. He wanted a site to be able to transport materials without going through other neighborhoods where work is not being done. He did not know the history of this property that he has been hearing tonight. He wanted to address some of the concerns he heard at the meeting tonight: bonds with the town are expected and done all the time and he has no problem getting them. He has done rental agreements with other towns in the past. His company carries over \$1 million in environmental pollution coverage. He stated he has known Mr. Turner for 20 years, he takes his reputation and quality of his companies work to heart. This is about a \$2 million project, the size of the piles and amount of activity is not anywhere near the scale of the Kezia Farm project.

Mayor Montinieri stated the Council is concerned about this location’s proximity to a neighborhood. He thinks Council can help locate a more suitable property at a low cost and asked what a reasonable window of time would be for the Council to assist in locating another property. Mr. Serrambana stated that waiting for the Council to discuss this was one of the

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things effecting his start date. Construction will begin at the end of this week and a new storage location is needed as soon as possible.

Mayor Montinieri stated he thinks the Council can be some help in finding a suitable location other than the Savage Park location; hopefully by the end of this week. Mr. Serrambana stated if he thought there was a more suitable location to avoid a lot of truck traffic through other area he would have pursued those. He is just trying to get the work done. Safety is of great concern and the more neighborhoods they have to travel through the more risk.

Mayor Montinieiri stated that the issues with this site are the neighborhood usage and the visibility of construction equipment from the road. He stated the Council can help him find another location and with the cost.

Councilor Rell asked what the duration of use for Savage Park would be. Mr. Serrambana stated December 15<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Rell said he is concerned that Council wants to put a four month long project on hold because we've heard input from neighbors, but for a 70 unit apartment complex we voted to approve that despite not hearing any public comments.

Councilor Martino moved to **"WITHDRAW THE MOTION"**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Councilor Martino moved to **"ACCEPT THE AMENDED INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT FOR THE NORTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM"**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Town Manager Bridges stated that, as part of the relationship with CRCOG, there is a workforce development council. Because CRCOG has expanded to include additional towns, certain agreements have to be amended between the participating organizations. This agreement adds additional communities to the program. Town Manager Bridges stated he supports this and said workforce development does a good job.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Martino moved to **"APPROVE THE LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD (BOE) AND ORIGEN WETHERSFIELD LLC FOR APPROXIMATELY 7,500 SQUARE FEET OF SPACE LOCATED AT 898 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY, LOWER LEVEL"**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Mayor Montinieri stated he has met with Judy Keane for about year about the space at the community center which has been shared between the Transitional Academy and Judy's program. Mike Emmett has done a lot of work in finding a location for the Transitional

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Academy so the Pitkin Center space can be used by the Keane Foundation, who renovated the space.

Superintendent Mike Emmett said the Wethersfield Transition Academy came about in the 2010-2011 school year. It services students aged 18-21 that require transition services (job development, self-help skills) and an individualized education plan. This is also a legal requirement the district has. This program was designed to be community-based, not in a school. There is no space in the Stillman building. The space needs to be wheelchair accessible, include a kitchen and be on the bus line. Trend data shows there will be more and more students in this program. Not all neighboring towns have this type of transition program, so this is an opportunity to reach out to them to place their students in the Wethersfield Transition Academy rather than a private facility. The tuition money from this would offset the cost of the lease over the course of time. This lease opportunity gives the ability to grow the program. The buildout is largely done, the town Fire Marshal and building officials have looked at it, the additional work needed is minimal and can be done by Mr. Bushey's crew. Pending Town Council's approval, the students would move to the new building early this Fall.

Councilor Kotkin stated they are approving something that would obligate the Town to pay a fair amount of money. He asked if, from a financial standpoint, the Town would spend less by building out the program as described than we otherwise would spend. Mr. Emmett stated yes; without the Transition Academy, the Town would face outplacing these students out of Wethersfield, with significant transportation and tuition costs totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Councilor Hemmann asked what the capacity of this space. Mr. Emmett stated they are expecting to have between 20-25 students in the space.

Councilor Hemmann asked when the out of district tuition would subsidize the lease. Mr. Emmett answered he is expecting to break even in year two. He stated there is a need in other districts for this placement.

Councilor Hemmann asked if this would be budget neutral. Mr. Emmett answered that is the expectation.

Councilor Manousos asked if it is budget neutral or actually budget positive. Mr. Emmett answered that it depends on how many students we end up bringing in.

Councilor Manousos asked if bringing in students from out of district will require additional staffing. Mr. Emmett answered that at this time we will be using existing staff, but in bringing in outside students the tuition would cover the lease and additional services. One student should cover the bulk of the first year's rent.

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Councilor Hemmann asked if a student coming in from out of district would have an IEP and a plan of what is needed. If it required a one-to-one aide, or something specific, is there the capacity to build that into the tuition. Mr. Emmett answered yes, and the other town would also be responsible for working with us in the development and implementation of the IEP.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Martino moved **“TO CANCEL THE NOVEMBER 2, 2015 MEETING OF THE WETHERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL”**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

### **BIDS**

Councilor Martino moved to **“AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH SOFTWARE AS REQUESTED”**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Town Manager Bridges stated that, as discussed during the budget process, the Town is moving to two dispatchers on at all times. This allows us to assume the emergency medical dispatching program which we currently contract out for. Chief Cetran and Lieutenant Crabtree have done the research on purchasing a software system and have made a recommendation.

Mayor Montinieri asked Chief Cetran if he is comfortable bringing this forward. Chief Cetran answered yes.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Martino moved to **“APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF THE 2016 TAHOE FOR THE WETHERSFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT”**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Town Manager Bridges stated that at the last meeting Council approved the purchase of a 2015 Tahoe for \$35,000, which is no longer available. The 2016 Tahoe is still within the budget of the CNEF fund.

Councilor Hemmann asked if the potential of getting a 2015 Expedition was looked at. Town Manager Bridges stated that he does not know if it was. The Tahoe was chosen based on what the fire department is looking for in a vehicle.

Councilor Hurley asked if the Town Garage will fit the Tahoe with all the appropriate materials. Town Manager Bridges answered yes. Councilor Hurley asked if this is the first Tahoe we are

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purchasing. Town Manger Bridges answered no, it is the third.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

### MINUTES

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 20, 2015”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Councilor Kotkin said to check on the spelling of Kirsche in the minutes; there is no ‘e’ and there should be. When former Deputy Mayor Console was making comments about his recommendation to cut all budgets by 5%, he is pretty sure he made the exception of the police department. Councilor Martino and Town Manager Bridges agreed that Mr. Console did say that.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, stated that the speed sensor should have been set up where he is requesting the stop sign. He asked who is going to speed right after making a turn. Mayor Montinieri said that, when meeting with Mr. Colantonio, they discussed that the intent of putting in the speed sensor sign was to see if we could do something to influence peoples’ thinking about speeding. The results of over 2,000 vehicles are helpful but are not without exploration. He reminded Mr. Colantonio that it was at his request that we put the speed sensor there to get the message out that this is a concern area.

Mr. Colantonio stated he is not complaining about that it was done, but where it was placed. He stated it should have been in front of his house because the sooner you see the speed gadget, the sooner you are going to slow down. Mayor Montinieri said the idea is to capture people’s normal behavior so the read will be more accurate.

Mr. Colantonio said they have a difference of opinion. He also said he has lived in his home since 1973 and has never seen more trucks going up Morrison Avenue. Regarding the tax abatement for Ridge Road developers, he advised that if the project is not feasible, don’t do it. When the Town bought the open space for \$3 million, one argument for buying it was that houses could not be built on it so the school system would not be taxed with more students. Now the town wants to put in condo’s which will bring in more students. If it’s not worth it for the developers to build, we should just leave the land as open space. He questioned if the Council is representing the residents or their own agenda when they vote along party lines. Regarding the construction storage area at Savage Park, he thinks the contractor should be able to park his equipment there as long as the Town controls what he does.

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George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, said that his wife still cannot hear the speakers at the Town Council meetings when she watches them on tv. He said there is a technical flaw that is preventing viewers at home from hearing the people speaking and the Town has the resources to fix it. He stated that Town Planner, Peter Gillespie did a good job at presenting the benefits and costs of the apartments on Ridge Road, but not the fact that 1 & 2 bedroom apartments will mean more children in the school system and what impact that will have. He said he thinks it is a fact that individual homeowner's taxes do not cover the cost of more than one child. He asked how he can replay the Council meetings on the website. Town Manager Bridges said that he made a note to clarify that in the morning.

Paul Copp, 100 Executive Square, said that the new Dial-A Ride service is doing a pretty good job, but the fees were raised when the gas prices were up and they have not come back down. He thanked the Council for their decision on Savage Park, but asked why not one person from the neighborhood was there at the meeting. Town Clerk Sassano said that she lives in the neighborhood and did know about it.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, said he thinks the Savage Park decision was a good one to try to help the contractor find another site. He said, now that the Board of Education is in the business of competing with private industry and trying to make money, they might want to consider renting some space at the Town Garage for this contractor. Regarding the 70 units on Ridge Road for people coming back to Wethersfield after college -- they don't come back, they go where there are jobs. Believes the residents on Ridge Road should have been given notice about tonight's meeting. The Council voted to accept a \$633,946 grant for the James Devlin Senior Housing Complex. Asked why we are accepting borrowed money when the Wethersfield Housing Authority has an investment account with lots of money it that should be spent on needed repairs. He thinks the Board of Education competing against private schools for educating 18-21 year olds is not a good idea. He does not know why council approved the Intergovernmental Consortium Agreement for the North Central Connecticut Workforce Development Consortium or why it was signed because of the article regarding conflicts of interest and confidentiality. He stated that there are several elected officials on the Board of Education who have conflicts on interest in their duties--they vote on the budgets when members of their family are teachers. To approve this agreement is to approve something that you don't enforce. Town Manager Bridges said the Board doesn't sit on this.

Lee Sekas, spoke regarding the stop sign on Morrison Avenue. For the cost of the street study, and all the time taken over the years, we could have paid for a stop sign dozens of times over by now. Put the stop sign in and end this issue. He thinks the tax abatement voted on tonight could have been postponed or lowered. There are other blighted properties in town, and this one isn't even visible from the road. He said the Town should be a leader in being finically responsible.

Matt D'Angelo, 16 Dennison Ridge, spoke regarding the 70 rental units. He said he is usually

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skeptical of any private entity telling a town government that they can make a profit if the town gives remuneration. He is encouraged that this developer doesn't get anything until he gets approval and public input and the project is finished with certificate of occupancy. The primary demographic seems to be young, single professionals just out of school with jobs in the area. Remains to be seen if they can attract these people --if they don't the loss is on them and the town would be no worse off than we are right now. Regarding the Board of Education project, he is encouraged we are able to expand our facilities and range of services. He was always frustrated when he sat on the Board and did not have the resources to educate special needs students and had to transport them to another location, which can be very costly.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:20 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**", seconded by Councilor Kotkin. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council  
September 8, 2015