

MARCH 29, 2005 SPECIAL MEETING

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on Tuesday, March 29, 2005 at 7:20 p.m. in the Conference Room, Lower Level, at the Board of Education, 127 Hartford Avenue, Wethersfield, CT.

Present: Councilors Adil, Cascio, Czernicki, Forrest, Fortunato, Hemmann, Montinieri, and Chairperson Morin.
Absent: Deputy Mayor Karangekis

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, Members of the School Building Committee, David Drake, Charles Viani, Lucas McIntire, Diane Fitzpatrick, Daniel Camilliere, Jeffrey Kotkin; Project Manager Tom DiMauro and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Chairperson Morin called the Special Meeting to order and asked Town Manager Bonnie Therrien to bring everyone up to date on the projects.

Town Manager Therrien said that they were going to discuss going forward with a bid on installing new windows on the east side (Willow St) of the Webb School. It has been in the project from the very beginning but since the project budget is so tight, the Building Committee has waited until now to determine whether to replace the windows. Town Manager Therrien said that the monies have been accounted for and that the Finance Director Lisa Hancock was satisfied that the Building Committee Project Manager Tom DiMauro has supplied the Town with the requested information and that both sides agree on the amount already expended and the remaining monies of \$529.

Building Committee Chairperson David Drake said they are at the point where they need to decide on the windows. The Committee can either repair, paint and louver the windows for \$19,500 or replace all those on the east side for about \$50,000. To go back later, even next year, would be more expensive and cause more problems and duplication of some of the work, which has to be done before school opens. The project is on time but installing new windows would move the completion date to early August.

Town Manager Therrien said the Council has two motions to make if they are going to move forward. The first would be to close out the already completed projects of Stillman and Physical Services and transfer the remaining monies to the Webb project. This is possible because it is all the same bond. If the second motion is approved to install new windows, the Manager would recommend putting the money in the 2005-2006 budget because she has no contingency to take it from this year or anywhere else to place it.

Councilor Cascio moved, **"TO APPROVE THE CLOSING OUT OF THE PHYSICAL SERVICES AND STILLMAN SCHOOL ACCOUNTS AFTER ALL BILLS HAVE BEEN PAID AND TRANSFERRING ANY EXCESS MONEY FROM THESE TWO ACCOUNTS INTO THE WEBB SCHOOL PROJECT,"** seconded by Council Forrest. With all councilors present, including the Chairperson, voting AYE, the motion passed unanimously 8-0-0.

The second motion required more explanation. Chairperson Drake said the Building Committee wanted to meet with the Town Council to explain the need for additional funds. Chairperson Drake said the Building Committee was faced with paying energy and utility bills they did not expect of \$20,000 and \$30,000. Since it is a Board of Education building the Committee thought the Board of Education had already included those expenses in their operating budget. If it comes out of the bond, it would be financed for the life of the bond. Also, the Building Committee was unaware just two weeks ago of the \$107,000 for interest they were charged for short term notes because the Town did not sell the bonds at this point. Town Manager Therrien said in the long run the Town will do better by selling the BANS. She is planning on selling the bonds in June. This was a change in the way the Town bonds were previously handled. The Committee thought they had the \$107,000 in their budget to use on renovations. Because of these unanticipated expenses they would require approximately \$89,939 in addition to the referendum amount. They thought it was too important to ignore and wanted the Council to know at this time so they would be able to go forward with the approval of Council.

Chairperson Morin asked for a motion to be brought forward so they would be able to discuss it.

Councilor Fortunato moved, **"TO AWARD THE WINDOW REPLACEMENT AT WEBB SCHOOL TO OSCAR'S ABATEMENT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$40,590 AND TO A & A WINDOWS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$195,641 WITH THE AGREEMENT THAT IF NEEDED, THE TOWN COUNCIL WILL APPROPRIATE UP TO \$89,939 OUT OF THE '05-'06 BUDGET TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT"**, seconded by Councilor Montinieri.

Councilor Adil was not clear where the \$89,939 figure came from.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said it was the amount that might be needed because of the soft costs. Chairperson Drake said that it is the difference between what they have and what they need after they accounted for the unexpected expenses. He said they are going forward carefully and they are comfortable with that figure. The project is almost complete. Within a month, May 1, they will be in a better position and they will let the Council know the final figure for the budget. They cannot spend more than the referendum states. Thus, Council must agree to expend up to \$89,939 on the Webb project in the 2005-2006 budget.

Councilor Cascio said that this Council like previous ones is committed to projects and also having them done correctly. It makes sense to do it now rather than just repair and re-glaze when for \$40,000 more we can have it done properly the first time.

Councilor Cascio mentioned that at the Shared Services meeting, there were conflicting reports from what he thought was presented tonight, for example bathrooms, not being done because of real financial issues and he asked the Manager to help them through it.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that our Finance Director and the General Contractor have reconciled their numbers since the last report of the Shared Services Committee. The Credit CM Reimbursements and the other soft costs were announced the same night the Town Council met. That is why the figures received at Shared Services were conflicting. Finance Director Lisa Hancock said there was \$62,939 for premiums. Manager Therrien said that the heating bill had just come in but now, after a lot of hard work by the Committee, Project Manager DiMauro, Finance Director Hancock, and administrative analysis Tony Martino everyone is on the same page, within \$529 of each other.

Councilor Cascio wanted to know if the reason for a shift in terms of interest was caused by not using bonds but rather bans. Town Manager Therrien said the short term notes have a much lower interest rate and the cost to the Town is lower in the long run because we save money. The short term interest is paid out of the bond. Chairperson Morin said they could not change what has happened and they need to do the right thing now.

Mr. Viani, Building Committee, said that the staff worked night and day to get this straightened out. Councilor Cascio was happy it flip-flopped in the correct way.

Mr. Viani said there were allowances within each contract and they did not want to pull it out in case they needed it. Now they have a better sense of what they need and will do the change order now.

Councilor Adil asked if they had approached the State for receiving additional reimbursement money. Mr. Viani said there is a bill that could get us additional reimbursements. Finance Director Hancock said if received, the money goes to pay off the debt.

Councilor Fortunato thought the heating bill would go to the Board of Education. Mr. Drake said it was \$20,000 on Monday, \$25,000 on Thursday. Councilor Fortunato asked if the Board of Education was already out of the building at that time. She asked if there were energy savings coming in. Mr. Drake said everything is done, now it is just the windows left to be finished.

Councilor Czernicki thought the heating bill, although the Board left the building, should be in their regular budget. She suggested amending the budget for heating rather than pay for it with the bond over 20 years. Councilor Czernicki

asked where the \$89,939 would show as a line item in the budget. Town Manager Therrien said it would be under capital reserve.

Councilor Hemmann asked if the money projected for the abatement is the same as the arbitration amount. Mr. Drake said TRC gave back money. They said there was no asbestos and there was.

Councilor Montinieri asked if they just paint and repair the windows around the school to take pressure off the Building Committee, what would get done if we do not do new windows?

Mr. Drake said some things they want to do is a gym floor for \$10,000 but they would not do it until July when they see where they are then. They want to be sure they are covered on the windows. They will arrange for Council to go through the building to see what is completed. Core elements of the building are done.

Councilor Montinieri wanted to see the east-side windows replaced, the others painted. The financing question was unfortunate but she appreciates the Building Committee's efforts. Mr. Drake said they are one month from completion.

Councilor Hemmann supports adding windows at this time; she doesn't want to see another situation like the High School, where windows are still not done when they should have been done in the bond.

Councilor Forrest asked about the contingency and if Town staff could help do the work. Mr. Drake said they have to pay them the prevailing wage, so there are no savings there. The Town staff has been great. Councilor Forrest asked if there is a difference due to unforeseen expenses and if there were possible paybacks from the Board of Education or rebates.

Mr. Viani wanted to report to the Council for their support before the Committee went forward with the windows. They might need the money from the Council to complete the project.

Chairperson Morin said there would not be any paybacks from the Board of Education.

Finance Director Hancock said it is grant money and any rebates would be used to pay off the debt.

Town Manager Therrien warned that they are close to budget deadline. She plans on selling bonds this June. The Bond and Rating Agencies will be looking at the newest budget book when determining a rate for the bonds.

Mr. Viani said they would know by May 1. Mr. Drake is very comfortable with having a more complete picture by then. They could provide a more accurate number for the budget. Chairperson Morin said he appreciates the Committee coming forward now and is comfortable with granting up to \$89,939 to support them in this project.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:00 p.m. Councilor Adil moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by vote of Council 5/16/05