

Unapproved
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 21, 2009

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, September 21, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Console, Forrest, Hemmann, Kotkin, Roberts, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Montinieri, and Chairperson Adil.

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Kotkin led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, took attendance.

HEARINGS

RESOLUTION – ABANDONMENT OF A PORTION OF THE FORMER SPRING STREET RIGHT OF WAY

No one wished to speak for or against the resolution. Chairperson Adil declared the hearing closed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Martha Connelly, 12 Fairmont Street, urged that the Town stop the construction of a fence between the Town Hall and Silas Deane Middle School. She said that she has spoken with the Town Manager and residents in Town. In three days 108 residents signed a petition opposing the fence. She said that the Town is taking the step to wall off a school from a Library. She said that the Town Manager told her there were concerns with traffic in the parking lot of Town Hall because parents drop off and pick up students in the lot. She said that the Town is taking an extreme measure to cut off the flow between two public, Town owned buildings. She said that there was no concern given to neighbors and the impact this would have on the surrounding streets. It sends a terrible message to children to block their access to the Library. She asked the Town Council to please halt the construction of this fence until the Town and Board of Education can address it.

Carolyn Fazzina, 19 Fairmont Street, said that there will be a new parking pattern in the Town Hall parking lot. She asked if it would alleviate some of the traffic issues. She also asked if a traffic monitor or crossing guard could be placed in the lot in the morning and afternoon when parents are dropping off and picking up students.

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Roberts Young, 20 Coppermill Road said that he is always talking about taxes. The Town needs to look at the revenue side, too. He distributed a summary of State revenue by fund, tax type, and account to the Town Councilors. He reviewed the shortfalls in State money. He said that people are still leaving the State. There are still foreclosures and unemployment. He said that these are bad times coming up. He urged the Town Council to reforecast the budget and bring it down by cutting back.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, said that an article in Wethersfield Post said that he has been complaining a lot about Morrison Avenue. He said that Councilor Forrest said that work is being done on the street. He said that it has been two years and the problems have not been fixed. He said that Morrison Avenue does not meet the Town road standards. It appears to him that no one cares about Morrison Avenue. He would like to meet with someone and discuss this.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, said that there have been a lot of important issues that have been addressed by his colleagues in Town. There are still some little irritants to address:

1. The Cloverdale pond needs to be looked at as an asset and work should continue on it.
2. It is difficult to locate names and phone numbers of people in Town government in the calendar. That information should be easier to obtain.
3. He asked why PTO's are listed under Town Administration, maybe the Taxpayer's Association should be listed under Town Council.
4. He got to the meeting late tonight and almost lost his right to speak at a Town Council meeting. The Town Council should reinstate the Public portion of the meeting at the end of the meeting.
5. He said that there is information on the website and television station concerning public safety that impacts only a small handful of people. The Town Council, with the help of the Police Department should be enforcing the law about people driving while on their cell phones. People should be stopped and fined. Using a cell phone while driving is worse than driving drunk.

COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Councilor Forrest said that the:

- Shade Tree Commission met and looked at plans for the replanting of trees on the Broad Street Green.
- Conservation Commission met and commented on the Beaver Brook Final Plan that will be discussed later in the meeting.
- Green Summit III planning is underway for the fall event.
- Energy Committee met and discussed an energy co-op where the Town would bid out for low cost electricity and residents and businesses could opt in to the bid and receive low cost electricity. It could result in a 10 – 15 percent savings.

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Councilor Walsh said that the Redevelopment Commission is looking into meeting with the owner of the former CL&P building to see if there is a role for the Commission in assisting with the development of the location.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Insurance Committee met and addressed health savings plans. It is also watching for recoveries for the property and casualty carrier resulting from the tornado. The healthcare costs for the first two months of the fiscal year are below the budgeted amount.

Councilor Cascio asked for some clarification on the fencing between the Town Hall and Silas Deane Middle School.

Chairperson Adil said that Mike Turner will speak in a minute to discuss the fence issue. He said that he attended the 2nd Annual Kids Day this year. It was a great event. The Library is sponsoring a program on September 24th on job finding in a tough economy. The Annual meeting of the Friends of the Library will be on September 29th. The George D. Ritchie Youth Soccer is hosting a fundraiser dance this Friday at the Community Center. Finally, this Sunday is the 375th Anniversary Parade. There will be 66 groups participating. The reviewing stand will be on Main Street by the First Church.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that:

- The Town received \$99,651 in stimulus funds for energy conservation projects. The staff is preparing a list of potential projects.
- Council has information from the Housing Authority concerning the tornado damage it sustained. The Director will be at the next meeting.
- Town staff is working on the language for the Health Insurance Reserve Fund. The Board of Education reviewed it and it will be ready for Council at its next meeting.
- Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, is here to discuss the proposed fence between Town Hall and the middle school.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that the plan for the fence was presented to the Town Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and other Town committees. The intention of the fence is to stop the drop off and pick up of the middle school students in the Town Hall parking lot. The suggestion came up two years ago during the renovation of the Town Hall and Library. At that time the south end of the parking lot was fenced in for construction equipment. The then Town Manager noted how well the fence worked at eliminating the congestion of traffic caused by the parents. The fence that is planned is a five foot tall ornamental fence similar to the wrought iron fence in the front of Town Hall. There will be a gate that can be unlocked for certain events when overflow parking might be needed. This information was not given under the guise of night. It was discussed with the Infrastructure Committee and Building Committee. It was also discussed at length with the Planning and Zoning Commission and brought up during the bidding process for the parking lot with the Town Council.

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Councilor Roberts asked how the residents and students would walk from the Silas Deane Middle School to the Library.

Mike Turner said that students have been walking down to the Silas Deane Highway and up to the Library. There is a door to Town Hall on that side of the building.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked if the issue of drop off and pickup was addressed at the school level.

Mike Turner said that it was addressed at the school level as well as with Shared Services. The way the Silas Deane Middle school parking lot is designed parents enter on Fairmont Street or Church Place, drop children off in the circle and go back up through the parking lot.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked if there are issues on these streets with traffic.

Mike Turner said that the residents of Church Place would say there are issues due to the narrowness of the street. He said that the morning drop off is not really problematic because the process is so quick. A parent pulls into the parking lot, drops the child off, and the child walks to the Middle School side entrance. In the afternoon, parents line up in the parking lot and wait for their children. There have been numerous accidents. Parents park all over the parking lot.

Councilor Console said that at the last meeting he said that he thought there should be a driveway between the buildings for emergency access. It is all public property and access for 180 days a year for drop off and pick up would alleviate congestion on other roads. He said that he has seen school buses take out signs on Church Place.

Councilor Roberts said that there was a problem with out of Town special education buses using Church Place. That problem has been addressed and the buses were rerouted.

Councilor Walsh said that it seems like there are a lot of safety concerns with the pick up but not drop off. He asked if the gate could be open every morning for drop off and then locked mid-morning. The Town Hall isn't open during the morning drop off time.

Mike Turner said that the gate is there so that the Town will have that flexibility.

Councilor Roberts said that parents get to the schools up to a ½ hour before school ends to get in the front of the line. Parent pick up is a big problem at all of the schools. It has been looked at with Shared Services a million times. There are really not that many options. She said that drop off in the morning is not really a problem but wondered if it would be difficult to have parents drop off in the morning in the Town Hall parking lot but not pick up there in the afternoon.

Councilor Cascio asked if there were any problems with students walking down to the Silas Deane Highway during the renovations to Town Hall.

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Mike Turner said that he was not aware of any problems. There is a sidewalk there and most students are dismissed from the Silas Deane Highway.

Councilor Cascio said that the Town put a lock on the gate at Wethersfield High School, too. It should learn from its mistakes. When you lock something, you cause problems. The comments from the public tonight made it seem like a wall was being build when in fact it is a fence with a gate that can be unlocked.

Councilor Hemmann said that she hoped the gate would be unlocked on the weekends.

Councilor Kotkin asked what time school starts in the morning.

Mike Turner said that parents drop off between 7:30 and 7:45 a.m.

Councilor Kotkin said that he concurs with Councilor Walsh and asked that the Town look at allowing morning drop off. It is the afternoon pick up that is problematic.

Mike Turner said that there is also a problem with Chartwells Food Service employees parking in the Town Hall lot. There are about 30 employees during the course of one day.

Councilor Roberts said that it won't be an issue if the gate is locked mid morning.

Councilor Hemmann said that shouldn't play a part in the decision. That is a personnel issue that should be handled by the Board of Education.

Councilor Console asked if there was a count of parents dropping off and picking up.

Mike Turner said that an official count has never been done but that it is easily 50 parents a day, especially when the weather is bad.

Chairperson Adil said that he can see the rational. The parking lot can be dangerous. Parents should have students walk to school or ride the bus. This went through several commissions. The gate can be unlocked during the morning and then closed. There is a drop off and pick up issue at the high school too.

Councilor Roberts asked what would be the next step.

Chairperson Adil asked that there be a discussion with the Board of Education and have them comment back to the Town Manager.

Councilor Forrest asked that the Energy Committee be involved in the decision making process regarding the \$99,000 of energy funds that the Town received.

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COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATIONS OF DONNA FOREST, JENNIFER PAQUETTE, MEG O’CONNOR, BRIAN SHEEKAN, THOMAS MOORE, AND JAMES COLLINS FROM THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Councilor Forrest abstained from the vote on Donna Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed (8-0-1 for Ms. Forrest’s resignation) 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“TO ACCEPT THE APPOINTMENTS OF NANCY STILWELL AS MUNICIPAL AGENT OF CHILDREN FOR A TERM FROM 9-21-09 TO 6-30-11 AND CHRISTINE TAYLOR AS MUNICIPAL AGENT OF THE ELDERLY FOR A TERM FROM 9-21-09 TO 6-30-11”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Councilor Hemmann said that she did not receive a copy of these appointments.

Chairperson Adil said that they are Mayor appointments.

Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilors Console and Hemmann abstained. The motion passed 7-0-2.

Councilor Forrest moved **“TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ABANDONMENT OF A PORTION OF FORMER SPRING STREET RIGHT OF WAY IN THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that this is the final parcel attached to the abandonment as part of the realigning of Spring Street.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Forrest moved **“TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT BEAVER BROOK LINEAR PARK FINAL REPORT AND INSTRUCT THE TOWN MANAGER TO LOOK FOR FUNDING”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that there is a very descriptive memo of the process that was used to create the plan for a linear park along the backside of commercial properties on the Silas Deane Highway. The Conservation Committee looked at the plan and was excited by the

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prospect of turning it into a linear park. He said that he will look for funding and work along with the Silas Deane Master Plan for a cohesive picture of the Silas Deane Highway.

Councilor Kotkin said that he looked at the drawings and ideas. This would be a fantastic resource for the Town. He urged the Town Manager to try to figure out how to finance the project.

Councilor Forrest said that the drainage basin or waterway that has been polluted for many years. The combination of the gateway to Hartford and Silas Deane corridor seem to be a natural fit for a park. He thanked the Conservation Commission and Town Council for all of their work on this plan. He is hopeful that the Town will be able to find funding. He said that the Beaver Brook runs the length of the Town. The Spring Street pond is the most known part of the Beaver Brook.

Chairperson Adil said that the Commission did a wonderful job on the plan. He also thanked Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc. for its excellent job producing the report. He said that he doesn't want the report to sit on the shelf for another 40 years and hopes that funding can be found.

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

BIDS

Councilor Roberts moved **“TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR SALT FOR ROADWAYS TO EASTERN SALT CO., INC. AND AMERICAN ROCK SALT”** seconded by Councilor Hemmann.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that this is an annual bid. He is recommending that the two lowest bidders be awarded.

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

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR BRIMFIELD ROAD REAR YARD CURTAIN DRAIN TO DICIOCCIO BROTHERS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$30,675”** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that this is a drainage project on Brimfield Road. He would ask that Mike Turner respond to any specific questions.

Councilor Hemmann asked if this project is similar to the project that was done several years ago on Beverly Road and Marmour Court.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that this is run off from Longvue Drive and several

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properties on the Housing Authority onto Marmour Court properties. There is no drainage in the area. The Town is lucky to have the ability to tie the drains into Brimfield Road. The low bidder is a local contractor that the Town has used numerous times and is pleased with its work.

Councilor Kotkin said that he has never seen 17 bidders before. It may be indicative of the need for work.

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

Councilor Roberts moved **“TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR POLICE VEHICLE COMPUTERS, MOUNTING BRACKETS, AND EXTENDED WARRANTIES TO HUB DATA911 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$32,640”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Montinieri.

Jeff Kotkin, Town Manager, said that this is a bid for computers that are a step beyond the typical mobile data units that are in police cruisers. They are modular units with a better life span, easier to read screens and keyboards. They are also upgradeable. The Police Department received a grant for the purchase of them. The bid is off of the State bid.

Councilor Forrest said that the grant is for \$34,000 and the bid is only \$32,000. He asked what would happen to the other \$2,000.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that the money will be reprogrammed. A second grant is coming from the State for the purchase of more of these units as part of the American Recovery Funds. The \$2,000 will go towards that purchase.

Councilor Hemmann asked if all cruisers would have these units after both grants are used.

Rae Ann Palmer said she will have to confirm with the Chief but she thinks only the round the clock vehicles will have them. The traffic cruisers will not. There is just not enough money.

Councilor Walsh asked about the warranty.

RaeAnn Palmer said that she would have to find out the warranty length and get back to Council with the details.

Chairperson Adil said that he is assuming that the Police will use these devices appropriately and the Town will not have an issue with them driving and using it.

Councilor Roberts said that the units are used to run plates and licenses after a vehicle is stopped. The officer will be able to enter data into the system.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE AUTHORIZATION AND SUBMISSION OF A GRANT FROM THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND YOUTH SERVICES AND THE AWARD OF FUNDS FROM THE GRANT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND YOUTH SERVICES

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD that Jeffrey K. Bridges Jr., Town Manager, and Nancy Stilwell, Director of Social and Youth Services are hereby authorized to make, execute and approve on behalf of the Town of Wethersfield, a contract between the State Department of Education and the Town of Wethersfield Department of Social and Youth Services. Said contract shall be in the amount of \$27,916* for contributions to program services within the "Youth Services Bureau" for fiscal year 2009/2010.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CENTRAL CONNECTICUT SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY AND AUTHORIZATION TO PAY \$500 FOR START UP COSTS

WHEREAS the municipalities constituting the Mid-Connecticut Project have been researching solutions for long-term solid waste disposal when their contract with the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority expires in 2012; and

WHEREAS other municipalities in the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials and elsewhere have expressed interest in joining efforts with the Mid-Connecticut Project municipalities to find long-term solid waste disposal solutions; and

WHEREAS the Capitol Region Council of Governments has performed a regional solid waste options analysis and successfully tested the presence of alternatives in the private market through a Request for Information for Integrated Regional Solid Waste Management Services covering Transfer, Transportation, Disposal and Processing/ Recycling Services; and

WHEREAS, the Capitol Region Council of Governments Executive Committee has authorized CRCOG staff to facilitate the forming of a solid waste management authority to represent municipalities interested in conducting an RFP and negotiating for long-term solid waste disposal services; and

WHEREAS the Town of Wethersfield has expressed preliminary interest in taking part in the solid waste authority formed by the Capitol Region Council of Governments, the "Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority."

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Wethersfield Town Council does hereby preliminarily endorse the above referenced Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority and authorizes the Town Manager to sign all necessary agreements and take all necessary actions to allow the Town to pay a fee of \$500 to help defray the professional fees necessary to draft a model ordinance which the Town would then adopt if it decided to become a member of the Authority, as well as other costs of creating the Authority.

RESOLUTION- PROHIBITING THE USE OF TOWN TAXPAYERS MONEY TO ACQUIRE CONTAMINATED PROPERTY

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council, on behalf of the Town of Wethersfield, does hereby declare that, because of the potential costs and expenses associated therewith, it hereby establishes a policy prohibiting the use of Town funds for the purchase or acquisition of any interest in real property which is on the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's "List of Significant Environmental Hazards".

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MINUTES

Councilor Walsh moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2009”** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:15 p.m., Councilor Kotkin **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS LEGAL MATTERS”** seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0. Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, was present. No motions were made and no votes were taken during executive session.

At 8:30 p.m., Councilor Forrest moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:30 p.m., Councilor Forrest moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk