

**Approved**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
May 12, 2016

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Thursday, May 12, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Bello, Hemmann, Hurley, Latina, Martino, Spinella, Deputy Mayor Barry, and Chairperson Montinieri. Absent: Councilor Rell.

Also present: Mike O'Neil, Finance Director; Mike Emmett, Superintendent of Schools; Sally Dastoli, Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Board of Education Chairperson Barbara Granato, Board of Education members: John Morris and Polly Moon; Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk.

Meeting started with the pledge of allegiance.

Finance Director Mike O'Neil reviewed the detailed changes on the revenue side 8 items which are: Increase of \$25,000 in Parks & Recreation fees; \$30,000 increase transfer to the private duty fund; included a pilot from the housing authority \$8,000 increase; the building permit fees by \$15,000; incorporated additional use of fund balance increase of \$100,000; changes to state revenues was a decrease of 988,000 for several items. Change in the tax levy which results from all the changes in revenue and expenditures, so the tax levy went down by \$418,000 and because of the increase in the motor vehicle mill rate cap we added \$85,000 for the motor vehicle supplement. Items 1-14 are changes in the expenditure accounts. The first item is a reclassification of some public service contributions that are made between departments so that was a net effect of zero; a recent reduction in postal rates - \$1,300; remove charter expense that was inadvertently left in from last year's budget - \$5,000; adjustment for custodial bids we are entering into a new contract which came in more favorable than expected - \$6,000; pre purchase of police commodities - \$15,000; reduction in administrative group compensation - \$3,000; reduction in diesel fuel in Fire Department -\$2,000; eliminate ICMA conference that the Town Manager attends - \$2,000; reduce physical service provisions for overtime and road treatment - \$50,000; use of additional bond premium to offset debt service - \$100,000; reduction in the town's medical expenses which get contributed to the medical self-insurance fund - \$200,000 (\$62,000 on the town side and the balance is included in the BOE reduction); adjustment to the transfer to the CNEF - \$27,500; increase for the EOC Coordinator stipend which had been left out of the previous version of the budget - \$ 1,500; adjustment to Board of Education appropriation - \$872,000.

Town Manager Bridges stated that per the Charter the Council has to make formal amendments to the Town Manager's Budget in terms of revenue and expenditure changes. These first two motions do that and they need to be read verbatim and then the next set of motions which actually adopt the various provisions of the budget. The Charter is very specific on the motions that need to be adopted, specifically for the Board of Education, specifically for the Library and you specifically set the mill rate so the first three pages of your packets contain the motions we would need for the Charter to effectuate the budget.

Councilor Hurley asked what the \$21,900 was for the Town wide Radio because he hadn't seen that before.

Town Manager Bridges stated that the Town Council budget had a series of contributions to outside agencies and one of those is CMed which is a public safety emergency radio system for ambulance services and for whatever reason the Town Council always carried that number and so we took that out of your budget and put it in the radio budget so it is a wash.

Councilor Spinella asked for the bottom line effect on people's taxes.

Town Manager Bridges indicated that the Assessor ran the numbers and based upon the mill rate cap on motor vehicle and the proposed increase in the real estate mill rate was \$39.00 net increase to the average homeowner with 2 cars.

Councilor Hemmann asked about the remaining funds in the fund balance. We are taking \$400,000 from fund balance; it was \$300,000 initially and then this adds another \$100,000 so what is remaining and what is the percentage of the balance.

Town Manager Bridges stated that it is over 10%. We anticipate from the revenue side; in the current year revenue we used the governor's number not the biennially budget number. The revenue we received this year is proposed to be the biennial budget number which is several hundred thousand dollars higher than we can put in the current year budget so that will lapse along with other expenditures or revenues we receive or don't spend.

Councilor Latina asked that you might make up whatever you are taking out.

Town Manager Bridges indicated yes pretty much, so we may not spend any of the fund balance. In the past several years we used a \$300,000 fund balance number as an offset against any potential revenues that we don't realize. For the past several years we have realized all the revenue we anticipated without the use of the fund balance so that fund balance of \$300,000 just rolls so we have never seen a reduction in the fund balance. The fund balance over the past few years has been somewhat stable and as the budget total increases, it kind of ticks along with it.

Councilor Hemmann inquired, relating to the motor vehicle loss in revenue, if we are scheduled to lose \$933,484 of revenue that we would have gotten if the cars stayed within the town and it would have been more than that because it was 1.3.

Town Manager Bridges responded that at the 32 mill rate we were estimating a 1.3 million dollar loss. At the 37 mill rate we are estimating a \$330,000 loss.

Councilor Hemmann asked from the resident's perspective, we could see changes with that next year and she understands they cap the rate at 37 rather than dropping it back to 29 but that is revenue we have to make up from the town's perspective that we may not get back from the state in the future.

Town Manager Bridges said the state budget, as proposed and as voted on only by the Senate included a new municipal revenue sharing account. It included aid to cities and towns that lower their mill rate and a general revenue sharing piece. They took two accounts that we were supposed to get, the \$940,000 to replace the motor vehicle loss and the 1.3 originally proposed for municipal aid, reduced the total dollar amount available in those two items and put it all under the municipal aid line and that number is \$940,000 so we more than make up for the loss of the motor vehicle and we get about \$600,000 of new revenue sharing that we had not realized before.

Councilor Martino thanked Town Manager Bridges and Financial Director O'Neil for all their hard work. A lot of information has been taken into consideration for this. On the town side, there are no new employees being proposed and they have cut the budget where possible. The Board worked with us. There is some surplus money allowing them to buy some items this year, rather than next year. There are no staff reductions. A world language teacher, which was going to be a state mandate, did not occur. This year we received the increase cost for MDC of \$188,000 and payments of the second bond payment for the high school renovation which we had to take into consideration. He commended the staff for the great job of getting this down to a mill rate where the effect on the average homeowner with two cars will only be \$39.00.

Councilor Spinella commented how well prepared and very knowledgeable the Manager and Finance Director were about the whole process.

Councilor Latina wanted to thank everyone for all the hard work. She was looking forward to working together over the summer and into the fall for the long term; how we can restructure the manner of how the town does things. We do have a really tight budget. She thinks we can put our minds together and come up with a plan where we are not waiting, holding our breath, on the State with their numbers. It will be beneficial for us in the future to wean ourselves as much as possible. It is such a bad precedent, constantly waiting for numbers at the last minute. It is a minimal tax increase but it's a tax increase. She feels for some of the seniors who are on fixed incomes. She knows we want to provide our services. It goes back to the restructuring of how we do business. She looks forward to those conversations.

Councilor Hurley commented they have all talked about the Board of Education getting to zero when he looked at their finances. They have about 1.5 increase in the salary lines and \$100,000 taken off for what Councilor Martino stated. About half of that was contractual and another \$700,000 was not contractual. He thought that could get us down a little bit lower.

Councilor Hemmann wanted to thank everyone for their hard work. We have had some difficult decisions. She is really concerned about next year because the state is in a world of hurt. Some of her comments have been related to the things that we've talked about on the really not want to do list. We are going to have those discussions because we just can't afford this. She is very concerned with the continual increases. She feels the Board could have done a little bit more. Next year is going to be hard and she looks forward to the discussions on how we structure and deliver services to the town. Things have to change.

Councilor Martino responded that first we have to get through this process of implementing this budget and getting it ready for an audit. Then we can have finance committee meetings to discuss getting ready for next year.

Deputy Mayor Barry commented that Town Manager Bridges and Finance Director O’Neil have done a tremendous job on presenting the information to us throughout the process. We have worked together as Democrats and Republicans and had significant amount of workshops where everyone had an opportunity to be heard. This was a challenging budget year probably the most challenging in his three years on the Council.

**MOTIONS FOR THE BUDGET ADOPTION  
2016 – 2017**

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER MARCH 31, 2016 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS”**

seconded by Councilor Bello:

AMOUNT	ACCOUNT
INCREASE \$ 85,000	40103 – MOTOR VEHICLE SUPPLEMENT
INCREASE 15,000	41203 – BUILDING DEPT.
DECREASE (841)	42501 – PILOT – STATE OWNED PROPERTY
DECREASE ( 67)	42515 – STATE PILOT – COLLEGES & HOSPITALS
DECREASE (544)	42610 – MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT
DECREASE (413,226)	42615 – MRSA/SALES TAX SHARING
DECREASE (933,484)	42616 – MRSA/MOTOR VEHICLE PROP. TAX GRANTS
INCREASE 480,424	43001 – EDUCATION COST SHARING
DECREASE (85,662)	43003 – SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION – PUBLIC
DECREASE (35,352)	43004 – PRIVATE SCHOOL – TRANSP & HEALTH
INCREASE 8,000	44502 – PILOT – HIGHVUE
INCREASE 25,000	45808 – RECREATION
INCREASE 100,000	49002 – SURPLUS PRIOR YEARS
INCREASE 30,000	49002 – TRANSFER IN – POLICE PRIVATE DUTY

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 5-3-0; Councilors Hemmann, Hurley & Latina voted NO.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER MARCH 31, 2016 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS”**

seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry:

AMOUNT	ACCOUNT
DECREASE \$ ( 30,637)	110 - TOWN COUNCIL
INCREASE 1,734	120 - TOWN MANAGER
DECREASE ( 5,000)	150 - TOWN CLERK
DECREASE ( 1,300)	250 - CENTRAL OFFICE SERVICES
DECREASE ( 17,500)	420 - POLICE
INCREASE 21,903	430 - TOWN WIDE RADIO

DECREASE	( 2,000)	450 - FIRE SUPPRESSION
INCREASE	1,500	510 - ENGINEERING
DECREASE	( 53,500)	520 - PHYSICAL SERVICES
INCREASE	3,000	620 - SOCIAL & YOUTH SERVICES
INCREASE	2,000	800 - PARKS & RECREATION
DECREASE	(100,000)	920 - DEBT SERVICE
DECREASE	( 27,500)	950 – TRANSFERS - CIP/CNEF
DECREASE	( 65,000)	960 – RETIREE MEDICAL/OPEB

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER MARCH 31, 2016 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS TO DECREASE THE TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES BY \$872,000”** seconded by Councilor Spinella.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 5-3-0; Councilors Hemmann, Hurley & Latina voted NO.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT THE TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES BE SET AT \$56,613,100 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2016”** seconded by Councilor Spinella.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 5-3-0; Councilors Hemmann, Hurley & Latina voted NO.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL ADOPT THE TOWN BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER ON MARCH 31, 2016 AND AS AMENDED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL, IN THE SUM OF \$97,298,990 NOT INCLUDING USE OF BOND PREMIUM OF \$500,000 FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION PROJECT, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2016”** seconded by Councilor Spinella.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 5-3-0; Councilors Hemmann, Hurley & Latina voted NO.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT THE TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CAPITAL AND NONRECURRING ROAD FUND BE SET AT \$915,729 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2016”** seconded by Councilor Spinella.

Town Manager Bridges commented that there are two state grants that are combined with that to form 1.5 million for a total. This is just the town side.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT CAPITAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION PROJECT BE SET AT \$500,000 TO BE FUNDED FROM BOND PREMIUM”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR LIBRARY PURPOSES BE SET AT \$1,976,003 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2016”** seconded by Councilor Bello.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT THE TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE RAISED BY TAXES FOR THE TOWN, LIBRARY, SCHOOL AND CAPITAL AND NONRECURRING ROAD FUND PURPOSES COMBINED BE SET AT \$84,652,226 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2016”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 5-3-0; Councilors Hemmann, Hurley & Latina voted NO.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT THE GENERAL FUND TAX RATE ON ALL REAL AND PERSONAL TAXABLE PROPERTY BE SET AT 38.12 MILLS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2016”**, seconded by Councilor Bello.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 5-3-0; Councilors Hemmann, Hurley & Latina voted NO.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT THE GENERAL FUND TAX RATE ON ALL MOTOR VEHICLES TAXABLE PROPERTY BE SET AT 36.59 MILLS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2016”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT THE CAPITAL AND NON RECURRING ROADS FUND TAX RATE ON ALL REAL AND PERSONAL TAXABLE PROPERTY BE SET AT .42 MILLS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2016”** seconded by Councilor Bello.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Martino motioned **“THAT THE CAPITAL AND NON RECURRING ROADS FUND TAX RATE ON ALL MOTOR VEHICLES TAXABLE PROPERTY BE SET AT .41 MILLS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2016”** seconded by Councilor Spinella.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted. Motion passed 8-0-0.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:20 p.m., Councilor Bello moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Spinella. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

APPROVED BY VOTE OF COUNCIL  
June 2, 2016