

**REGULAR MEETING
MAY 7, 2012**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, May 7, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, McAlister, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann.

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager, Police Chief James Cetran and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

PROCLAMATIONS

Dance 10 – Commemoration of their 25th Anniversary – Chairperson Hemmann presented the Proclamation to Mary Ellen Reilly.

Solute to Seniors – Chairperson Hemmann presented the Proclamation to Seniors and introduced the student ceremony.

Loretta Skowronek, Intergenerational Committee Chair explained the Annual Salute to Seniors program and introduced the following students who read their essays to their selected senior.

Tyler Piecewicz – Rocco Montano (Grandfather)
Aidan Sitler – Betsy Brown (Grandmother)
Cassidy Lepore – Bobbi Granato (2nd Grade Teacher)
Spencer Forbes – Diana Forbes (Grandmother)
Kerry Lindquist – Thomas Hanley (Uncle)[not present]

GENERAL COMMENTS

Frank Capalbo, 183 Nott St., commented that he was sprayed by an automatic sprinkler that went off along Wolcott Hill Road across from the Wethersfield High School entrance and expressed concern regarding sidewalk conditions within the town and suggested that something should be done about it.

Susan Sweeney Butler, 8 Morrison Ave., commented on the lack of notice for the one-side parking on the street during Martin Luther King weekend. She also expressed frustration with the Town after soil was unloaded on her newly seeded front lawn. She would have appreciated some notice and encourages better communication within Town and Town administrators.

Mark Miele, 45 Drummer Lane, spoke as former Police Officer and life-long resident regarding changes made to police retirees. He wanted to know how Town Manager Bridges could change the interpretation of benefits paid to certain retirees of the Police Department when the previous Town Manager and Finance Director had already interpreted the language. Addendum #1.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave., commented on the need for additional top soil for the street and noted concerns regarding the sidewalk repair and the lack of a base under the sidewalk. Mr. Colantonio also questioned the status of the stop sign for Morrison Ave. and restated the steady flow of traffic in the area.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented on his disappointment on the passing of the referendum and the lack of residents that went out to vote. He also commented on the leasing of fire trucks and other fire apparatus and the \$750,000 cost associated with it. He also noted that Chapter 311 of the Charter states purchases over \$200,000 should go to referendum.

Town Manager Bridges stated that the town is not buying a fire truck now but the specks have to be worked out, according to process; a number of hearings will have to follow; there is no purchase of a truck anticipated next year.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, agreed with letting Mr. Miele speak to express his point of view; the referendum was decided; officials were on board to have it pass. He did not agree with using the Ambulance facility for a polling location on Election Day; it was crowded and a ramp used for the stairs was insufficient. We have new elections officials and the moderator's rules were not followed. Voting is an important process; no excuses should be tolerated, the legislative body needs to find another voting location for this location as it is not big enough for the number of people. He is concerned about the spending and willfully negating charter process. He was pleased the issue near his home was being taken care of; he provided technical guidance but it is only a temporary fix.

Dave Coursey, 4 Angela Dr., encouraged council members to do their job and straighten out the issue with the Police Department. He urged council members to get it together and get it done within a manner where it does not cost town money on expensive legal fees.

David Caruk, 149 Broad St., spoke on behalf Officer Miele and the good work of the Wethersfield Police Dept. He stated that the Wethersfield Police Department was rated very high based on a previous survey taken years back and added that people feel safe in Wethersfield and feels that it is a bad decision to cut retirement benefits for police.

Jim Stavola, 149 Ivy Lane, Colchester, former Police Officer in town for 30 years. Mr. Stavola stated that he is very disturbed at the mayor who he has known for years. He stressed how the retirees did their job and did it well. He urged the mayor to just listen and not shut them out and to avoid litigation which would cost the town money.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Roberts reported that she was at the Mayor's office hours last Thursday and met with George Ruhe who expressed his concerns for the ambulance facility and the pond on Cloverdale. He reported that the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee met and informed Dolores Sassano of an issue that needs to be resolved in the ordinance or resolution establishing the committee regarding a representative of AARP listed specifically, however, AARP in town is no longer in existence, so an update to the resolution or ordinance reflecting that is in order. Councilor Roberts also reported that on Tuesday, May 15th at 1:00 p.m. in the Banquet Room, the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee will be sponsoring the Annual Educational Seminar called "Will Your Nest Egg Be Gone Before You Are?" She added that attorneys will be present to talk about asset management, and that mortgage specialists will be available to talk about reverse mortgages, annuities, trusts and other criteria to help people with their financial planning. Councilor Roberts also informed the Council that on May 15th from 3:30 – 4:30 a shredding truck will be available in the Community Center Parking lot where anyone can bring down any documents that they want to be shredded.

Councilor Manousos reported on behalf of the Budget and Finance Group. Councilor Manousos reported that they have had their series of budget workshops on the town budget and they will be having another one on Wednesday night where he hopes they will be able to adopt the budget. He also noted that May 15th is the deadline.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Hemmann reported that she received a letter from the American Warrior Project stating that local Wethersfield World War II Veterans have been selected to attend the Connecticut American Warrior Day Honor Trip on May 26th--Memorial Day weekend. Mayor Hemmann noted that of an average age 88 this is their first opportunity to visit the Washington, DC memorials and then recognized Veteran George Ruhe, Veteran George Steinmetz and Veteran Edwin Augustynowski, as the recipients of this honor. Mayor Hemmann announced that the veterans will be leaving Bradley Airport at 9:00 a.m. on May 26th and will return home at around 7:00 p.m. that same night. Mayor Hemmann noted that after the Day of Honor, there will be a large homecoming at Bradley Airport at 8:00 p.m. on the 26th and extended an invitation to all. She also added that it is open to the public and there are typically 500 patriotic supporters who will be in attendance.

Councilor Hurley responded to George Ruhe that the registrars are looking for another location to replace the ambulance.

Councilor McAlister commented on the grass on Morrison Avenue. He acknowledged that communication is just one issue relative to notifying neighbors of parking cars and feels that we can do a better job. He added that the other issue is just common sense and feels that we need to empower the staff to be able to ask questions if they go up to a facility or site to dump soil and

see grass that is just starting to grow. Councilor McAlister feels they should be empowered to either call someone or come back another day after they have verified the situation with the neighbor. Although Councilor McAlister did acknowledge that this was a third party contractor in this particular case, he reiterated the need to have workers communicate effectively with the town and its residents should questions arise when providing services in an effort to avoid these types of situations in the future.

Deputy Mayor Console also commented on Morrison Avenue and noted that the last time that the Council spoke with Mr. Turner, he indicated that the project would be done by this meeting, but is not done. Deputy Mayor Console noted that he went by the street tonight before the meeting and noticed things still unfinished; the sides of the stone pillars in front are still not corrected. He then questioned as to why it is not finished.

Jeff Bridges responded that he believed that the stone pillars were not included in that estimate and they were given a price from the mason because it is a change order in addition to the contract.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that Mr. Turner indicated that they were going to take care of it. Deputy Mayor Console continued to express his frustration with Morrison Avenue and offered to go and fix the problem himself.

Jeff Bridges responded that the pillars were not included in the original contract due to the pricing and cost concerns of the Council. He added that there is money in the budget now to do the pillars and explained that once an acceptable price is received from the mason, the work will be authorized to be done.

Deputy Mayor Console next commented on the fire truck newspaper article that was published and stated that as head of the Public Safety Committee he had to set up one meeting. He noted that Councilor Hurley, Councilor Drake and Councilor Robertson were all present at the meeting and explained that they were all in discussion regarding the fire equipment and stated that he had some ideas as well as some of the other councilors. Deputy Mayor Console thought that the article was premature; that it should not have gone to the newspaper and did not think that any comment should have been made by any town official. He also commented that as a result of the article, he received a bunch of calls about the method in which financing is done for these. He reiterated that nothing had been decided by the Safety Committee and he hoped that another article will go out reflecting that fact.

Deputy Mayor Console reported that he attended a Clean Water Project update dinner on April 30th and stated that it was well attended by many residents in town. He noted that MDC brought everyone up-to-date on what they were doing, the amount of progress they are making, the second phase that they will be going in, which will be coming up in another referendum during the same day as the presidential election which is expected to be about \$800 or \$900 million.

Deputy Mayor Console also noted MDC's excellent website which includes all of their updates. He commented that it was a very interesting and well attended event.

Deputy Mayor Console next commented on the Police Department's activity several weeks back regarding their mobilization effort to locate a the missing teen from Desmond Drive. He praised their great team effort which resulted in a positive outcome and thanked the Police Department for their outstanding effort.

Deputy Mayor Console expressed his thanks to the police chief for having him attend the annual trade show at the Aqua Turf. He noted that it was very informative and good to see the new technology that is available as well as to see what is now being offered, and where we are heading in the future.

Deputy Mayor Console also acknowledged the new Panera Bread that has opened in town and commented that it always seems busy and that it is good to see another business open in town.

Councilor Roberts commented on a Morrison Avenue issue and stated that she door-knocked on Morrison Avenue during the campaign and had stopped at Mrs. Butler's house. She noted that this was the second time that something major had been done on the property. She explained that Mrs. Butler came home and found an entire sidewalk that had been installed up to her door that she had no idea was going on. Councilor Roberts expressed frustration with the issues with the contractor and commented that either the contractor does not follow through or we need better inspections, or the workers are not following through for the contractor. She commented that there were more problems with this construction project than most projects in town.

Jeff Bridges commented that he will review the notes on this project and stated that they do take pre and post pictures of the property and check to make sure that whatever level of improvements she had before, she should have now.

Councilor Roberts suggested that the homeowner should have some level of input on the design when work is being done on their property.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges commented that last week the Brainard Airport Master Plan Advisory Committee met for the first time here. He stated that we have a process where the public comment throughout the process on the future of Brainard airport. He reported that they are going to look at the control of the general aviation community, what they could do about noise abatement, what they could do about property if there is a desire to move runways or a desire to swap land with the MDC. Mr. Bridges stated that as meetings proceed, notices will be issued and that they will probably meet once a quarter with the consultant.

Mr. Bridges next commented that the staff has asked to remove 3c from the agenda. He explained that the actual building itself is a steel-frame building and the frame is bent and it would cost more to take it apart in terms of staff hours than what we would get for it on auction if we were to sell it as raw steel.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Hurley moved **"TO TAKE OUT OF ORDER AND REMOVE FROM THE AGENDA ITEM B.3.C. AUTHORIZATION TO SELL TOWN PROPERTY"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Manager Bridges stated the condition of the property was so bad they were going to sell it as scrap metal.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO SEND TO THE WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION FOR A SECTION 8-24 REFERRAL OF THE PROPOSED FIRST AMENDMENT TO MITCHELL ON THE PARK LEASE"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, introduced Town Attorney Duncan Forsyth to explain it. He explained that there had been an issue with back taxes on the land the building is on. To resolve this issue, it was agreed that Mitchell on the Park will pay \$53,000 plus of unpaid taxes in equal installments of approx. \$5,300 over the next ten years and will make all future tax payments as they become due. He also reported that the lessee has also asked for the lease to be extended to 2114 and that it would become a 99-year lease which is a reasonable standard. Attorney Forsyth also recommended that the matter be sent to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review and recommendation pursuant to Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Councilor Kotkin questioned what would happen if they didn't pay the back or current taxes? He asked if that would be an event of default and also questioned if we could actually be in a position where we could actually be the landlord of that building and have tenants if that were the case.

Attorney Forsyth responded that they own the building with that reversion, but was unable to provide a complete answer at that time. He noted that he will certainly look into the question, in an event of default with regard to the lease, how would that impact the building and the town's ability to take the rights to the building. Attorney Forsyth then noted that he will provide an answer to the Council on that question.

Another question was asked regarding what the taxes are going forward on the property and the real estate and the building?

Jeff Bridge responded that the property taxes are about 12,000--/\$14000 year and noted that the land tax was the only issue.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO APPROVE THE SUBORDINATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD AND JAMES E. AND NANCY E. ARNOLD OF 446 HARTFORD AVENUE"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Town Manager Bridges stated that the town does allow the homeowners with a town assist mortgage to refinance for better terms as long as they qualify with the bank.

Councilor Kotkin asked how many homes are out there with servicer of the mortgage.

Mr. Bridges responded that people have a loan with us against the property and according to the loan agreement if they sell or even if they refinance, they are obligated to pay it back. We've held that as long as the owner is just refinancing then a subordination would be acceptable. I can get you a list of all the properties that we have.

Councilor Kotkin asked if this was a past program or if we still had it.

Mr. Bridges responded no, we have not sought grant money for this program for at least four years.

Councilor Kotkin then asked what happens to the money as it comes in?

Mr. Bridges responded that it is considered program income and that it is used to reloan.

Councilor Kotkin then asked if there are new loans going out?

Mr. Bridges replied no, and explained that there were two issues to resolve with properties and reserving those funds in anticipation of resolving those issues. He further noted that once those issues are resolved, they are going to have to reformat the program to provide their oversight and then go forward.

Councilor Kotkin asked who oversees this on your behalf--is it the Town Managers office or the Planning and Development office?

Mr. Bridges responded some were done through Tri-town which is in Rocky Hill, so it really

wasn't oversight from anyone in this building.

Councilor Kotkin suggested that it would be helpful to have a general update and overview of the whole program and would be interested to know how many homes and towns are actually affected.

Mr. Bridges commented we don't really see many homes with those types of loans.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if issues have been resolved along Ridge and Crest?

Mr. Bridges replied that they have done the scope of work to see what items need to be addressed and the former grant administrator agrees with the scope of work. We sent the scope of work to the property owner to review and stated that he will be meeting with them tomorrow afternoon.

Deputy Mayor Console thanked Mr. Bridges for the information.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-1.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO AUTHORIZE PARTICIPATION IN A REGIONAL GRANT FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING TO CREATE A MID-STATE REGIONAL MAJOR CRIME SQUAD AND TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN SHARE OF \$12,267"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Town Manager Bridges called on Police Chief James Cetran to answer any questions Councilors may have on this process. Chief Cetran stated no taxpayer money is being used, it is from recovered funds. He had previously discussed it during the budget process.

Chief Cetran commented that he was here not too long ago and pretty much went through everything. He stated that the only change is from an OPM grant to a DOT grant and added that Newington has taken the lead in getting this vehicle for us through DOT. Chief Cetran added that he is just seeking the approval of the expenditure of money for the 1/5 of the 20 percent match from Wethersfield to participate.

Mayor Hemmann asked if we had that money budgeted?

Chief Cetran replied no and it would be taken out of massive overture and that it will not be taken out of taxpayer funds.

Police Chief Cetran noted that equipment is going to be stored in Newington and that we'll all share. He explained that it will be used for multiple purposes, for major crimes, DUI spot checks, and major accident reconstruction. It's going to have triple duty actually for all five towns.

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

BIDS

Councilor Hurley moved "**TO AWARD OFFICE SUPPLIES BID #2011-17 TO SUBURBAN STATIONERS**" seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

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

Councilor Hurley moved "**TO AWARD A CONTRACT TO DIGITAL BACK OFFICE TO INSTALL A FIBER INTERNET CONNECTION AT TOWN HALL IN THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR AND, CONTINGENT UPON FUNDING APPROVAL IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2012-13 BUDGET, TO INSTALL A FIBER NETWORK BETWEEN TOWN BUILDINGS AND WETHERSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY DIGITAL BACK OFFICE DATED FEBRUARY 9, 2012**" seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Assistant Town Manager Rae Ann Palmer commented that this was the project that they discussed at their Data Budget meeting and requested the council to award the contract to Digital Back Office for this acquisition (handout of contract distributed to council members). Ms. Palmer explained that, essentially, they will hook the town up with internet with a fiber optic connection and if approved within the next fiscal year they will begin the connection of all town buildings and public schools into a wider network that will allow us to better share resources and will improve both the business processes of the town and allow us to expand our services to citizens that we offer through the internet. Ms. Palmer then asked if there were any other questions and deferred them to the technical experts present in the room.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

- a. Introduction of Small Cities Resolution: Authorization to apply for funding on behalf of the Wethersfield Housing Authority.
- b. Introduction of Small Cities Resolution: To approve the Small Cities Program Housing Rehabilitation Income reuse plan.
- c. Introduction of Hanmer School Fire Alarm Resolution: Authorization to prepare an application for funding assistance for the installation of a new fire alarm system at Hanmer School.
- d. Introduction of Hanmer School Fire Alarm Resolution: Resolution to establish a Building Committee to oversee the fire alarm project at Hanmer School.
- e. Introduction of Hanmer School Fire Alarm Resolution: Authorization to contract with Friar and Associates for development of plans and specifications for the fire alarm project at Hanmer School.

MINUTES

Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 2, 2012**" seconded by Councilor Roberts.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-1. Councilor Hurley abstained.

Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO APPROVE THE BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 9, 2012**" seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-2. Councilors McAlister and Manousos abstained.

Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO APPROVE THE BUDGET HEARING MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2012**" seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present, including the chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-1. Councilor Manousos abstained.

Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO APPROVE THE BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 2012**" seconded by Councilor McAlister.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO APPROVE THE BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 24, 2012**" seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-2. Councilors Manousos and McAlister abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill, Rd., commented on the MDC meeting and upcoming referendum and the huge amounts of money associated with it. He commented that the council's action should be to protect the citizens from huge spikes and big tax increases and stressed concern on how it affects the value of homes. He stressed that there is too much bonding and borrowing and suggested taxing the people who are using the services--like the new school. Set up a system on the bill and have tax people accordingly. Pay to play.

James Clynch, 903 Ridge Rd., commented that he had called 9-1-1 on several occasions regarding suspicious activity and stated that he is a little paranoid now because the times that he has called 9-1-1, he had gotten a little scolded and was told that 9-1-1 is for an emergency. He

also stated that even though some of his calls have identified crimes that have committed, he is still intimidated by calling 9-1-1.

At 9:05 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**" seconded by Councilor McAlister. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0. Also present during Executive Session were Jeff Bridges, Town Manager; Duncan Forsyth, Town Attorney; Ken Plumb, Town Labor Attorney. No motions were made and no votes were taken during executive session.

At 10:50 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION**" seconded by Councilor McAlister. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO ACCEPT THE SETTLEMENT KLAVINS V. WETHERSFIELD AS PROPOSED BY CIRMA AND THE TOWN ATTORNEY**" seconded by Councilor McAlister. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:52 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor McAlister. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk
Approved by Vote of Council
May 21, 2012