

**REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 5, 2011**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Tuesday, July 5, 2011 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, Mike Turner, Director of Physical Services and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Drake led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

**HEARINGS**

Resolution for Road Bond: Request by certain Council members for the preparation of a referendum question for the November 8, 2011 ballot to authorize a \$4,000,000 bond for road improvements.

Michael McKenna, 100 Gristmill Road, spoke in favor of the referendum for the road fund.

Dan Silver, 19 Orchard Brook Drive, spoke in favor of the referendum for the road fund and felt it was very important.

Frank Sorano 102 Jameswell Road, spoke in favor of the referendum for the road fund and noted that he hoped that the drainage on Jameswell Road will be addressed in the bond.

Tony Homicki, 201 Cumberland Road, spoke in favor of the referendum for the road fund.

Harry Lichtenbaum, 16 Town House Lane, spoke in favor of the referendum for the road fund.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, spoke against the referendum, but not the work. If there is work to be done, then it should be done. He suggested raising the taxes \$40 to \$50 for each family to raise the money for the roads.

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Road, commented that he is on the fence with regards to the bond issue. All the facts are needed in order to make this decision. He suggested when the roads are repaved to have a speed bump installed before the stop sign so that people will stop.

Tom Izard, 89 Ciderbrook Drive, spoke in favor of the referendum for the road fund.

Judy Parker, 366 Pine Lane, commented that when she was on Council more than fifteen years ago, there was a 20 year program in place which would ensure that each road in Town was re-

surfaced every 20 years. Since that time, the scope and cost of these services have risen dramatically.

John Miller, 45 Highland Street, commented that it isn't a case about fixing the roads, but how it is going to be paid. He noted that bonding current expenses is a road to disaster. Maintaining roads is a current expense. He commented that the Town has gotten behind in the last ten years with road maintenance, but there is new leadership with the Council now. He noted that bonding is not the answer to this problem.

Shirley Steinmetz, 375 Brimfield Road, commented that the voters should decide what is to be done with the roads.

Robert Cobb, 99 Meadowview Drive, commented that no one can argue that the roads need to be repaired and maintained, but he is against the method of funding through a bond. He suggested dividing the number of households in Wethersfield by the cost and it is roughly \$100/year for each household.

Scott Marshall, 24 Straddle Hill, spoke against the referendum for the road fund.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented that he opposed going out to bond for the roads. He noted that this conversation should have been part of the earlier budget talks. He also commented that \$2.1 million should have been cut from the school budget and allocated to the roads.

Paul Courchaine, 481 Main Street, spoke that he was not in favor of the proposal and agreed that road repair should be part of the ongoing maintenance in Town. He also noted that there is a process in place which is the Capital Improvements Program and he did not support going out to bond for road repairs.

Hearing closed at 7:30 p.m.

Resolution Authorizing State Library Grant: The State Library provides grants to municipalities for records management programs, this resolution authorizes acceptance of the grant. No one spoke on this matter.

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

#### PUBLIC

Behn Sikora, 35 State Street, spoke in favor of the memorandum of understanding for CREC in Wethersfield and noted that his son has been selected to attend the new magnet school presently located on Franklin Avenue.

Dan Silver, 19 Orchard Brook Drive, spoke in favor of the CREC Memorandum of Understanding and felt it was important. He felt the program would be win/win for the Town. It has been difficult for the public to reserve the public meeting rooms at the Library as the calendar is filled quickly and the added rooms at the CREC building would be helpful. The addition of the athletic fields would also be beneficial.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, commented that a year ago he had brought up an issue of bushes that were extending onto the sidewalks on Cottwell Drive and asked if anything was going to be done with that. He also noted there is a TS Realty sign at end of Morrison Avenue and the Silas Deane Highway that his hindering is view of the highway was not clear whether this sign is a right away on the Silas Deane Highway or on private property. He felt if the sign is on State property then it should be moved. He also noted that there are signs at the corner of Ridge Road and Prospect Street and until you get close to the sign, they are impossible to read. He also commented that he has received six separate letters from the tax collector's office and asked why it cannot be mailed in one envelope.

Connie Rosato, 581 Ridge Road, commented that since the announcement that the Town was interested in selling the parcel on Crest Street, she has made several requests to have the Town conduct geological testing on that parcel but have not received any response from the Town. If the Town decides to sell all or part of the parcel, she requests a letter from the Town stating that the blasting will not affect her home.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented that he is not in favor of selling any property that may end up with a home on it and urged the Council not to sell the building lot on Cedar Street. In addition, if the basketball court is damaged, it should be taken out and left as open space. He also commented on the CREC issue and felt it was a decent deal for the Town. He does not understand why the owner of the property that CREC is looking at is willing to leave \$2 million behind after the sale.

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Road, commented that he is concerned with the census and the redistricting and asked for the status on the voter district realignments.

Chairperson Hemmann responded that someone will look into this issue.

### COUNCIL REPORTS

Deputy Mayor Console reported that the Safety Committee and the Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance Association met last week and noted that the ambulance association has not had a contract since 1981 and an audit also needs to be done before a contract could be finalized which is being worked on by the Town Manager.

Councilor Manousos reported for the Budget Finance Committee which discussed the bonding to repay the State related to the School Project Fund Grant. Five different debt scenarios were reviewed, given the cash flow constraints and debt levels in Town. The Committee settled on a

ten year fix rate bond at 3 ¾ % which better matches the life of the project. This option is going to required \$84,000 a year in payments which is slightly more than what has been budgeted, so there will be a need to commit in the future to funding part of this. The second item discussed was the school contingency fund transfer request by the Board of Education and it was unanimously agreed upon that this request would not be granted at this time. A financial statement was reviewed and through the end of May, they [Board of Education] were under budget by \$6.3 million, which was after they encumbered \$1.3 million. Councilor Manousos also reported for the Redevelopment Agency in which there was a promising meeting on the Weight Watchers' Building. Councilor Manousos also reported that due to some business commitments, he is unable to meet as a liaison for the Historical Society so Councilor Hurley will take over for him.

Councilor Roberts asked Councilor Manousos to further explain the Redevelopment Agency issue regarding a bond.

Councilor Manousos explained that there is a redevelopment plan for the Weight Watchers' building which is being finalized and they are figuring out what the needs will be and what the Town's participation will be and what may need to be required. They still need to go through the Planning and Zoning and the Housing Authority.

Councilor Roberts asked Chairperson Hemmann if the Council was going to have input on the development of the bond, or would the Redevelopment Agency come forward with their plan. She noted that the last time there was discussion on a bond for economic redevelopment, there was substantial discussion on the Council level.

Councilor Manousos responded that the Council would have an opportunity to give input.

Councilor Drake reported that the Library Board voted the same officers in for the new year. He also reported that Brad Milvae has retired after 18-19 years on the Board and thanked him for all his work on the Board. He also reported on a Hartford Courant article regarding that people would now be able to check out books on their own because of the RIFD tags and he reported that this is not the case. The RIFD tags will help the check out process but the library will still be staffed.

#### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor McAlister asked Councilor Manousos that if the Board of Education has \$2 million left over at the end of the fiscal year and they decide to give the Town the money back, what would be the Towns' options.

Jeff Bridges responded that it would lapse the fund balance and it could be used in the next budget.

Councilor McAlister asked if the money could be used right away.

Jeff Bridges responded that up to \$200,000 can be used.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he attended the Sixth Grade Step Up graduation at Webb Elementary School which was very nice. He also attended the Wethersfield High School graduation along with several other council members, the Mayor and the Town Manager. He also noted that the Wethersfield/Rocky Hill Chapter of UNICO made national news with the Memorial Day parade and thanked Dr. Ken and former president Emilio Pizzaferrato. It also noted that UNICO had made a donation to the Wethersfield school system. Deputy Mayor Console also spoke about the road issue and noted that he received unsigned correspondence from a resident on Meadowgate. He also noted that it would be nice if dollar numbers were included in the referendum information. He also commented that he has reviewed the Board of Education's manual at the Library and will be asking for answers to additional questions he has on how things are being run. He also noted that there was another article in the Hartford Courant regarding the Board of Education cuts and noted that the Board of Education's budget was not cut and that they did receive an \$800,000 increase overall if taken into account the money transfers from the Town of Wethersfield, it comes up to a \$2,148,000 increase or a 4.3% increase and suggested that the Superintendent should chose his words better. He also noted that he is reviewing the Board of Education's manual to find out why there was major shuffle with the teachers.

Chairperson Hemmann reported that she attended the HARC Awards ceremony at the Hartford Club, which had honored the Heffernan family for their work and commitment to their organization. The Heffernan Family and HARC honored the Wethersfield High School JETS team and the JETS team was at the awards and talked about their invention. She also noted that the Wethersfield High School graduation was well attended and it had been a nice affair even though it had to be rescheduled for inside.

#### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges commented on the Meadowgate notice and Mike Turner has informed him that MDC is going to be doing a sizable project there in the Fall and once it is done, the entire area will be repaved.

#### COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO ADD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION REGARDING REAL ESTATE NEGOTIATIONS TO THE END OF THE MEETING,”** seconded by Councilor

Manousos.

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

Ordinances, Resolutions and Appointments for Action

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF KEVIN ROGERS, 23 QUAIL HILL, FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD,”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

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

Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO APPOINT CYNTHIA GREENBLATT, 35 BROAD STREET, TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION, FOR THE TERM 07-01-11 THROUGH 06-30-16; TO CORRECT THE NAME OF SUSAN GILLANDERS ON THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION; TO CORRECT THE END DATE FOR KEVIN ROGERS ON THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS, TO FILL THE VACANCY CREATED WHEN GENE ZIURYS MOVED FROM ALTERNATE TO REGULAR MEMBER, END DATE 6/30/13,; AND TO CORRECT THE END MONTH FROM FEBRUARY TO JUNE FOR LEIGH STANDISH, ALTERNATE ON THE CONNECTICUT RIVER ASSEMBLY, FOR THE TERM 2-22-11 THROUGH 6-30-13,”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

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

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO DIRECT THE TOWN MANAGER TO WORK WITH THE BOND COUNSEL TO PREPARE A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF UP TO \$4 MILLION OF BONDS, PROCEEDS OF WHICH WILL BE SPENT OVER A FIVE YEAR PERIOD TO ACCELERATE THE MAINTENANCE AND REPAVING OF TOWN ROADS. SUCH A RESOLUTION SHALL BE PREPARED IN TIME TO BE VOTED UPON BY RESIDENTS DURING THE NOVEMBER 8, 2011 GENERAL ELECTIONS. PROCEEDS FROM SUCH BONDS SHALL SUPPLEMENT AND NOT REPLACE THE TOWN’S ANNUAL ROAD REPAVEMENT BUDGET,”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Jeff Bridges reported that this was requested to be put on the agenda by the minority of the Town Council to enhance the availability of resources to repair Town roads in accordance with the Capital Improvement program of the Town.

Councilor Kotkin reported that this resolution addresses an issue partially brought up during the public commentary. He noted that neither party has supported adequate road repair in the past few years so the Town is behind. If the Town decides to do what some residents have suggested,

those who have opposed the resolution, it guarantees that the Town will continue to stay behind. He noted that the bond will allow the Town to catch up on road repairs. He noted that he is not comfortable telling some people that there will not be enough money to fix certain roads for a long period of time. Town Council has to bring the resolution to the voters. If this is not brought to the voters, then they do not have the option and he urged the Council to support this.

Deputy Mayor Console noted that he agreed with some of Councilor Kotkin's comments, but noted that the entire Council has a fiduciary responsibility to the Town of Wethersfield and the Town should not be borrowing \$4 million in a bond for maintenance. As a taxpayer, he does not have a problem with "pay as you go." He commented that he did not have a problem of raising taxes as long as that money was allocated to road repair. He noted that even with the \$4 million bond, there still is not a guarantee that all roads will be repaired.

Councilor McAlister agreed that the roads are substandard and perhaps a bond is the way to go, but his concern is that the Council's job is to be leaders and to bring this matter to vote. There is a need to educate the public on what is necessary and what other alternatives are being considered. He noted that he is not comfortable with it as no analysis has been done.

Councilor Drake commented that a bond was done for road repair six years ago, and the Town is right back to where it was six years ago. He noted that money should not be borrowed for maintenance and he was against this resolution.

Councilor Montinieri thanked the residents who came out both in favor and against the bond. He felt residents should have the opportunity and the right to decide whether the Town should or should not borrow money, whether it's for capital improvements or road improvements. He noted that the Town Council has the fiduciary obligation to take the lead of our residents who would suggest that this alternative versus another alternative would be the way to go. Councilor Montinieri also noted that Council significantly cut the Board of Education's budget this year and no money was spent on roads. Councilor Montinieri also noted that he does not agree with Councilor McAlister's statement that no work has been done, when in fact there have been two companies who have done research for over ten years on the roads' conditions. An appropriation was made at the last Council meeting to use two new technologies that will extend the life of the Town's roads. He noted that it is the Council's fiduciary obligation to guide the public's input.

Councilor Hurley commented that raising taxes minimally would be the way to go versus a \$4 million bond that would cost \$6 million to repay.

Councilor Montinieri commented that what Councilor Hurley is suggesting hasn't been done yet and if this is voted down by the residents, then that would be the next alternative to consider.

Councilor Drake asked to amend the motion that instead of the bond issue, ask the voters to vote on an indefinite \$50/per household tax levy specifically for road use.

Councilor Manousos commented that he felt this idea was premature. He asked what roads were contemplated in the \$4 million.

Councilor Kotkin responded that there were not any specific roads that were contemplated, only a list of roads which describes what needs to be done for each road. He noted that \$1.2 million is needed to stay where they are. The Town is currently allocating \$800,000 to \$900,000 a year, but a portion of that is from the State, and that may not be there next year or the following year. He explained that Mike Turner has told him that the average road condition in town is below where it was in 2003 before the initial bonding. The idea would not be to spend the \$4 million in the first twelve months, but to supplement the \$500,000 allocation with the \$800,000 a year. He also commented that he does not consider this maintenance of roads but an investment in the roads and would oppose bonding for operating costs. This is an investment in the Town and in the infrastructure of the Town and it has not been adequately funded. He commented that he disputed Deputy Mayor Console's characterization of maintenance of roads. He also commented that there is time value of money, which while paying off the debt, the dollar that is being used is worth less than the dollar that is invested today. He felt the voters should be given the option.

Councilor Manousos asked if Councilor Kotkin knew how many roads or which roads would be covered with the \$4 million.

Councilor Kotkin responded that specific roads are not known at this time.

Councilor Manousos commented that the public has already been engaged in these discussions and feedback has been solicited so that information should be gathered now as to what streets need to be done. He noted that he is surprised to learn about all this in the manner that he had. He suggested that a fraction of a mill be dedicated to road repairs, and that would meet the additional money. He feels the public supports this option. He asked when the budget was approved.

Dolores Sassano responded that it was approved on May 15.

Councilor Manousos noted that the first time he had heard of this situation was through an article written by David Drury on May 28, and he questioned that if they have heard so much from the public since that time, why didn't this get vetted through the Budget and Finance Committee and why was David Drury from the Hartford Courant the first person to get this information.

Councilor Kotkin responded that he gave the motion to the Town Manager on June 6 and it became part of the public record. The next day he gave the motion to the reporter. The issue is whether or not it is a good idea and whether people should have an opportunity to vote on it.

Councilor Manousos asked why this wasn't discussed during the Budget and Finance Committee.

Councilor Kotkin responded that it was an idea that developed after hearing so many people complaining about the roads. He stated that if Councilor Manousos doesn't want it, he has the

votes to turn it down. He felt it should be brought before voters and let them vote on it. If the voters vote against it, then Council can go back to the drawing board as the leaders of the Town. If they do like the idea then it will give the Town Manager and the Town Engineer the tools to go forward and improve our road structure.

Chairperson Hemmann commented that one of the purposes of the budget forums this year, which was a different format than in the past, was to solicit input from the public with regards to capital improvements and talk about different ways to fund those capital improvements. She noted that she felt this was very effective. What was discussed, that hadn't been discussed in the past, was dedicating a mill levy to a particular project, such as roads on an annual basis for a specific period of time. She also noted that the Council needs to be cognizant of the high school bond that will be coming up.

Councilor Roberts commented that she felt the budget forums were effective way to get input this year, but it was still a small portion of people of attended the forums. She stated that the Council is not committing the Town with anything. Council is asking the residents for their input. As part of being an elected official, it means you get input on specific issues and there shouldn't be an assumption that as an elected official, you know the will of people on every issue. If people are concerned about the roads, they will come out and vote on the referendum. If they are not concerned about the roads or they don't think bonding is the way to go, they can also express their opinion in November.

Councilor Manousos commented that he questions the motivation of door to door campaign because it doesn't give the residents information.

Councilor Roberts noted that she did not have any information regarding the door to door campaign.

Councilor Manousos noted that he in response to the three articles in the paper, he would have expected more people.

Deputy Mayor Console asked Mike Turner if the Town goes ahead with the \$4 million bond, is there any guarantee that specific streets are going to be fixed, or is there a possibility that the \$4 million can be used on other roads and then the roads that still have an issue, will continue to have an issue.

Jeff Bridges responded that as was discussed at the last Council meeting, staff along with members of the Infrastructure, Public Works Committee and the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee, will be gathering to develop a new policy and program for use of the software and that will determine the list in the process of how roads get paved.

Deputy Mayor Console asked that with the list, the \$4 million will be used up and there will still be roads on the list that are not going to paved.

Jeff Bridges responded that regardless of funding, there will be roads that will not be paved.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that even with the \$4 million, there will be roads that don't get fixed and some of the people who voted to have the roads paved, still may not get their streets paved.

Jeff Bridges responded that even with the additional \$1.2 million levy, it is a possibility.

Deputy Mayor Console responded that even with the additional mill levy, there is a possibility, but we would not be paying the \$1.9 million extra in interest.

Jeff Bridges responded that this was correct.

Councilor Manousos stated that the entire Council is in agreement that roads need to be repaved. It's the question of how this was brought forward, the mechanism of funding and that's what is being worked on.

Councilor Drake commented that he would like to continue looking at some type of tax levy and he is not going to vote for the bond issue.

Councilor Montinieri commented that the public forums were an excellent opportunity for the residents to review the information and look at the charts. But he noted that he could not say that he had sufficient feedback from the commentary that was there, as well as the fact that it was averaging 35 to 40 people at the forum, that in no way would give him sufficient guidance to say that this alternative is necessarily better than the other.

Councilors Kotkin, Montinieri and Roberts AYE. Councilors Drake, Hurley, Manousos, McAlister, Deputy Mayor Console and Chairperson Hemmann voted NO. The motion FAILS. 3-6-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN CLERK, DOLORES G. SASSANO, TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT A GRANT OF \$6,000 TO CONTINUE THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ALREADY UNDERWAY,"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges reported that this is an annual grant that the Town Clerk receives for the records management program.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO TRANSFER \$4,000 FROM THE PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUDGET TO THE TECHNOLOGY RESERVE FUND FOR THE WEBSITE REDSIGN PROJECT,"** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Jeff Bridges reported that in the current year budget, there is money to upgrade the Town's website. The funds that were unexpended from the Planning and Economic Development budget and co-mingle those with the other funds for the website and update the Tourism and Economic Development website, along with the Town website.

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

Councilor Drake moved **“TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL, WETHERSFIELD LLC, AND THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD INDICATING SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PRE-K THROUGH 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE MAGNET SCHOOL AT 176 CUMBERLAND AVENUE,”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Councilor Kotkin noted that due to his employer is potentially involved in this transaction, he will need to abstain and he is going to step away for a moment while this is being discussed.

Jeff Bridges reported at the May 16 meeting, there was a presentation done by CREC regarding the potential use of what is known at the Northeast Utilities building on Cumberland Avenue for a pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade magnet school. As part of that discussion, there were certain benefits offered to the Town in response for support for the development of that facility of that location. The Memorandum of Understanding is a memorialization of those conditions under which the Town would offer support for the project. Specifically, there is a \$ 2 million one time lump sum payment to the Town upon getting the necessary approvals from the various boards and commissions which they will need approvals from. There is also a six acre parcel on the west side of the property that the Town would receive an option on. That parcel would be split between a roughly 4.6 acre parcel and a 1.5 acre parcel.

Councilor Drake asked about the three acres on the east side, he had that it would have been available to the Town for free. He thought it would be available for development or for the Town.

Jack Bradley responded that CREC is trying to buy the property and get approval to go forward to the Planning and Zoning and move the proposal. At this time, the current owners are in litigation with the current owners and they are in the process of making a settlement and there is a 3 acre piece on the east side of the property. An option is going to be available to CREC. The original option was to purchase 9.8 acres.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he still needs to do some due diligence as to how the \$2 million works into the picture and where it is coming from.

Don Walsh responded that he was able to respond to Deputy Mayor Console's concern. He explained that the State of Connecticut has a process for making sure these transactions are reasonable and sellers are treated well. That process involves two appraisals and there was a huge cap between the two appraisals, which usually doesn't happen. The State will approve the

higher of the two appraisals. The owners are aware of this situation. CREC feels the property is going to come in somewhere between \$5 million and \$6 ½ million. The owners are taking \$2 million of the higher appraisal figure is and giving it to the Town. From CREC's standpoint, this is a clear sign as to how motivated the sellers are to sell this property. In CREC's opinion, the seller just can't do anything with this property.

Chairperson Hemmann commented that this is a pilot payment regarding the one time payment in lieu of taxes as a way to make up for loss of tax revenue.

Don Walsh noted that this is an offer between the Town and the seller and he would characterize it as the equivalent of lump sum pilot payment.

Deputy Mayor Console noted that it is starting to understand the process. He also noted that he is for this project, and he is very impressed and it adds to the educational competition between Wethersfield and the surrounding towns.

Don Walsh responded that they appreciate the notion of competition. He noted that he would like to underscore that CREC views themselves as people who exist to help our Boards of Education.

Deputy Mayor Console thanked Don Walsh for the clarification.

Councilor Roberts reiterated that she is voting against this project and it has nothing to do with CREC and its proposal. The question for her is permanently removing a major commercial property from the tax rolls and she cannot support this.

Councilor Montinieri noted that he had asked to get the Board of Education's thoughts on this matter and to date he has not been able to see if there is support from the Board of Education. He is concerned that he does not see the support from the Board of Education.

Councilor McAlister asked if Councilor Montinieri has reached out to the majority leadership and asked why they have not taken a position.

Councilor Montinieri responded that he has not talked with the Board of Education.

Chairperson Hemmann noted that a letter was received from the Board of Education and they were not in support and it was on their agenda of the CREC school.

Councilor McAlister asked if the whole board voted against it.

Councilor Manousos noted that he did not believe that there was an actual physical vote and his understanding from the minutes that there were people of both sides of the issue.

Don Walsh confirmed that there were people on both sides of the issue.

Councilor Drake commented that the Council was going to stand alone and asked if the Board has supported this project.

Don Walsh responded that they did receive a lengthy letter of questions from the Board of Education Chairman and CREC responded promptly with what they felt were helpful and complete answers and to date, the letter has not been responded to by the Board of Education.

Councilor Manousos commented that when the facility was fully occupied, the taxes were \$200,000.

Councilor Montinieri responded that it was between 350 and 500.

Councilor Drake asked Councilor Montinieri if there is someone who has something on the table with the developer.

Councilor Montinieri responded that he believes it is on hold.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he had asked the current owner, Mr. Fisher, if there were any other developers and he responded that in the past three years there has been nothing.

Jack Bradley noted that in representing CREC, he does not want to be in a position of representing anything on behalf of the owner.

Councilor Drake asked if the Board of Education doesn't respond to CREC, does the Council continue going forward.

Don Walsh responded that if the Board of Education does not respond, they will continue to go forward.

Jack Bradley noted that anyone who was present when CREC made their presentation to the Board of Education, the Board of Education's concern was the funding. He noted that a presentation was made to both the Council and the Board, but they are only looking for formal approval from the Council.

Councilor Manousos noted that from looking at the minutes, the Board would approve CREC if the Board received the \$2 million.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilors Montinieri and Roberts voted NO. Councilor Kotkin abstained. The motion passed 6-2-1.

Councilor Manousos moved **"TO APPROVE OVER THE STREET BANNER POLICY AND TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY,"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Jeff Bridges reported that as part of the Marsh Street improvements, in anticipation of putting various banners to support Town functions. The staff in the Planning Commission has developed a policy on the use of that mechanism.

Deputy Mayor Console asked Mike Turner if the banners were like the banners that are seen in Essex.

Mike Turner responded that is what their intentions are. It is also being asked that advertising be limited on the banner.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO TRANSFER \$113,000 FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING FOR EDUCATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATIONS PROJECT AND REPAYMENT OF CERTAIN FUNDS FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS,”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Jeff Bridges reported that the Budget & Finance Committee reviewed the spreadsheet that relates to the repayment to the State (\$672,465) for the grants that were received in excess of the authorized amount. In addition, to also repay the Town’s capital account for certain projects that need to be reimbursed (\$290,547.17). The total amount exceeds the bond authorization in the amount of \$105,000. In addition, the educational specifications for the high school renovations project needs to be completed was not part of the original \$65,000 capital fund allocation for the pre-referendum work and that estimate is \$7,250. \$113,000 is needed from the contingency account to the capital reserve funds to cover these two items later this year.

Councilor Roberts commented that this is the first time that they haven’t had a document that has come before the Council that says the Building Committee is looking for a spring referendum for the High School project. Her specific issue with this transfer is in the past, the educational specifications have been done by the Board and she doesn’t understand why the Council is asking to pay the architect. She noted that this has always been done by staff and feels this is a waste of money and cannot support this and doesn’t see any justifications.

Councilor Drake noted that that Board had been asked to do the specifications and it wasn’t happening, so the architect was getting paid to work and couldn’t do his job.

Councilor Roberts noted that she wanted to know what the obstacles as to why they couldn’t do it. She asked if it was because of lack of expertise, because if that is the case, then they are hiring the wrong people. She added that this is a routine part of being an administrator in the school district. School districts pay for their own specifications for their own projects.

Deputy Mayor Console suggested tabling this portion of the motion and try to get the questions answered.

Chairman Hemmann asked if there is a timeline assigned to the transfer of the other funds that go to the State.

Jeff Bridges responded the sooner the better and noted that this will be coming out of the prior year's budget.

Councilor McAlister commented that he was unclear as to what portion was for the educational specifications and what portion was for the repayment of certain funds.

Councilor Montinieri responded that the amount for the educational specifications is \$7,250.

Jeff Bridges commented that the amount is \$7,250 plus expendables, copies, etc. He added that the repayment to the State would be \$105,000.

Chairperson Hemmann asked if the Superintendent can be contacted and asked why the architect needs to do the specifications.

Jeff Bridges responded that he will take care of this.

Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO AMEND THE TRANSFER OF \$105,000 FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING FOR THE REPAYMENT OF CERTAIN FUNDS FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS,”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

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

Councilor Hurley reported that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board unanimously voted that they did not want the parcel lot at the corner of Nott and Westlook streets.

Chairperson Hemmann added that at the Council's previous meeting, it was left that Council would wait to hear back from the Parks Recreation Advisory Board. She asked if there was any willingness to move this in some manner.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO SELL THE PARCEL AT THE CORNER OF NOTT STREET AND WESTLOOK STREET,”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Councilor Drake commented that it adds a lot to this area and he doesn't see what two extra houses would do to this area so he is going to vote to leave it as it is.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he agreed with Councilor Drake's comments. He noted that for the amount of money the Town may receive from selling the property, it should just be kept as is.

Councilor McAlister commented that he understands the idea of open space, but he felt most

people don't appreciate this parcel as a park, but it looks like it is someone's backyard. One of his original thoughts was not to sell it and put something there to make it a park. Now that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board doesn't want it, what would be the cost to put up a wooden sign noting "Westlook Public Park" to make people aware that this is the Town's property and not someone's backyard.

Councilor Manousos felt that the property should be sold off because it is not suitable for park land and the Town should be discouraging children from playing in this area. He added that this is not park land and at one time it was dedicated to a fire house so these are buildable lots and there is no reason for the Town to own it, and he believes Councilor Kotkin would agree with him.

Councilor Roberts commented that it should be left as is.

Councilor McAlister commented that since there is a formal opinion from Parks & Recreation that this parcel is not suitable for a park, is there any liability with the Town now that the Town has knowledge that it is not suitable for public use.

Jeff Bridges responded that he would need to check with the Town Attorney.

Councilor Roberts commented that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board noted that they did not want to develop it into a park.

Chairperson Hemmann commented that there are many different parcels in Town that are open space.

Councilors Hurley Kotkin and Manousos voted AYE. Councilors Drake, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console and Chairperson Hemmann voted NO. Councilor McAlister ABSTAINED. The motion fails 3-5-1.

### BIDS

Councilor Hurley moved **"TO AWARD A CONTRACT TO TREMCO/WEATHER PROOFING TECHNOLOGIES FOR ROOF REPAIR PER THE ATTACHED AGREEMENT FOR THE TERM JULY 1, 2011 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2012 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$55,165,"** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Jeff Bridges reported that this is an ongoing preventative routine maintenance program provided by Tremco and has been approved by the Capital Improvements Advisory Committee.

Chairperson Hemmann commented that it is important to note that this is a second of a five year term which includes roof inspection and routine/preventative maintenance and 24/7 roof leak response if required.

Councilor Kotkin commented that the past winter had been horrific and asked Mike Turner what the benefits of this was during this past winter.

Mike Turner responded that there hadn't been a lot of issues this past winter. The firm has been very responsive with any leaks that the Town building may have had.

Deputy Mayor Console asked what the status was of the dome[skylight] at the Charles Wright School.

Mike Turner responded that it was redesigned and is out to bid at this time.

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

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO APPROVE BLUM SHAPIRO AS THE TOWN’S INDEPENDENT AUDITOR FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2011 AT THE PROPOSED FEE OF \$38,400,”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Jeff Bridges responded that this is annual contract and the cost is split with the Board of Education to conduct the Town’s annual audit.

Councilor Kotkin asked Jeff Bridges if the Town has an expectation of going out to bid next year because there won't be the continuity with the new Finance Director.

Jeff Bridges responded that they have had those discussions.

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

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Barbara Ruhe, 79 Main Street, urged Council to think very hard before spending any money. She commented that something will need to be done with the high school and people are going to be resistant. She suggested that the Town should take the \$2 million that CREC is offering to the Town and put it in an investment fund at 2% or 3% and it will provide the Town with some income.

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Road, spoke on the issue of repaving the roads and the bond issue.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented on the repaving of the roads and noted that one of the big problems that the State and Country is facing is the issue of borrowing. He sensed from Council’s discussion is that there was a difference between paying for a bond and paying up front. He encouraged the Council to take the same level of interest in getting citizen input when it comes to passing budgets. He noted that he is in favor of fixing the roads but not for bonding, but is in favor of paying as you go.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on a comment from Councilor Montinieri regarding the cuts made on the Board of Education's budget and noted that the Board's budget was not cut, only their proposed budget was cut. He also spoke on the bond issue for the roads. He also noted that Councilor Roberts spoke noted her concerns about taking the Northeast Utilities property off the tax roll, but the property that the police station now located was at one time was taxable property and now is not.

Councilor McAlister moved **"TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION,"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

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

At 10:16 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION,"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

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

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:17 p.m., Councilor Manousos moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING,"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

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

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk  
*Approved by vote of Council*  
*July 18, 2011*

## Bridges, Jeff

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**From:** Robert Gaynor [rfjgco@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 05, 2011 4:52 PM  
**To:** Bridges, Jeff  
**Subject:** Fw: Public Hearing on the Proposed Bond Issue for Road Repair

--- On Tue, 7/5/11, Robert Gaynor <[rfjgco@yahoo.com](mailto:rfjgco@yahoo.com)> wrote:

From: Robert Gaynor <[rfjgco@yahoo.com](mailto:rfjgco@yahoo.com)>  
Subject: Public Hearing on the Proposed Bond Issue for Road Repair  
To: [donna.hemmann@wethersfield.org](mailto:donna.hemmann@wethersfield.org), [john.console@wethersfield.org](mailto:john.console@wethersfield.org), [david.drake@wethersfield.org](mailto:david.drake@wethersfield.org),  
[Mike.hurley@wethersfield.org](mailto:Mike.hurley@wethersfield.org), [jeffrey.kotkin@wethersfield.org](mailto:jeffrey.kotkin@wethersfield.org), [stathis.manousos@wethersfield.org](mailto:stathis.manousos@wethersfield.org),  
[Jim.mcalister@wethersfield.org](mailto:Jim.mcalister@wethersfield.org), [paul.montinieri@wethersfield.org](mailto:paul.montinieri@wethersfield.org), [groberts@wethersfield.org](mailto:groberts@wethersfield.org)  
Date: Tuesday, July 5, 2011, 8:47 PM

Donna, please read this email into the public record, for I cannot attend the hearing tonight. I am Robert Gaynor of 20 Orchard Hill Drive. I have been a taxpayer in Wethersfield for 33 years. I have always been fiscally conservative, as I was raised by my parents who lived through the depression. With the present poor state of our economy with: high unemployment, underemployment, a high foreclosure rate, people fearful of losing their jobs, and increasing inflation most people are learning to do without and spending less. It is time for the three town council members who are proposing a \$4 million bond issue for road repair to become fiscally responsible. / They are proposing a bond issue of this magnitude right after the town budget was put in place. Taxpayers are struggling to pay the 2.5% increase in taxes. The Courant reported "town officials" estimate \$1.2 million is needed every year for road repair. Who are these officials? The amount needs to be documented. If it is accurate, the town budget is only \$315,000 less. These "three" are not living in reality. This is not the time for a \$4 million bond. / They are proposing a \$4million bond before the survey of road conditions is completed. This is like getting a mortgage before knowing the price of a house. This is the height of financial irresponsibility. I don't suppose they would do this with their own personal finances, spending their own money. It is too easy for them to spend other peoples' money, even when taxpayers are struggling. They cannot contain their spending. They do not deserve to be re-elected. / This public hearing is premature. This proposed \$4 million bond issue is premature. Wait for the completion of the survey. How much is the survey costing? Who decided to outsource the survey? Why are town employees not doing it? A \$4 million bond at 4% over 20 years will cost \$1,818,831.75. I wonder if the "three" considered this! If this goes to referendum, I hope that it doesn't, this cost must be acknowledged in the interest of full disclosure. We shouldn't be adding to the town debt service, which is already 4.38% of budget. This would increase town debt to \$5,511,7112 and 6.54% of budget. This is way out of line. / I do a great deal of driving in Wethersfield. I do not see that the roads are in bad shape. They are certainly acceptable, and not worth going into deeper debt. The roads don't need \$4 million plus \$1.8 million of interest of repair. Some of the worst road conditions occur after roads are resurfaced, when the manholes are not raised. This makes for permanent road depressions, like potholes. This happens too often. This is not money well-spent. / The Courant stated the town is "cash strapped". This needs to be explained. We are in lean times. The taxpayers are also cash strapped. / I would like to get a new driveway, but I am going to wait until my personal economy is better. / Strike down the irresponsible notion of a bond issue for road repair. Make do with what was allocated in the current budget.