

Unapproved
REGULAR MEETING
October 5, 2015

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, October 5, 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: Sally Katz, Director of Physicals Services, Mike Turner, Town Engineer, Marlene Desjardins, Tax Collector, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Roberts led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

PUBLIC HEARING NONE

Proclamation: Fire Prevention Week, October 4, 2015 – October 10, 2015: “hear the beep where you sleep, a smoke detector in every room” is the theme. Fire Marshal Dignoti, Fire Department Deputies Brian Schroll, and Art Abronzino received the proclamation from Mayor Montinieri.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Matthew Forrest, 72 Somerset St. Green Summit has funds left after 10 years and have decided to split the amount between the Town of Wethersfield to plant trees along Savage Park and to the Great Meadows Trust to continue their good work.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue is not going to stop speaking about the stop sign “until he gets the right answer from the town”. He repeated reading from a 2009 police report.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd. continued on the “borrowed” monies of the federal government issues and reminded Council he thinks they continue to accept it, in grants etc. Also recession is over but not in CT. No one has mentioned holding debates for people to ask questions of candidates. This year he is treasurer and campaign manager for a 3rd party in Town. Independence is a choice for the public to vote for as they will hold or reduce taxes. Town needs to reduce staff. Council needs to spend money wisely, not buy fire engines and dump trucks on lease agreements.

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Rd spoke in favor of supporting fundraisers for all groups in Town. The Halloween fundraiser for the Nature Center is coming up. End of the month they will again present a haunted house theme. It had been cancelled due to extremely bad weather but it will be held this year. Everyone should help out and support each other’s events.

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George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, stated the PA system is working well in the room but the real test is if it is being heard in homes. There will be some Council changes, as are retiring. He hopes citizenry vote their conscience. Also is surprised there was no debate this year, but there is still time. He heard the town received some money back, and wondered if the pond near his home is going to benefit from a little of it.

Paul Copp, 100 Executive Sq. Chairperson of Independence party spoke about debating and how they are entertaining and can be knowledgeable. He had been a host one year and had candidates ask questions of each other. It was civilized and informative. There is still time for a debate.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Martino attended the Public Works Committee meeting; they declined a Performance Contracting Bid, because buildings suggested by staff were too small. They decided it would be better to use CIP. Also, they are interested in having CCM make a presentation on buying street lights and looking at solar panels. Council Kotkin was also at the meeting but due to his employer, did not vote on street lights. They also had a suggestion to move the community gardens to Wilkus farm property .It would more spaces and sunshine. Reviewed the Trackless System, leaf collection, Sally Katz had a presentation and there would be no cost savings.

Councilor Roberts stated that the Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborate will hold its Annual Meeting, October 19, after a light supper. The Wethersfield Historical Society was thankful for the Council approving the money for the windows at the Old Academy. The society was honored nationally when it received a Leadership in History Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History for its exhibit Castle on the Cove: *The Connecticut State Prison and Wethersfield*. She also attended the Youth Advisory Board where they focused on food share and hunger in CT and in town. They decided to have a mentoring plan between students and businesses in Wethersfield. Intermural sports have started; also the Friday night 6th graders have structured activities.

Councilor Kotkin attended the Library Board meeting, most discussion revolved around an email from Leslie Esoian, editor, Wethersfield Town Talk.com. She had put on her website people want to know how Brook Berry is doing, the numbers of people using the library etc. Also, she feels a lot of people are wondering if a library is even needed anymore since the Internet is the new Library, and what she feels about it. Councilor Kotkin stated Doreen Ciarcia is the Chairperson and the Board had decided not to have their private emails provided to residents. Names and addresses are located online under boards and commissions.

It spurred discussion for emails for boards and commission members, most are willing to serve but do not feel the need to have certain information available. He stated Council does have town e-mails but is it essential for all members of a board or commission?

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COUNCILOR COMMENTS

Councilor Hurley said he missed the last meeting when the Ridge Rd apartments were discussed; he was informed they would have a meeting and they would be informed, so they would be able to attend. Also he wanted to know about the Transition Academy. Mayor Montinieri stated there would be a meeting tomorrow night with the, Superintendent Emmett and parent representatives have a meeting October 6, 2015.

Councilor Martino commented on Fire Department recognition of Dave Anderson on his 60 years in the department went above and beyond in everything he does. He provided a lot of knowledge and information to all of the members of the department.

Councilor Hemmann stated as a young worker at his farm stand he taught them community and mentored “youngins” as he taught customer service, having the kids from town who worked on his farm, learn to count back change, work as a team, all of life’s lessons, even as they were unaware of it happening. Recognition well deserved, though he didn’t think it necessary.

Councilor Kotkin spoke on the tax abatement on Ridge Road which has not been discussed tonight but which he did for at the last meeting. Since he is not running again for Council he wanted to correct misinformation at this time. There were quite a few fair comments and some he thought has to be corrected. The parcel in question has been blighted for several years, the current owner in delinquent in past due taxes, amounting to over \$31,000. It would be a source of new revenue, it cleans up a blighted area. We now have a developer, well respected, wanting to do something with the property. The process has to go to Planning and Zoning, which requires public notification and public input. If approved, the Town would immediately receive the past due taxes, the ongoing taxes of approximately \$15,000 per year would be current. We would let them have approximately 2years, tax abatements, then they will be up and running and paying more in taxes as well as in motor vehicle taxes to the Town. He regrets that some of the neighbors did not know about the tax abatement and some think it is too dense to have 70 units. P & Z commissions can decide that. Others have speculated on the impact on our education costs, which a feasibility study refutes. Rutgers University also had done a study which showed an insignificant number of students for a project of that size, whether 7 – 11 children. It is misleading to think we would need to add a new school, teacher or even a bus route. It is still a potential proposal because it has not been approved. It may not be approved. If approved it would be a tremendous benefit. Many think the Town should be run like a business. There is not a business that would reject this proposal. It adds apartments for younger adults, small families as well as seniors who want to remain in Town without their larger homes. This is only the 2nd business in Town where we offered a tax abatement to in Town since he has been here. The other was to return a bankruptcy property to the tax rolls.

Leslie Esoian, how to contact Library Board members, should they have town emails. Library Board had decided to have drop boxes instead, they do not want their email information available to the public, their addresses are and their telephone numbers also are public.

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COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Manousos asked Councilor Martino where the farming for community gardens will be placed on the property, Councilor Martino stated they asked the manager to get back to them before they put the information out to the public, so they will have a say in it.

Councilor Manousos appreciated the outreach to public as to where it would be going. Appreciates Councilor Kotkin comments, but thinks he could have done that a month ago voting to postpone the vote until people could weigh in on the development.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

There is one comment this evening. A host of new legislation was enacted this past session and will be effective October, this year. In public works contracts, construction over \$50,000 requires a 25% back up; Finance attended a meeting and we will change our policies to accommodate the required changes.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

Town Clerk Sassano stated that absentee ballots were now available in her office. To date 18 applications were completed. As long as they are back by 8:00 p.m Election night, they will be counted.

COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Barry, “Motion to accept the appointments of Reio (Ray) Lampro to the Wethersfield Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities, 10-5-15 to 6-30-17; Yolanda Antoniak to Planning and Zoning as an alternate for 10-5-15 to 6-30-18”, seconded by Councilor Roberts.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

2nd Motion:

Councilor Martino, “Motion to authorize the submission of a 2016 DOT/NHSTA DUI Grant for the Wethersfield Police Department”, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

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3rd Motion

Councilor Martino, “Motion to authorize the Wethersfield Historical Society to mount State and National Historic registry plaques on the Old Academy Building, Keeney Cultural, Cove Warehouse and the Deming-Standish House” seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

4th Motion

Councilor Martino “Motion to approve the write-off of the uncollectable 1999 taxes”, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Tax Collector Marlene Desjardins stated that after 15 years, she can no longer collect them.

This \$5,000 represents the last of the taxes for that year.

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

Mayor Montinieri complimented her on the great collection of past due taxes, they always comment on her collection rate, but she is not always present. Ms. Desjardins stated it was not just her work but the work of the whole department that makes it possible.

BIDS

5th Motion

Councilor Martino, “Motion to award the Rock Salt bid to American Rock Salt @\$75.70 a ton & DRVN @\$70.00 a ton”, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Town Manager called on Ms. Katz, Director of Physical Services to speak to the bids and stated that last year it worked out very well for us; other towns were not as lucky.

She stated she did not just go with the state bid, they researched firms on their own and it worked out very well. They are using the firms this year as well. She stated in Wethersfield they use straight salt to avoid ice buildup. Councilor Rell asked what decides what we do. Ms. Katz replied the current footprint designates what we do.

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

6th Motion

Councilor Martino, “Motion to purchase a John Deere model number 410L backhoe using the National Joint Power Alliance contract and authorize the trade in of the current 1994 Caterpillar backhoe for \$16,500 resulting in a purchase price of \$108,271”, seconded by Councilor Kotkin,

Director Katz stated this is the biggest workhorse of the fleet. It works 24 hours. They tested

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several others as well, with her seasoned workers, 8 hours straight each day. It fit us best, and it came in under budget.

Councilor Hurley asked if they will get 20 years out of it, Ms. Katz said they tested all the engines and it's their intention to make it last.

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

7th Motion

Councilor Martino, "Motion to accept the bid from Wespro Ltd. for ADA sidewalk panels, and approve an amount not to exceed \$25,000", seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Town Engineer Mike Turner said they put it out to bid. Westpro is the lowest responsible bidder, at \$18,000. Staff recommends using the entire \$25000 and doing others also. Councilor Kotkin asked where they were putting them because there are 2 different types.. Mr. Turner referred to the accompanying map. Mayor Montinieri mentioned Lee Sekas referred to places which needed them last year. Deputy Mayor Barry mentioned Silas Deane and Wells Road area. Mr. Turner stated they have been completed. Mr. Turner stated these are tactile handicap ramps. Councilor Rell thought Lee was referring to narrowing walkways. Mayor Montinieri stated he also mentioned Silas Deane Middle School.

Councilor Manousos stated Mr. Turner had mentioned grinding the sidewalk edges. Mr. Turner, explained these are tactile mats, not the sidewalk edges.

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

8th Motion

Councilor Martino "Motion to accept the proposal from GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. for dam inspection services, in an amount not to exceed \$34,850", seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Town Engineer Mike Turner said that they previously had received only 1 proposal in August, from Lucks. They did go out again and they will do DEEP inspections on 9 dams to let us know what we have to do to bring them up to speed. Councilor Hemmann was happy to see we went out again. She wished they had done the same with the reconstruction of Main St.

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

9th Motion

Councilor Martino, "Motion to approve Meeting Minutes of September 21, 2015", seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Councilor Manousos stated he did not have a copy, Councilors stated they were there and asked if he wanted to review a hard copy. He did.

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All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-1 [MH not at mtg]

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Clynch, Ridge Rd, also owns property at Marsh St, He never had problems with this culvert when Jim McDonald was here. Jim did the whole culvert but since we had a new director of Physical Services, there is a problem. She decided it was private property and has not continued maintaining it. He told them that when it floods, the town may not use his driveway to bypass the water.

George Ruhe stated that Mr. Copp asked about the debate or lack thereof. Step up to the plate, ask someone to raise the questions. ADA panels, with little bumps, questions where they are placed sometimes. When he suggests it is in the wrong area, he is told experts decide where they go. Special Police grants for DWI. They should be doing it all the time. Federal grant, do they get OT for doing it. It seems to him, in normal duty, they should be doing it, unless this is for a special checkpoint. We pay for this one way or another.

Gus Colantonio, comment on Library being a thing of the past, he disagrees. He uses it all the time, best place in Town, we need it and we need to fund it. If we only got 1 bid, why didn't we go out again for Church and Main St inter-section. He hopes someone from Town, goes out to inspect it all the time. Also, all the sidewalk repairs should be inspected. He is against the Ridge Road apartments, in favor of leaving it as open space.

Robert Young, police grant, again borrowed money. Surplus money, hadn't heard of it in a long time. Also he is looking forward to see the Board of Education year-end balance. We continue to borrow.

Tom Mazarella, Wolcott Hill, numbers are thrown around, no fact checking, I don't know what the cost of education is here. How many children can we accommodate? What is the capacity of the system? We may not have to expand the system, if we can handle up to 10 more children, it could lower the cost per student.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:50 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Martino. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk