

## **MARCH 20, 2006 REGULAR MEETING**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on March 20, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Silas Deane Middle School following an Executive Session at 6:00 p.m. in the lower level Conference Room of the Town Hall at which all Councilors except Councilor Cascio were present when Councilor Kirsche moved, **"TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PENDING LITIGATION - TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD VS WETHERSFIELD TECHNOLOGY GROUP, AND UNION NEGOTIATIONS"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0. Also present at the Executive Session were Town Manager Bonnie Therrien, Town Attorney Jack Bradley, and Planning and Zoning Commission Chairperson Joe Hammer (these attendees left Executive Session at 6:25 p.m.). Police Chief James Cetran arrived at 6:26 p.m. No votes were taken during the Executive Session. At 6:44 p.m., Councilor Adil moved, **"TO MOVE OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0. At 6:45 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved, **"TO ADJOURN TO THE REGULAR MEETING"**, seconded by Councilor Walsh. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

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

Absent: Councilor Cascio.

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

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Deputy Mayor Fortunato.

### **Presentation of Campership Check to Dr. Nancy Stilwell**

Paul Montinieri spoke on behalf of the volunteers who participated in the Mayor's Golf Tournament, by thanking Chairperson Morin for his generosity and energy in starting this fundraiser several years ago. He presented a check to the Town to be used to fund summer camp registrations. Chairperson Morin stated that a fundraiser is scheduled for October of this year; however, he is not sure at this time whether it will be another golf tournament or not.

### **Report from the Keane Foundation**

Judy Keane stated that the Keane Foundation was created to develop a sports center in Wethersfield and she introduced a number of the Keane Foundation members present at the Council meeting. She said that these individuals, along with many others, have worked tirelessly over the last number of years to raise funds for the Keane Foundation and are now ready to realize their goal. Ms. Keane said that the Keane Foundation has developed a proposal to renovate the east wing of the Pitkin Community Center to create a sports center consisting of an enlarged gymnasium, fitness room, walking track, lockers, a shower facility, and a meeting room. She said that this facility would add to the current use of the building and would be beneficial to many community groups. Ms. Keane asked the Council to endorse the concept and collaborate with the Keane Foundation as it is their goal to break ground on the project on the fifth anniversary of the fall of the World Trade Center towers. She thanked all for their donations of time and funds, with special thanks to the Parks & Recreation Department for all of their help.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the current budget includes a \$60,000 appropriation for the gym and recommended that next year's budget includes another \$30,000 for work to be done; however she now recommends holding up on spending the \$60,000 so that this amount will become the Town's share toward the Keane Foundation's goal toward this project. She said that this will then be a public nonprofit partnership which will allow for the possibility of receiving more grants for the project. She said that she is very excited about the Keane Foundation's proposal since there have been concerns about the condition of the gym and this project will be a win/win situation for everyone. She recommended to the Council that the currently appropriated \$60,000 not be spent and instead rolled into

next year's budget along with the additional \$30,000 to be appropriated.

Chairperson Morin said that he supports the efforts of Ms. Keane and the Foundation since the proposal will benefit the community in such a positive way.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO SUPPORT THE KEANE FOUNDATION IN THEIR PROPOSAL TO RENOVATE THE WEST WING OF THE PITKIN COMMUNITY CENTER TO CREATE A SPORTS CENTER"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Fortunato.

Councilor Forrest said that this is a fantastic motion and he has seen public and private projects come together in the past with great success.

Councilor Drake said that he fully supports the motion and he's happy to see something come of the group's efforts.

Councilor Walsh thanked Ms. Keane and the members of the Keane Foundation. He said that he is pleased to see something so positive for the community coming out of an event so tragic.

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

### **Report from the Central Connecticut Health District**

Central Connecticut Health District Chairperson Carolyn Wysocki stated that the Health District has adopted a budget of \$660,000 and that they continue to update their Strategic Plan. She provided the following PowerPoint presentation:



[Council Presentation](#) [100 KB PDF\*]

Ms. Wysocki stated that the Town Manager of Newington has expressed an interest in having that town join the Central Connecticut Health District. She said that the Health District continues to maintain satellite offices in each member town.

Paul Hutcheon, Director of Health for the Central Connecticut Health District, serving the Towns of Berlin, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield introduced himself and stated that the central office is located in the newly renovated space in the Wethersfield Town Hall. He said that there are sanitarian satellite stations located at the other two Town Halls. Mr. Hutcheon provided the Council with a printout of the Central Connecticut Health District's Community Health Report Card and also provided the following PowerPoint presentation on the Central Connecticut Health District's Annual Report:



[Annual Report](#) [224 KB PDF\*]

Mr. Hutcheon indicated that there is one year left of the Federal Public Health Grant and that the programs listed will

likely continue since they are very popular. He said that in April a drill will be held in both New Britain and Manchester to test the Health District's ability to run a medication POD (point of distribution) exercise. Mr. Hutcheon acknowledged and thanked the numerous volunteers who contribute to the success of the Health District.

Councilor Drake asked if the local ordinances for health codes are all the same for the three towns participating in the Central Connecticut Health District and Mr. Hutcheon told him that they are.

Councilor Adil asked Mr. Hutcheon for a brief explanation of the bird flu virus on a local level. Mr. Hutcheon said that the State is developing a State plan to address the avian flu and the Health District has received a copy of this plan and has provided comment back to the State. He said that it will be difficult to determine the quantity of avian flu vaccinations needed if they are offered to the public and he sees this as a limited activity at best; therefore it would be necessary for the Health District to implement its emergency preparedness plan for a POD. Mr. Hutcheon stated that a pamphlet has been distributed to the community requesting that those who wish to volunteer with Emergency Preparedness in the event of an emergency contact the Central Connecticut Health District.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato thanked Mr. Hutcheon and said that she looks forward to him returning at a later date to review the Health District's Community Health Report Card. She asked Mr. Hutcheon to explain the objective referring to the hiring of a Salon Inspector. Mr. Hutcheon stated that the Health District Board has voted to postpone this ordinance until at least January, 2007 since it is still being fine tuned. Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that she is pleased to see this being addressed. She asked if there has been a discussion as to the design of the content of the forums being proposed. Mr. Hutcheon stated that he and Ms. Wysocki have had discussions that the forums may center around emergency preparedness and to possibly bring together representatives from Berlin, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield's police, fire, EMS, health, and outside agencies to discuss the level of preparedness.

Councilor Kotkin commented that he was very impressed with the organization of the flu vaccination clinics especially given the volume of participants. He asked Mr. Hutcheon if there is any way to gain information as to scheduling, so residents are well prepared for vaccination clinics in the future. Mr. Hutcheon said that it may take action on the part of the Federal Government in dictating to vaccine manufacturers distributors the process by which vaccine doses will be distributed. He said that the Health District's doses of the vaccine are part of a State bid and he hasn't any process put into place to guarantee that the Health District will receive their requested 5,000 doses in September, although he has had to reserve vaccination clinic locations already.

Ms. Wysocki addressed the Asian flu vaccine topic stating that the Health District is still unsure if this is even coming.

### **Report from CCSU - Study of the Department of Youth and Social Services**

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that Council approved the study of the Department of Youth and Social Services by representatives from CCSU. She said that the Youth Advisory Board was also involved and reviewed the report.

Benjamin Tyson and Jessica Cabanillas, Principal Researchers from CCSU, provided an overview of the report which included the Objectives, Research Methods, and Conclusions below:

**Objectives:** To assess duplication and gaps in services for youth, seniors and people with disabilities offered by the Wethersfield Department of Social and Youth Services.

**Research Methods** (determined by Town Manager Bonnie Therrien, Dr. Stilwell, and Mr. Tyson): (1) Inventory of youth programs sponsored by state, municipal, and private agencies/ organizations in Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, Newington, and Hartford; (2) Three focus groups/interviews with twenty-six middle and high school students; and (3) Survey of two hundred twelve seniors and people with disabilities.

**Conclusions:** (1) Duplication and gaps in Youth Services including ROPE, Crossroads, and Adventure Excursions, Sports, Music/Art/Humanities, Recreation/Social Program, Recreation/Social Program, and Counseling and disciplinary services; and (2) Duplication and gaps in services for seniors and disabled people.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the correct title is "Dr." Tyson and he responded that it is. She asked who facilitated the focus groups and Dr. Tyson said that his wife, who is a professional focus group operator, did this along with Graduate Student and Principal Researcher Jessica Cabanillas and he facilitated the recording. Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the audio tapes are available to listen to and if a transcript of the tapes was prepared. Dr. Tyson said that he did not prepare a transcript. Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked how the information was gathered from surrounding communities and Dr. Tyson said that the majority of the work was done online using the online directory, with telephone follow-up. Deputy Mayor Fortunato commented that the report provides a good inventory of services; however, she was surprised that groups such as providers for persons with disabilities were not included, and there was limited information regarding senior services, faith-based organizations, or community providers. She cautioned that this report should not be taken as the final word of what services are available, although the inventory is a good beginning step. Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked Dr. Tyson to suggest how the Town should proceed with the information provided. Dr. Tyson replied that the inventory is only to be used for Youth Services and not for services for seniors or the disabled. Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that she thought that the focus of the analysis was to look at the services provided by Youth and Social Services and not Recreation, and she would like to see further analysis of the resources available for seniors and the disabled. Dr. Tyson stated that he, Town Manager Bonnie Therrien, and Dr. Stilwell determined that the survey would address recreation and social services.

Councilor Adil commented that in the listing of duplication and gaps in services for senior and disabled people, there are a number of programs that appear in different categories and he asked Dr. Tyson for an explanation of this. Dr. Tyson indicated that some of the categories involved open-ended questions where respondents could write in answers, while others were closed-ended questions that required a ranking of information provided. Councilor Adil asked how many of the respondents were senior citizen representatives and Dr. Tyson stated that it was approximately three-quarters. Dr. Tyson said that his advice at this point would be for the Town to begin to look at the cost factors of the programs to determine a dollar figure, an importance factor, and a usage factor to move forward with programs. Councilor Adil stated that he was under the impression that the main purpose of the survey would be to review the cost of services and Dr. Tyson told him that he did not have financial data.

Councilor Drake asked Dr. Stilwell how she will proceed with the information provided.

Dr. Stilwell clarified that the Meals-on-wheels and Tax Preparation programs are not provided by her Department, but rather by AARP, and are therefore of no cost to the Town. Dr. Stilwell stated that there needs to be an effort put forth for better marketing of programs in order to increase awareness, particularly at the High School level. She said that she'd like to see a needs assessment study for additional data be undertaken to determine the needs, such as stress, tobacco, or bullying, of a larger group of students, and then determine the most efficient way to approach these needs.

Councilor Kotkin asked what other towns have done with information they've accumulated from such surveys. Dr. Tyson said that this is the first such survey for youth services; although senior needs assessments have been conducted in the past. He said that the development of a good survey for youth would go a long way since there are so many issues involved. Dr. Tyson stated that youth respondents need to have parental permission to participate in the survey which would require permission slips being submitted. He said that the acquired numbers data, financial data, needs assessment data, and participation data needs to be discussed and hard decisions made.

Chairperson Morin said that he appreciates the work that has been done; however what he envisioned is slightly different than what is being presented. He said that during budget deliberations last year, the Council suggested a survey that would determine if the Town is duplicating services and how services could be provided more efficiently. Chairperson Morin said that this study is a good start, however. He said that he will provide the Town Manager with the names of three Councilors to serve on a committee along with other appropriate members to move forward with further information.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

## **HEARING**

## Resolution for Historic Documents Preservation Competitive Grant 2007

## Resolution Authorizing Participation in Office of Domestic Preparedness Training Reimbursement Program

No one wished to speak and the Chairperson declared the Hearing segment closed.

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented that it came as no surprise to him that at the last Council meeting, the majority of Council members voted against the State's proposal for the elimination of the automobile property tax due to a State surplus. Mr. Young said that the surplus should be evenly distributed back to State residents and he feels that the proposed automobile property tax elimination is a good way to handle the situation. Mr. Young commented on a recent Hartford Courant article regarding taxes in Connecticut and stated that the leaders of Wethersfield need to work with the State and Federal delegation to reduce taxes.

Edward Tevald, 894 Ridge Road, commented on his disapproval of the five-minute limitation on public comments stating that public attendance is low at Council meetings and that some people have indicated to him that they are more interested in the public comments at Council meetings than the deliberations of Council members.

No one else wished to speak and the Chairperson declared the General Comments segment closed.

### COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Councilor Adil reported on the recent meeting of the Public Safety Committee where the country-wide pressure for more fire training was discussed. He stated that he attended the recent EDIC meeting where budget review took place as well as a discussion regarding bussing from Wethersfield to the Hartford Convention Center. Councilor Adil congratulated all Town staff involved in obtaining the \$50,000 Preserve Grant for the Town.

Councilor Kirsche reported that the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities met recently and there was much positive feedback on the Dial-A-Ride program as well as discussion regarding the size of lettering on street signs and the replacement of old signs with signs having larger print. Councilor Kirsche stated that the Committee is in the process of updating and revising the resource book for people with disabilities. Councilor Kirsche commented on some of the issues brought up during his Councilor Hours which included the reinstatement of public comment at the end of Council meetings, and the Northeast Utilities rezoning for multi-family purchases having a tax impact on the Town. Councilor Kirsche commented that he is pleased to hear that the Town Manager's Weekly Report will soon be available electronically.

Councilor Kotkin reported that he attended the recent Mill Woods Advisory Board meeting who are discussing various fund-raising efforts to raise money for the Park. He said that the Town's little league and soccer groups have expressed interest in financially supporting various aspects of the construction of new fields at the Park.

Councilor Adil commented that he attended a meeting regarding Blue Back Square at which the contractor stated that he was able to do the project without tax abatements. Councilor Adil commented that he spoke at the recent EDIC breakfast meeting where excellent input was shared by successful businesses in Town.

Chairperson Morin announced a number of upcoming community events as well as Council meetings. He reported that he and the Town Manager recently traveled to Washington D.C. to be presented with the \$50,000 Preserve America Grant from First Lady Laura Bush and Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton. Chairperson Morin said that Wethersfield is one of only three communities in the State of Connecticut designated as a Preserve America community. He stated that once the renovations to the Town Hall are completed, an area will be designated to hang the plaque. Chairperson Morin thanked Rae Ann Palmer, Peter Gillespie, and other Town staff members involved in the receipt of this grant. Chairperson Morin also thanked staff members who have been so helpful in successfully moving the appropriate departments into the lower level of the Town Hall.

## **COUNCIL ACTION**

Councilor Adil moved "**TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF JOHN F. BAKER FROM THE WETHERSFIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**", seconded by Councilor Kirsche. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

### Resolution for Historic Documents Preservation Competitive Grant 2007

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that this grant money will be used to perform an inventory of active and inactive Town records in the Town Clerk's Office and the records storage area. She said that the Town will need to provide in-kind services should the grant be received.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved "**TO ACCEPT THE RESOLUTION FOR HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION COMPETITIVE GRANT 2007**", seconded by Councilor Walsh.

Councilor Drake asked if the Town has any obligations with this grant and the Town Manager said that she is unaware of any, except that once the project is complete, the Town should keep up with the inventory.

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

### Resolution Authorizing Participation in Office of Domestic Preparedness Training Reimbursement Program

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that under the Federal Homeland Security Grant a resolution needs to be passed in order to reimburse volunteers for required training.

Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO ACCEPT THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN THE OFFICE OF DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM**", seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Councilor Adil asked if this grant is in coordination with other towns and the Town Manager said that it is a regional effort.

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

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### Insurance Renewals - Liability

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the Town's liability and property and casualty insurance policies will expire at the end of June and the Town's agent of record, Gregg Bedula has solicited quotes which were reviewed by the Insurance Committee. She said that the Committee recommends the renewal of the CIRMA Workers Compensation insurance program and of the CIRMA Liability and Property insurance program option 2; and also recommends the renewal of the Youth & Social Services Errors and Omissions policy at the same level of coverage with the current provider.

Chairperson Morin pointed out that the Town provides workers compensation training to make employees more aware

of safety in the workplace.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that mandatory quarterly Safety Committee meetings are held with the Town and Board of Education staff.

Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO RENEW THE WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE AND THE LIABILITY AND PROPERTY INSURANCE THROUGH CIRMA OPTION 2 AS OUTLINED AND TO RENEW THE SOCIAL SERVICES ERRORS AND OMISSIONS POLICY WITH SCOTTSDALE INSURANCE COMPANY**", seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that she is glad to hear of the quarterly Safety Committee meetings and asked if this information is shared with the Insurance Committee. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the mandated Safety Committee meetings are attended by staff and personnel. Deputy Mayor Fortunato suggested that a schedule of these meetings be prepared to notify others of them. She asked if the amount listed in the Finance Director's memorandum comes from the Board of Education budget or if it is part of the Town's budget. The Town Manager said that it is part of the Board of Education budget.

Councilor Adil asked what the premium amount is with reference to Option 2 Youth & Social Services Errors and Omissions Policy. Mr. Bedula answered that the amount is \$9,066 for the actual coverage plus a 4% surplus lines tax. Councilor Adil asked the Town Manager about the Town's medication distribution and she said that distribution, with parent's and doctor's permission, is made on overnight or extended length trips; especially during the Youth & Social Services summer programs. Mr. Bedula explained that the coverage is for medications that may be dispensed and also for the counseling provided by the social workers. Councilor Adil suggested that possibly this could be contracted out and the Town Manager said that this would be a policy decision made by the Council during budget deliberations. She suggested that should the policy be changed, that the Town continue with some type of insurance coverage anyway.

Councilor Drake referred to last year's workers compensation figures for the Board of Education and asked if it was just a bad year last year or if this is a trend. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that there was a major issue that came up with the Board of Education last year. Mr. Bedula explained that the experience in the past two years has been substandard and was cause for CIRMA's review and reevaluation. He said the situation is widespread and there is no trend in any specific area.

Councilor Kotkin commended the Insurance Committee for recognizing that workers compensation is going up and parlaying the Town's good experience with their liability resulting in only an approximate 1% increase. Councilor Kotkin stated that the training program will likely address issues dealing with getting around in winter snow and ice so as to alleviate slips, trips, or falls.

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

#### Fire Grant - Federal Grant

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the funding from this grant will be used for a Mass Notification Warning System to replace the current horn notification system. She said that the grant requires a 10% match which can be budgeted for in the next fiscal year if the grant is received.

Councilor Forrest moved "**TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT, IF AWARDED, A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, OFFICE FOR DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS, ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT FOR A MASS NOTIFICATION WARNING SYSTEM**", seconded by Councilor Walsh.

Councilor Forrest asked the Town Manager to describe the mass warning system. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that she has received numerous complaints regarding the current horn notification system and the new system will communicate warnings through the radio or cell phones instead. She said that the new system will also function as a means of communication with citizens in the event of a natural or man-made disaster by way of a

"reverse 911" technique.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the present system will be eliminated and the Town Manager said that it will be.

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

## **BIDS**

None.

## **ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION**

None.

## **MINUTES**

Councilor Walsh moved "**TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF MARCH 6, 2006**", seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Walsh moved "**TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 6, 2006**", seconded by Councilor Adil. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:00 p.m., Councilor Adil moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

*Approved by vote of Council 4/3/2006*

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\*These linked files are in Adobe's Portable Document Format. To view them you will need Adobe Reader installed on your computer. It is available for free download at:

