

BUDGET WORKSHOP

APRIL 23, 2007

The Wethersfield Town Council held its budget workshop on Monday, April 23, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. at the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Drake, Forrest, Kirsche, Kotkin, Montinieri, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Fortunato and Chairperson Adil.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk took attendance.

VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that on page 124 the Town Council will see that money has been set aside for the stipend program for the volunteer. Also in the budget there is money for utilities and \$4,500 worth of repairs for equipment.

Greg Ritnick, President of the Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance Association, said that the ambulance members have a very similar tax program to the Fire Department. Ambulance members have to put in 432 volunteer hours with meetings, training, and riding in the ambulances. This time last year, the Association was in a rebuilding phase with very low membership. The numbers are slowly rising. The Association is giving an EMT class. The EMT class takes about a year to complete.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there is a contract for backup ambulance service to the Town if the Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance Association is already on a call.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there was a current stipend program.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that this year the Town is projecting to spend \$10,000 and \$18,000 is projected for next year because of new members and existing members who have met the requirements.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that the Town Council has heard the budget twice now and is well oriented with it. He said that he and the Town Manager have gotten updated information that he would like to share with the Town Council before taking questions. Chris Munroe, the Town's Insurance Agent of Record said that in the month of March, insurance claims were catastrophic. They roughly doubled. The budget is based on the past claim experience and factors in administrative costs. The primary cost is the past claim experience.

The Town was equally impacted with claims in March. The total for the Town and Board of Education claims were \$1,200,000. He would like to propose a meeting next Monday with Chris Munroe to discuss exclusively about these claims and how the Town should respond. He said that Karen Baldwin, Director of Human Resources and Karen Clancy, Supervisor of Financial Services were at the meeting to discuss this as well as the budget in general. The impact to the budget is sizeable and spans two budget years. The immediate concern is a \$200,000 deficit in the insurance account for this budget year. February was higher than average as well at about \$600,000. He said he thought that this was the anomalous month and was not prepared for an even larger impact in March. The \$200,000 budget deficit is based on a reasonable April, May and June impact. The Board of Education has stop loss insurance so that claims over \$100,000 are not collected from the Town. That has already gone in for April and may continue for May and June.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Town is in a similar situation. The Town Council can expect a short fall on the Town side of about \$300,000 for this fiscal year and \$200,000 for the next fiscal year.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that it will all depend on how the claims come in for the next couple of months. Looking at some realistic analysis, the Town backed out some of the heavy months and still the insurance is coming in at over \$500,000 more than allocated.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that she would like the week to do that analysis and see what options are available to make up the gap in both budgets.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that:

- The Board of Education was not aware of this until a meeting with Chris Munroe. The Board of Education is assuming that this is anomalous. A fairly healthy insurance reserve of up to \$1,000,000 would protect the Town. It is a way to go to build that kind of a reserve. For April, the Board of Education is looking at about \$550,000, up somewhat with one week to go. The Board of Education has had four catastrophic cases that have caused this spike in the one month claim experience. It is a small amount of people that are accounting for a very large proportion of the impact.
- In response to Councilor Kotkin's questions from a previous meeting, he said that energy costs were renegotiated since the budget was built. About \$140,000 can be reduced from the budget.
- In response to Deputy Mayor Fortunato's request for additional information concerning grants, he has a handout.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager asked Town Councilors to e-mail her any questions they may have concerning the health insurance so that Chris Munroe can be prepared with answers.

Councilor Drake said that the Board of Education has only four incidents. Is there enough history to show that the Board of Education is doing enough?

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that he is concerned in the short term, with the current budget and next year's budget, too. The Town and Board of Education need to be adequately protected.

Councilor Forrest asked about the energy savings renegotiation.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that a narrative that explains why the rates went down and the aggregate savings spreadsheet were passed out. The net savings for natural gas is \$109,610 and \$33,688 for electricity. Even with the \$140,000 savings, there is a 5 percent contingency or cushion built in.

Councilor Kotkin said that some of the work on the Wethersfield High School pool this summer is supposed to create a \$30,000 reduction based on less usage. He asked if that was built into the high school numbers.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that is not shown in the budget.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that some of the work that needs to be done will require the closing of the pool. The 25 percent energy savings will be because the Town Council allocated additional funds for additional equipment.

Councilor Kotkin said that he thought most of the savings would be in the natural gas account and heating the pool.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if there were additional energy audits that can be done. She suggested changing light bulbs and not leaving on all lights at the schools all night.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that the energy education program looks at patterns of consumption and alters them where appropriate. Software is used to track the savings. Moe McCarthy, Building Maintenance Director, is tracking energy savings in regards to infrastructure changes.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked that the school system focus on energy conservation and recycling.

Councilor Montinieri asked if he was being optimistic to think that there were energy savings over this past winter.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that he was being optimistic. The winter came late this year. The overall energy budget for the winter showed a slight surplus. However, that surplus was used for energy for the two months that weren't supposed to be winter.

Councilor Montinieri asked how he would characterize the school system in general in regards to energy efficiency. He said that it seems that the school system has a lot of old equipment that is still being used.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that the schools are somewhere in the middle as far as energy efficiency. Nearly every school has a window replacements project in the Capital Improvement Budget. That alone speaks to the schools' inefficiencies. Wethersfield is not far from the norm.

Councilor Drake said that windows are double paned but may leak. Even if replaced, the Town would not see a huge savings. There is not much efficiency difference in natural gas furnaces between new and old, either.

Chairperson Adil said that this would be a good topic for a Shared Services Committee meeting.

Councilor Cascio asked if the current Board of Education is satisfied with the budget.

Gerri Roberts, Chairperson of the Board of Education, said that the Board of Education is satisfied with the budget. She had heard that residents were going to support the addition of another guidance counselor at Wethersfield High School but no one spoke at the Public Hearing about the position.

Councilor Cascio said that he had received a call about an additional guidance counselor.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that typical caseloads for high schools the size of Wethersfield High School are anywhere from 220 to 280 per guidance counselor. Wethersfield High School guidance counselors have about 240 cases, right in the middle. There were other more pressing needs like the School Psychologist and mandated Special Education services. An additional guidance counselor is something to consider in the future.

Councilor Cascio said that the Town has a contract with Chartwells for food service. He asked when it would expire and if other companies had been considered. What does the contract give the Town?

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools said that it is a three year contract. It was just recently bid out. After careful review of the bids, Chartwell was the superior service. Chartwell hires employees and uses the Town facilities.

Councilor Cascio said that he has heard issues about the food on the elementary school level. The Town is so concerned with nutrition and food options and yet food is being served that doesn't match with a nutritional base. The Board of Education is being accused of educating children on nutritional facts and yet Chartwell is delivering food for the children.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that last year the Board of Education voted to take part in the State's Healthy Food Options. All of the foods must meet Connecticut standards. Chartwells is required to make sure the food meets these standards. After hours sales are exempt, things like fund raising and booster sales.

Councilor Cascio said that at one of the Chamber of Commerce meetings the question was asked if a security officer was being added to Silas Deane Middle School to help with the problems of children at the Library.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that there is no new position being added to the Silas Deane Middle School.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she has not heard anything about a current issue with middle school students and the Library.

Councilor Cascio said that at a Chamber of Commerce meeting; Laurel Goodgion, Library Director said that she hoped that the Town would consider the security monitor again because of the Library and children walking back and forth.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Library has this position already budgeted.

Councilor Cascio asked what the average class size was for the schools.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that at the elementary level it is 20 children per class average. There are no elementary classes at 25 students. There are some classes at the High School level that are over 25 and even 30. This has been a consistent concern for the Board of Education. The Middle School classes are 22 to 24 on average. It is a very attractive number for the middle school.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that she thought that some of the food services employees were Town employees. As those employees left, the positions would be filled with Chartwell employees. Is it at 100 percent?

Karen Baldwin, Director of Human Resources, said that there are six employees that are Town employees. Chartwell reimburses the Town for these employees.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked who the students are that are being evaluated and diagnosed at the High School by the School Psychologist. Why weren't they diagnosed at an earlier age?

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that the Special Education Director would be best able to discuss this issue, probably in a Shared Services Committee meeting. He said that he doesn't know the number of children coming into the system that require services. It is not atypical to develop issues at a later age. The Town is seeing a large increase in the number of children coming for special services.

Karen Baldwin, Director of Human Resources, said that relative to the High School, there are no new children to the system but issues that manifest themselves and behavioral challenges. Part of this position is to work with teachers to help with the children who have emotional and behavioral issues.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that this is preventative, too. The Town tries to serve the students instead of having to outpace the students.

Chairperson Adil asked about the grants.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that there are two types of grants. The first is Categorical Entitlement Grants from the State and Federal government. These grants come through the State Department of Education. The largest chunk of grants is Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Title One grants. They are to support programs that target students with academic achievements gaps. The rest of the grants are fairly small. The other category of grants is Competitive Grants. The Town is quite aggressive with these grants. \$985,950 is a consortium grant working with Central Connecticut State University working to improve professional development opportunities with history instruction. This money is for all the districts in the consortium to education history teachers.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if he is finding that the State and Federal grants are decreasing or staying steady.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that they are not increasing. Especially with Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it is an under funded mandate from the Federal government. The Federal Government is only funding at about 15 percent, with an original promise of 40 percent when the legislation was enacted. The State level mandate is also under funded. The burden is placed on the taxpayer for these shortfalls.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that she remembers when there was a lot more money available for technology for schools. She asked if those funds have dropped or has the Board of Education stopped pursuing those funds because it has done all it can.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that the Town has done a lot with the technology infrastructure grant.

The infrastructure grant is very competitive. The Town has gone after it every year. There are Towns that have more infrastructure needs than Wethersfield, now. These funds are not available for other technology purposes for those Towns ready to move to the next level.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the State was looking at that since so many districts have the infrastructures in place.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that this grant could be at risk with all of the other funding needed for other programs.

Councilor Forrest asked to verify if the grant money was inclusive in the budget.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that these grants are not in the operating budget. They are supplementary to the budget, by law.

Councilor Forrest asked if the Board of Education is going to receive another \$1,000,000 in addition to the budget.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said yes, the State and Federal Grants are over and above the operating budget. The grant information is included in the appendix so that the Town Council can see the money but it is not included in the operating budget.

Councilor Forrest asked if it would be adequate to say that last year the Board of Education spent more than was budgeted last year.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that these grants supplement the Town funding. The overall spending plan includes these dollars. The operating budget includes local school district dollars.

Karen Clancy, Supervisor of Financial Services said that the money in the first grant is for special education. The Board of Education has people already targeted or budgeted for Special Education. Paraprofessionals will absorb \$255,982. If that allocation was not received, funds would have to be taken from the general fund.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that these grants allow the Town to extend services to students that it otherwise could not or it would cost the Town more to do.

Councilor Drake asked if the Board of Education was not allowed to add these grants to their budget.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that the Board of Education can report the funding to the Town Council but can't commingle the funds. The Town Council could request an appendix that shows all of the additional revenue the Board of Education receives through grants.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that it would be very helpful to see.

Councilor Kotkin said that in the list of expenditures, energy education is an expenditure of \$67,200. What is that for?

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that pays for two part-time energy education coordinators. These are people who monitor consumption throughout the system. It also pays for tracking software. In one more year, the Town will own the tracking software.

Councilor Kotkin said that there is \$25,000 in contingency. He asked if this was the only contingency account.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that the main contingency is in special education outplacement. There are four slots built in at \$45,000 each for students who now require out placement. The transportation cost is about \$17,000 each student, too. Every year, it is spent. This is among the most volatile accounts.

Councilor Kotkin asked how many non-certified positions the Board of Education has.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said it was about 230.

Councilor Kotkin said that 8 retirements were built into the certified staff budget, but none in the non-certified budget. He asked why.

Karen Baldwin, Director of Human Resources said that there is a difference between turnover and retirement. She can count on one hand the number of non-certified retirements in four years.

Councilor Kotkin asked about the turnover rate.

Karen Baldwin, Director of Human Resources said that the paraprofessional turnover rate comes in two ways. Those working less than 20 hours a week move into a position of over 20 hours a week. There are others who come into a position of over 20 hours a week and leave the Town to become a special education assistant. There is a lot of step to step turnover. The turnover becomes a wash. This account is one of the most fluid accounts. There are over 100 paraprofessionals.

Councilor Walsh said a lot of the grant funding is to satisfy Federal and State mandates. Do the monies the Town receives cover the costs of the mandates.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that the grants do not cover the mandates.

Karen Baldwin, Director of Human Resources said that the Town covers over \$1,000,000 in special education teachers alone.

Councilor Montinieri asked about security in the school system. In a Washington Post article it said that 27 percent of middle school and high school students have brought a weapon to school in the last two years. As a parent, he is looking at the national concern of this. He said that he supports the additional security officer at the high school. Is the Town doing enough? How does the Town plan for the future?

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that the Town has made a substantial response in the past budget and this budget in response to the single incident of the kidnapping at Wethersfield High School. The buzzer systems have been implemented at all elementary schools. In response to students bringing a weapon(s) to school, staff does an excellent job at discovering the weapon and dealing with it. He said that there have been 6 expulsions this year, some for weaponry.

Councilor Kirsche said the teachers are the first line of defense when an issue arises. Do they have any training on how to react to a certain situation?

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that the teachers go through an evacuation procedure and lock down procedure. All teachers know their roles. They are not security trained per se but they know what to do in case of an emergency. The drills are done several times a year.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked how many psychologists are at the high school now.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that there is one full time psychologist. The proposed addition will make 1.5 full time positions.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that these positions will spend a majority of their time conducting evaluations and participating in the IEP process. What percentage of time will be spent on this?

Karen Baldwin, Director of Human Resources said that the Special Education Director would be able answer that question. She thinks that a smaller percentage of time will be spent on evaluations and a larger portion would be spent on the interdisciplinary team to give support to the students.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that this time would be spent in an assessment of children who have legitimate disabilities that are being served by the District. This is not for students exhibiting behavioral problems. This child would have to meet standards to receive these services. The crisis or prevention piece needs to be done, to serve the

overall needs of the students. These children have to exhibit behaviors that impair education. There is collaboration between the Town and Board of Education on prevention programs. There are opportunities to leverage grants.

Councilor Montinieri asked what percentage of time would the 1.5 school psychologist positions work with special education students.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that these positions would work primarily with students who have been evaluated and are eligible for special education services.

Councilor Montinieri said they would not necessarily work with students in crisis or with behavioral problems.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that these students would be formally diagnosed and would then require services as mandated by the State.

Deputy Mayor Fortunto said that is where there is an opportunity for Town staff to work with the Board of Education on prevention programs. The Social and Youth Services Department is mandated by the State Department of Education to address the needs of at-risk youth. The two need to work in cooperation.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that:

- Moving the crossing guards to the Board of Education budget from the Police Department budget was not in her proposed budget. It came about because of the issue of crossing guards being eligible to collect unemployment during the summer months because they work for the Town. The Police would continue to oversee the crossing guards.
- Charge backs need to be addressed. They are a lot of work and there are many of them. A committee is being formed to look at charge backs and see what makes sense to charge back. A report will be made to the Shared Services Committee at its May meeting.
- On page 217 of the Town budget there are three Capital Items for schools that Dr. Proctor may want to discuss.

Councilor Drake said that he thought the Highcrest roof was just replaced.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said that the roofing was not completed because the Town ran out of funding.

Councilor Walsh asked if the Highcrest flooring and carpeting replacement was replacing carpet for carpet.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said no. Wherever there is carpet that is being replaced, it is being replaced with BCT tile unless there are specialty needs for carpet.

Councilor Kotkin asked if these are the Board of Education's three highest priorities.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said yes.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Town is receiving \$100,000 in window replacement funding. Is it for Webb school?

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the funding is over two years and it is not for any specific windows.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Board of Education's highest priority is to finish the interior of Webb.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools, said yes it is.

RADIO BUDGET

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager said that the radio system management has been restructured from a large committee to a small core committee that consists of Officer Vargas and Lieutenant David Scales of the Police

Department, Deputy Chief Brian Schroll from the Fire Department, Tom Hemphill, Information Specialist and herself. The committee is making the best of the current radio system. Officer Vargas and Lieutenant David Scales of the Police Department, Deputy Chief Brian Schroll from the Fire Department, and Tom Hemphill, Information Specialist were retrained on the system.

Officer Vargas said that the Motorola training was a refresher course that brought everyone up to speed on the system.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that:

- As the Town moves forward, it positions Town staff to maximize the equipment that the Town has and looks forward to when the Town upgrades the system.
- The budget before the Town Council is a maintenance budget. It covers overtime to use Officer Vargas' expertise. The training that the committee received was paid for by Motorola.
- The committee is looking at the contract for the consultant for site management for the towers so that an RFP can be prepared to go out to bid.
- The service contract with Motorola provides the maintenance contract. All of the environmental alarms: heat, smoke, doors are all monitored in Town by the Police Department dispatch center.
- The budget includes batteries to keep up with the life cycle of batteries.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the replacement money for the entire system is shown on page 216.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that eventually the system will be upgraded to a digital system. As the Town goes through rebanding, it will need to replace some radios. The Town will also poise itself to replace radios for future use.

Chairperson Adil asked if any settlement money from Nextel would be used for these replacements.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that those funds will be used for staff time but those contracts aren't signed yet.

Councilor Drake asked if there will always be a service contract and what does it provide the Town.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that there will always be a service contract.

Officer Vargas said that the Town receives 24 hour coverage in case the system goes down. They also provide repair replacements to the system.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager said that Motorola also monitors all of the alarms.

Councilor Drake said that this agreement is expensive for a piece of electronic equipment.

Officer Vargas said that this is more than a piece of electronic equipment. It is the lifeline of the Police and Fire Departments.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that it is also insurance for the Town.

Councilor Drake said that 20 years ago there were radios, too. He said this whole concept bothers him. The problem is that the cost never goes away.

Officer Vargas said that the radio system capabilities are so much more. There are four repeaters that the radio system can tap into at any time so 5 or 6 people can talk at once.

ESCROW ACCOUNTS

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she was astounded by the number of Escrow Accounts the Town had when

she was first hired. Over the years, the number has been widdled down.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that in the last couple of weeks the Finance Department has been working to identify those accounts that should have been closed out. There will be an adjustment to the general fund to show the replacement of funds that were paid out of the general fund that should have been paid out of these escrow accounts. What is left will be ongoing accounts that have money coming in and out all of the time. The cost of evictions has been charged to one escrow account and it has no money going into the account.

Councilor Kotkin asked what was the Wethersfield Community Center escrow account.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager said that is the money from the rental of the Community Center and janitorial support. The Park and Recreation Department uses that money for the maintenance of the building and to pay for the janitors.

Councilor Kotkin said that \$30,000 seems like a lot of money in that account. The Park and Recreation Department is talking about moving the preschool program to a new location in the building, so why wouldn't they use this money for the move.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that she doesn't know but would find out.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Special Needs Fund collected \$32,000 but only spent \$8,000 last year. The balance is over \$180,000.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that there is a portion of that account that can't be spent. It has to be held in trust. A good portion of this account is used to support summer programs.

Councilor Kotkin said that he would like to find out the possibility of spending some of that money for social and youth programs.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that she wondered if an escrow account could fund the Fire Prevention senior outreach program.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that she would look into it.

Councilor Kirsche said that the Wethersfield Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities had discussed printing their resource book in Braille.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she has spoken to Carol Keenan, Chairperson of the Wethersfield Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities about using the Handicap Escrow Account for printing.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that there was a lot of information missing from that book and to please pass that information on to the Committee. Also, it is a good idea to have the resource in electronic format so that people can enlarge the font or use an electronic reader on their computer.

USER FEES

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that the committee consisting of volunteer employees looked at the user fees. Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner did a lot of research looking at what other Towns charge for fees. Most of the planning and development fees were on par or higher than surrounding Towns. The Police Department felt the same way. Park and Recreation fees were already decided on. The committee decided on raising photocopies per page up to \$1.00 and a return check fee of \$25.00. She said that most Towns have homeowners pay for bulky garbage pick up at residents' homes. To keep it affordable initially, the committee is recommending that Paine charge the residents for the pick up but the Town will continue to pay the disposal fee. For example, if a resident has items to be picked up, the resident would call Paine's and pay for the pick up either by credit card or by mailing in a check. Once payment is received, Paine's will come out and get the items. The savings to the Town would be about \$21,000. The

Town pays \$1,752 per month for this service now.

Councilor Drake said that the Town has to be careful. It doesn't want to start to find furniture thrown on curbs and behind schools.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said the Town Council doesn't need to make a decision tonight.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that the charges are per pick up. A resident could have five couches for pick up. If the Town added in the disposal charge, it would have brought the cost up higher. The other committee recommendation is in the Fire Department for billing to insurance companies for Fire Department response to motor vehicle accidents and hazardous material spills. The other Towns that do this charge insurance companies only, through a billing company.

Councilor Forrest asked how the \$20 bulk pick up fee squares with the Transfer Station fees.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that this is for items that residents can't easily bring to the Transfer Station. It is \$30 for a Transfer Station permit and \$30 for a 1/2 cubic yard of garbage.

Councilor Forrest asked if it was possible to buy a larger recycling bin.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she doesn't think so.

Councilor Drake asked who does the paperwork for the billing for fire calls.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that the Fire Marshal does the reporting on motor vehicle accidents so he would have that information.

Councilor Drake said that it seems like a lot of work to only collect \$1,500.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that once the Town starts to bill out, it may find it provides the service more often than it is aware.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the State has any limitations on the Town billing for accidents that occur on State highways.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the State gives the Town a small amount to offset some costs on the Berlin Turnpike and State roads. There is a limit. The Town will look into it.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato also asked what would happen if two Towns responded to an accident. Who would coordinate?

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that if the accident occurs in Wethersfield, the Town will bill for the accident.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Forrest moved "**TO ADJOURN TO THE NEXT BUDGET WORKSHOP ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2007**" seconded by Councilor Kirsche. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by vote of Council