

**REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 17, 2011**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, October 17, 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 and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Manousos led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

HEARINGS: None.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Penny Stanziale, 15 Harold Street, noted that everyone has an opportunity to participate in a survey for the Superintendent of School's position, which is available on the Wethersfield Board of Education website. She also thanked the Council for their service to Wethersfield.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, thanked Councilors Roberts and Drake and Deputy Mayor Console for checking on the status of the sidewalks on Morrison Avenue. He noted he received a letter dated July 22 regarding the intersection Orchard and Hillcrest Avenue. He previously requested intersection and stop sign distances for Morrison Avenue and has not received anything to date. He is also requesting sign information for a stop sign for the intersection of Orchard and Hillcrest Avenue. He commented that he feels the residents on Morrison Avenue have been treated like second class citizens.

John Miller, 45 Highland Street, commented that people have inquired about why Wethersfield paid so much for the Wilkus Property and he said there was a land trust representing and negotiating for the Town and being compensated by the seller. He also commented he is against unions funding local campaigns.

Jim Clynch, 903 Ridge Road, commented he had done yard work on his property at 105 Marsh Street on Sunday and when he went back on Monday, the nine Democratic signs that had been on his property had been removed. He noted the perpetrator should be ashamed. He is so upset about the incident that he has decided to list the house and sell the property.

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Road, commented that a cable box is needed in order to watch the Public Access channel. He also commented that the Nature Center will be holding their annual Haunted Habitat on October 28, 29 and 30.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented the propane gas filling station was a good idea but had a few concerns about a fire hazard being outside the building, the need for fencing around the pump and the back door of the building located there. He also commented on the Police Department DUI grant, and noted that texting and driving is the equivalent of driving while drinking. He hoped as the Police Department undertakes this task, their attention should also be paid to people texting and driving. On the referendum in November he urged caution as the Town does not have a lot of experience with redevelopment. He commented in the Town calendar under Town Government and the School Department, the school PTO's and PAC groups are listed and felt they had no business being there. He felt it should be listed under Civic Organizations and not be implied as part of Town Government. He also commented that the present Council has worked diligently, even if he hadn't agreed with everything, and expressed his personal thanks for the effort and time Council members put in.

Robert Cobb, 99 Meadowgate Drive, thanked members of Council for their service to the Town. He commented on the Democratic Town Committee's ads in the Wethersfield Life publication, specifically the ad about laying off teachers equals larger classes, and he felt it inferred layoffs are the fault of the Republicans on the Board of Education. He also commented on the cost of the ethics matter.

David Caruk, 149 Broad Street, commented on the poor results of Wethersfield's CMT and CAP scores. He commented that the Town should fund all day kindergarten and the fact that Public Access should be available without a cable box.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Drake commented that the School Committee issues have already been discussed and he noted that he supports the project.

Councilor McAlister reported for Public Works and the natural gas filling station and thought it would save a lot of money.

Councilor Manousos reported for the EDIC which met last week and noted that several façade improvements signs were approved for Main Street Creamery and Lamore's Automotive. He noted that Budget & Finance Committee will be having a meeting in the next couple of weeks.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Kotkin reported that he was going down Elm Street door to door and was given a copy of a flyer that was put out by the Rocky Hill Riverfront Preservation Society and the permanent closing of the old dump along the river in Rocky Hill, which may have impact on Elm Street and Great Meadow Road. The trucks may be driving back and forth on the roads and passed the flyer to the Town Manager. He also commented on the explanatory text for the referendum projects that suggests that there is not a developer for the Berlin Turnpike site, when he feels there is one.

Councilor Drake commented that he had gone past the Weight Watchers' building this past weekend and there were political signs on the property. When the Town has an interest in the property and the owner has asked for money from the Town for the development, it may have a negative effect on the referendum. He suggested that Peter Gillespie call the owner.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he worked at the Keane Carnival with UNICO and felt it was getting better each year. He noted that the Wethersfield Police Department will be hosting a car show at the Cove for the Police Explorer program this Sunday, October 23. He also commented on Desmond Drive and noted that MDC was there to show the contractor how the work can be done and the work on the water main was completed. He complimented the MDC workers. He also noted that MDC has had a number of layoffs, and was concerned as to whether or not it would affect the Town.

Jeff Bridges commented that during an MDC meeting, MDC reported that nothing will be known until the costs of the retirements are completed next month.

Deputy Mayor Console continued on with Morrison Avenue and noted that he had a concern regarding the corner of Tifton Street down to Silas Deane Highway, there were a number of issues with the sidewalks and telephone poles and was concerned that someone in a wheelchair may not be able to navigate around the poles. He also noted that the area with the most traffic measured 23.2 inches wide and it should have been 24 inches, and he asked the Town Manager to look into this. He also commented on the photos taken by Eleni Tsambanos of the condition at Wethersfield High School and commented that the building is lacking basic maintenance and with a new high school, the same conditions will happen unless there is basic maintenance done with the new building. He also commented that while going door to door, people ask him why he is doing what he is doing and he read a quote by Edward Hale.

Councilor Roberts received correspondence from Woodrow Warren and asked to have it part of the record. (Attachment No. 1). She also commented that the overhead Craft Fair sign is still displayed near the entrance to 91 near Mr. Clynch's property.

Councilor Manousos reported for Budget and Finance Committee and noted that the numbers which reflect the Town was over budget on the revenue side by \$100,000, even though the investment income was off 47%. On the total expenditure side, the Town was under budget, and the fund balance that was appropriated did not need to be used in full. The Town will be getting back \$1,600 from the Board of Education. He reported that the Hartford Marathon was held this past weekend and Will Sanders placed 9th out of the whole field. Mr. Sanders was the mastermind behind the lights on Windmill Hill during the holidays.

Chairperson Hemmann reported that although she was unable to attend Saturday evening, Father Campion from Corpus Christi Church will be retiring after 28 years of service and she wished him well with his retirement. She also reported that "Meet the Candidates" for the Board of Education is scheduled for October 19 from 7:00 to 9:00 at the Middle School and the remaining meeting for the Superintendent search is Tuesday, October 18 at the High School at 7:00 p.m.

She also reported that she attended a celebration at the Ukrainian National Home, for a celebration of 20 years of their independence from the Soviet Union.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges reported on a newspaper article regarding mercury at the Wethersfield Cove. He noted that a different study was done for the Town in conjunction with the Cove Grant project and the Town is awaiting results of those tests. The Department of Health also talked with the State about getting the actual mercury report from the college study. He noted that there has always been a fishing restriction that anything caught had to be released and that restriction continues.

Chairperson Hemmann noted that there was one clarification that could be made in the first article which stated that the sampling that the college did, it stated that they had tried to contact the Town officials.

Jeff Bridges responded that he had talked with that reporter on Sunday morning and he stated he did not try to contact the Town Official, the reporter only tried to contact the State Officials and he apologized and noted that he would try to print a retraction, which Jeff Bridges said he has not seen yet. Jeff Bridges also reported on new recycling figures from last year and recycling tonnage equals dollars back to the Town. He also reported that a letter was received from ISO indicating that they will be coming out to do a fire rating for the Town. A full rating has not been done since 1996.

COUNCIL ACTION

Ordinances, Resolutions and Appointments for Action

Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO APPOINT MILDRED COURNEYER, 337 FOLLY BROOK BOULEVARD, AS AN ALTERNATE TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor McAlister moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF A SLOW FILL**

NATURAL GAS FILLING STATION FROM THE TOWN OF GLASTONBURY AND TO AUTHORIZE AIR & GAS TECHNOLOGIES TO MOVE THE EQUIPMENT FOR INSTALLATION AT A LATER DATE,” seconded by Councilor Drake.

Jeff Bridges reported that the Town of Glastonbury is moving away from a slow fill station to a

fast flow station because of the number of vehicles that they have. Wethersfield is considering purchasing their slow fill station as a process to moving towards natural gas.

RaeAnn Palmer reported that they are asking to install a slow fill natural gas filling station. The gas company will install a pipe line from the Silas Deane Highway, at the gas company's expense. The square compressor will be shield by landscaping. On the deck will be the hoses and the posts for it. The equipment is approximately \$40,000 new, and the Town can purchase it from Glastonbury for \$12,500. Natural gas cost is approximately \$1.50/gallon.

Deputy Mayor Console asked the age of the Chevy Cavaliers that the Town presently owns.

RaeAnn Palmer responded that they are 2002 and are in good condition. She introduced a gentleman to speak on the safety issues of using natural gas.

Graham Barker reported that the equipment the Town is interested in purchasing is an appliance to distribute the gas and no gas is being stored on premises. This appliance will be located on the side of the sally port with the filling area on the sally port.

Councilor Kotkin commented that he felt it was a good idea and asked where the gas line is located at Town Hall.

RaeAnn Palmer responded that the gas line that comes into Town Hall is located at the Library side of the building. Connecticut Natural Gas will be putting in another gas line because the pressure from the current line is not adequate.

Councilor Kotkin asked if CNG is paying for the installation of the gas line.

RaeAnn Palmer confirmed that CNG is paying for the installation of the gas line. The Town would be paying for Air & Gas Technologies to install, set up, make sure that it is working and get all the safety features going. The Town will take care of the pipe from the street to where the Town is going to put it and the town will also install the cement pad and this will be done by the Town Staff.

Councilor Kotkin asked if this work will be done this Fall.

RaeAnn Palmer responded that the motion is to purchase the equipment only and the Town will look to install it in the Spring.

Councilor Kotkin asked if any of the Town cars run on natural gas.

RaeAnn Palmer responded the Town does have vehicles that run on natural gas.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the vehicles have dual gas tanks.

Graham Baker responded that the system for a dual tank gas has the option of running on either natural gas or gasoline, and on pressure it can switch to gasoline.

Councilor Kotkin asked if it is known that the Town cars run on natural gas.

RaeAnn Palmer responded that the Town does have cars that run on natural gas and they have been using it.

Councilor McAlister commented on maintenance cost which amounts to approximately \$2,500 to \$3,000 for every three years for the compressor heads.

Councilor Roberts asked why the system would be located at Town Hall as opposed to the Town Garage.

RaeAnn Palmer responded that there are two reasons. First, to get the gas to the area at the Town Garage, they would need to trench 375 feet, and second, the vehicles which will be using the fuel are parked at the Town Hall and used by the Town staff.

Councilor Drake asked if by bringing the pipe in from the Silas Deane Highway, if it was going to interfere with the landscaping.

RaeAnn Palmer responded that she and Mike Turner had reviewed the area, and the front sidewalk may need to be taken up and the cost would be \$7.00/square foot to have a contractor fix it and it is approximately 25 square feet.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the location should be looked at again because at some point there will be more vehicles that will be using the filling station and it may be expanded to the Town Garage.

Councilor Drake commented to Councilor Montinieri that it was discussed at the Public Works Committee that if this worked, the Town could go to the next step, which would mean additional equipment and trucks and then a new station would be purchased.

RaeAnn Palmer commented that the filling station would not be able to fill large equipment with a slow fill.

Councilor McAlister commented that on an average, the vehicles are driven about 300 miles/month and it takes 12 hours to fill a tank.

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

Councilor McAlister moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN STAFF TO SOLICIT REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR AN OWNER’S REPRESENTATIVE FOR ENERGY PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING,”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Jeff Bridges reported the Energy Committee is seeking a consultant to help formulate a request for proposal for performance contracting companies to submit proposals to upgrade Town owned buildings and utilize the savings from the energy efficiencies to pay for the upgrades. What is being asked is to solicit qualifications from consultants to help development plans to submit to contractors.

Chairperson Hemmann noted that this does not entail any dollars spent at this particular point of the process.

Jeff Bridges commented that dollars will not be spent until somebody actually does work.

Matt Forrest, 25 Spring Street, Vice Chair of the Energy Committee, reported that performance contracting is essentially getting a contract to reduce energy costs and by reducing energy costs, the Town will be able to get improvements to the Town buildings, thereby conserving energy. There is a need for a specified expert to produce a document which is 300-400 pages long and is very detailed specs. By doing that, it will protect the Town from whatever construction is done to the Town buildings. The project that the Town is contemplating is a multi-million dollar project which will save the Town multi-million dollars in taxes and energy.

Councilor Drake asked how many people they expect to respond.

Matt Forrest replied that it is likely that three or four people will respond.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the \$20,000 to \$30,000 is an estimate of the cost for someone to write the RFP.

Matt Forrest replied that this was correct.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there is currently money in the energy fund to pay for it.

Jeff Bridges responded that he believes there will be. There will be another check from Direct Energy in the next couple of months, in addition to what is remaining in the Energy Fund.

Councilor Kotkin asked how often money is collected from Direct Energy and will this expenditure drain the fund.

Jeff Bridges responded that it will deplete the fund.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there is any other source to refill the fund for future projects.

Jeff Bridges responded that this would be it for the fiscal year.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there were other projects that the committee was working on that might have to be put off because of there isn't any money in the fund or was this expected this year.

Jeff Bridges responded that the one project that was expected this year, is the filling station and money will need to be found for that in the Spring. The street light issue is still being worked on.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AN ACCEPT, IF AWARDED, A COMPREHENSIVE DUI ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM GRANT FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Jeff Bridges reported that this is an annual grant for the holiday season to allow for extra DUI patrols. Total cost covered by the grant is \$7,660.40, which is in the Town budget for overtime.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO REFER THE HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT TO ANY OR ALL TOWN AGENCIES FOR APPROVAL, STARTING WITH PLANNING & ZONING SEC. 8-24”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges reported at the meeting prior to tonight's meeting, there was discussion on the steps that were needed to undergo the high school project. One of the steps is to make sure Council refers the project to the local agencies for the necessary review and approval. The action in the motion will allow staff to shepherd the project through the appropriate process.

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

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROPRIATE \$10,000 FROM CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY OF THE HIGH SCHOOL,”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Jeff Bridges reported that there is a desire to do some additional environmental studies on the building.

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

MINUTES

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 3, 2011”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Clynch, 903 Ridge Road, commented on the fact that his house on Marsh Street is heated by gas and he needed to bring a gas line in from the street, which is across the street from the Town Garage. He also commented on the article about the mercury in the Wethersfield Cove.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, asked why the Town roads falling apart.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented that he felt the decision made on the gas filling station was a good decision and reiterated that all safety issues are addressed. He also asked if there will be any critical maintenance requirements that will need to be done on an ongoing basis. He also commented on the pictures taken by Eleni Tsambanos at the Wethersfield High School.

Barbara Ruhe, 79 Main Street, thanked the Council for a thankless job. She noted that what everyone needs to do in the next couple of weeks is to get out and vote on November 8.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:45 p.m., Councilor Kotkin 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
November 21, 2011