

ADJOURNED BUDGET MEETING APRIL 27, 2005

An Adjourned Meeting of the Town Council (adjourned from Tuesday, April 26, 2005) was held on Wednesday, April 27, 2005 at 5:45 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Town Hall with Deputy Mayor Karangekis presiding.

Present: Councilors Adil, Cascio, Czernicki, Forrest, Fortunato, Montinieri, and Deputy Mayor Karangekis.

Absent: Councilor Hemmann and Chairperson Morin.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien Town Manager, Dolores Sassano Town Clerk, and Lisa Hancock, Finance Director.

TREE WARDEN

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the Tree Warden's budget is part of Physical Services and stated that the Town of Newington is willing to split the cost of a new Maintainer II position for tree trimming which equates to \$15,476 for Wethersfield.

Wethersfield Tree Warden John Lepper stated that he has been requesting the much needed Maintainer II position for many years since a third person is necessary in order to perform tree work safely. Mr. Lepper said that also included in his budget is an inventory GPS/GIS management plan program that could be lower than that originally requested in the budget. He said the reason for this program is that basic data is needed to develop a management plan in order to operate more cost effectively and efficiently. Mr. Lepper stressed that lack of funding is not a good defense against loss of life and that the courts and insurers view progressive risk management efforts favorably. He said that an arborist should inspect trees at least once every five years. Mr. Lepper cited many examples of trees falling in towns that could have presented very serious consequences. He said that with a shortage of manpower he is currently unable to inspect the trees throughout Town as he should and one of his primary responsibilities is risk management. Mr. Lepper said that his budget includes funding for photography to document damage, for continued training to maintain certification, for dues for membership in necessary organizations to keep current, for mileage reimbursement, and for small tools and equipment. He said that he has also budgeted for updated clothing, as well as landscape supplies, office supplies, secretarial support service, and his stipend. Mr. Lepper said that Wethersfield has not invested much money in trees in many years since most funding comes from contributions, donations, and grants. He said that trees in Wethersfield are being taken down at a rate of 55-60 trees per year and the Town should be planting twice as many trees as are being taken down.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked what Wethersfield's restrictions are regarding limbs hanging down. Mr. Lepper said that the Town Ordinance requires 10 feet off the sidewalk and 14 feet off the street. Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked if something is done about limbs found to be in violation of this. Mr. Lepper said that the branches are trimmed.

Councilor Forrest asked where in the budget he could find the line item for the tree budget. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it is not a separate line item but is incorporated into other line items of the Physical Services budget. Councilor Forrest asked how the amount for the tree budget is adjusted if the Council should choose to do so. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Council would indicate that the allocation is for the tree budget and she will see that the funding gets into the right account.

Councilor Montinieri asked if Mr. Lepper fills the position that appears in the Physical Services budget as Tree Maintenance Supervisor and was told that this position is not for Mr. Lepper, but for a certified, licensed arborist who works for the Town full-time. Councilor Montinieri asked which other position works on the trees and was told by the Town Manager that it is a Maintainer I.

Councilor Czernicki asked the Town Manager why a tree budget line doesn't exist. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the current chart of accounts does not allow for this; however the proposed new Munis system would allow for this. Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Lepper what costs he would assign to his requests. Mr. Lepper said that the

additional position would be \$32,000, the inventory GPS would be \$45,000 and his total budget request for everything is \$100,275. Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Lepper if his top priorities would be the additional position and the inventory system and Mr. Lepper said that this is so.

Councilor Cascio asked if there would be a union problem since the current position working on trees is a Maintainer I and the requested new position will be a Maintainer II. Physical Services Supervisor Jim McDonald said that the requested position would be for a tree climber, which is currently being covered by the Tree Maintenance Supervisor. He said that a Maintainer I does not climb, but does rope work instead.

Mr. Lepper stated that there is a Physical Services staff member who has taken classes and graduated to become a certified arborist and this staff member is planning to take the State license, which, if he passes, will make him a licensed arborist. Mr. Lepper said that the Council needs to ask themselves if they want another licensed arborist on staff or risk this staff member going elsewhere with his expertise.

Councilor Forrest asked if the added position would move the Town into a process of better tree maintenance. Mr. Lepper said that the new position would slightly improve the process; however the upgrading of equipment will always be required as well.

Councilor Czernicki asked if the new position will be strictly for tree maintenance or would the position work on other duties during the off-season. Mr. McDonald said that everyone at Physical Services plows during the snow season. Councilor Czernicki asked if it will be required that the person filling the position be specifically trained as an arborist. Mr. McDonald said that the requirement of the position is that the person be a tree climber since pruning is the key issue. Councilor Czernicki verified that the position will need to be posted and Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it will be posted internally first and if no one fills the requirements, it will be posted externally.

Councilor Fortunato asked when the last claim was filed with the Town due to a tree issue. Mr. Lepper said that there were a couple property damage claims last summer. Councilor Fortunato asked what the amount of the Tree Warden's stipend is. Mr. Lepper said that the requested amount is \$15,000, which represents a \$12,000 increase over his current \$3,000 amount.

Finance Director Lisa Hancock said that the proposed budget includes only the \$3,000 stipend amount. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that 2004-2005 is the first time that the Tree Warden has received any stipend.

Councilor Fortunato asked for the difference in other items in the Tree Warden's budget and the Town Manager said that she would obtain and forward this information to Councilors.

Councilor Montinieri asked for verification that all new positions are not included in the Town Manager's proposed budget. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that all new positions and requests have been taken out of the budget.

Councilor Cascio stated that Wethersfield should be proud of being awarded the Tree City U.S.A. title and must be on the right track regardless of work that needs to be done. He commented that the Town needs to be able to maintain the number of trees it has and that two hundred additional trees could create a bigger problem for the Town. Councilor Cascio said that the Town needs to focus on maintenance and planting new trees to replace the old.

Mr. Lepper said that he agrees that if a tree is planted it must be maintained and the more trees planted, the more care required. He said that trees planted in the past twelve years have had to be taken down due to lack of proper maintenance.

HEALTH - 610 (C-95 TO C-97)

Central Connecticut Health District Director Paul Hutcheon provided a printed brochure of the Health District's adopted budget for fiscal year 2005-2006 which includes a Town assessment increase of 4.1% from \$3.90 to \$4.06 per capita for each of the member Towns. Mr. Hutcheon stated that the Health District plans to hire a grant writer working one day per week to research, locate, and write grants allowing for the improvement of programs offered. He said that

funding is provided in the budget for health programs identified as not being able to be funded by grants. Mr. Hutcheon reviewed the expenditures in the budget, which include a sharp increase in employee benefits and health programs. He said that a number of improvements in revenue have been made to attempt to reduce the burden to member Towns and the per capita rate. Mr. Hutcheon stated that there is a 25% increase for all permits, fees, and licenses, and a slight increase for flu shots. He said that the increase in per capita membership for Wethersfield amounts to \$4,200.

Councilor Adil verified that the impact on the Wethersfield budget would be \$4,200 over what the Town Manager has proposed and was told that the amount is actually \$4,254.

Councilor Czernicki asked why the Operating Expenses are significantly less than the previous year. Mr. Hutcheon said that the 2004-2005 budget included the cost of new office furniture due to the Town Hall renovation and this amount is not needed in the 2005-2006 budget. Councilor Czernicki asked where the 25% increase in fees leaves the Central Connecticut Health District in comparison to other Health Districts in the area. Mr. Hutcheon said that the increase leaves the Health District in the middle of the pack. Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Hutcheon if he anticipates any new programs on the horizon. Mr. Hutcheon said that Health Educator Linda Bantell has the primary responsibility of coordinating programs and that most of the programs are funded by the preventative health block grant. Mr. Hutcheon said that he has requested that Ms. Bantell and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Judith Torpey further develop programs offered which may take additional grant funding or resources. He said that he is hoping that the grant money can be used to offset the cost of the grant position. Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Hutcheon to review the increases in the Salaries & Benefits amounts. Mr. Hutcheon said that the Salaries have increased because the 2004-2005 budget utilized the bioterrorism grant to offset salary expenses and there are no bioterrorism grant monies applied in the 2005-2006 budget, which also includes the grant writer position. Mr. Hutcheon said that the same applies to the benefits with the exception of benefits for the grant writer since this will be a part-time position.

Councilor Fortunato asked if the revenues collected stay within the Health District's budget or come back to member Towns. Mr. Hutcheon said that the revenue stays with the Health District. Councilor Fortunato asked if the assessment amount is up for negotiation since the amount assessed for Wethersfield is above what the Town Manager has budgeted. Mr. Hutcheon said that the Health District adopts a budget and then passes the cost on to its member municipalities who, by choosing to be part of the Health District, are obligated to pay the fee unless they choose to withdraw their membership. Councilor Fortunato asked if a Town does not pay their full amount would the deficit be passed on to the other member municipalities or would the Health District reduce programming. Mr. Hutcheon said that this situation has never occurred before. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien pointed out that since the Health District is moving into a larger space at the Wethersfield Town Hall, she will be raising the amount they pay for rent which makes the assessment increase almost a wash.

Councilor Cascio asked for clarification of which positions were funded by the bioterrorism grant. Mr. Hutcheon said that 100% of the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator's salary and benefits, and portions of the Director of Health and Administrative Assistant's salaries and benefits were all funded by the bioterrorism grant. Mr. Hutcheon said that the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator's salary does not appear in the Health District's budget because it is 100% paid for through a grant and costs are not passed on to the member communities.

Councilor Fortunato verified that Mr. Hutcheon is not paid through the Town of Wethersfield and was told that this is so. Councilor Fortunato asked if the Health District is under the Town's insurance since their office is in the Town Hall, or if they pay for their own separate insurance. Mr. Hutcheon said that the Health District is a separate entity; therefore they provide all of their own insurances separately.

PUBLIC WORKS - 510 - ENGINEERING (C-75 TO C-77)

Town Engineer Mike Turner explained that most of the increases in the Engineering budget are due to contractual salaries and benefits. He said that Capital Outlay items include software and two replacement computers; however the Town Manager has cut this to one computer. Mr. Turner recommended that the Council reinstate the \$2,000 for the second computer so that the Department, which did not receive any new computers last year, can get back on track with the computer replacement program. Mr. Turner stated that there is no new staff proposed in the Engineering

budget.

Councilor Adil asked if the Engineering budget is where additional staff or a consultant would be funded with regard to the additional roadwork through the bond. Mr. Turner said that this would be funded under the Capital fund. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien verified that the bond could pay for these expenses.

Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Turner how much time is spent surveying fatal/near-fatal accident scenes with the Police Department. Mr. Turner said that the court system requires an accurate mapping when there is a fatality and the Police Department was able, through a program, to obtain survey equipment that is kept by the Engineering Department in return for cooperating with the Police Department. He said that the work time could amount to 4-8 hours for a two-man crew. Councilor Czernicki asked if this is a duplication of services that are performed by the Police Department's Accident Reconstruction Specialist. Mr. Turner said that the Engineering Department is only on the scene to assist the Specialist with mapping since they have better equipment and training for this. Councilor Czernicki asked if the Accident Reconstruction Specialist does not have the proper training to do this. Deputy Mayor Karangekis said that the Accident Reconstruction Specialist performs the initial investigation and provides rough drawings and measurements; however a fatal accident resulting in litigation requires more precise and accurate maps. Councilor Czernicki asked if the June 30, 2005 projected date for the Nott Street project completion is accurate. Mr. Turner said that he does not know when the date will be since the contractor is due to finish up landscaping and general clean-up; however he is not doing so because he has not been paid by the State since last November. He said that this is due to the fact that the Federal Highway Administration has not paid the State of Connecticut. Councilor Czernicki asked when the trailer will be gone and was told by Mr. Turner that this will happen when the job is completed and that the area will be restored once the trailer is removed.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the Overtime pay line item is for snow removal and was told that snow removal is in the Physical Services budget. Mr. Turner said that he can live with the Town Manager's reduction of the overtime line item from \$250 to \$0 since his crew would actually rather receive comp-time.

TRAFFIC & SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE - 511 (C-78 TO C-79)

Mr. Turner said that this budget consists of all of the line striping throughout Town and the sidewalk maintenance account. He said that the line-striping portion of the \$59,100 budget is \$9,100, which represents slightly less than half of the amount required to paint line striping in all parking lots in Town. Mr. Turner said that the reduced amount would include all safety-sensitive striping such as crosswalks, stop bars, railroad crossings, and directional arrows at intersections. He said that no yellow center lane, shoulder, or parking lot striping would be done for the second year now. Mr. Turner said that the \$50,000 sidewalk budget covers all sidewalk work that can be done for that amount. He said that this is the amount paid to the contractors and approximately one-half comes back to the Town through fees to the residents.

Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Turner what the percentage of sidewalk inspection and repair will be for the upcoming year. Mr. Turner said that the program was set up so as to revisit an area every five years; however the current status for revisiting is once every eight years, which equates to 10% of Town sidewalks being inspected and repaired. He said that a continuation of the funding of \$50,000 would eventually lead to a ten-year cycle. Councilor Czernicki addressed the striping situation at the Emerson Williams School and Mr. Turner said that the State performs this four-inch striping and if the Town wants twelve-inch striping, they would have to pay a contractor to do so. Councilor Czernicki asked what the cost for this would be since there is a safety issue in this area. Mr. Turner said that the cost would be approximately \$200. Councilor Czernicki asked if there are safety issues involved with not re-striping the yellow centerlines. Mr. Turner said that there could be since these lines are considered to be a traffic control device and the current lines are faded.

Councilor Adil asked if the currently discussed scheduling of sidewalk maintenance would be possible with the funding provided. Mr. Turner said that it would be possible.

BUILDING & FACILITY MAINTENANCE - 542 (C-83 TO C-84)

Mr. Turner explained that this budget covers the costs for water, utilities, and custodial services at the various Town buildings, with the exception of the Town Garage, which falls under the Physical Services budget. He said that there is an increase in utilities and the custodial services at the Town Garage due to the renovation, which added office space.

PHYSICAL SERVICES - 550 (C-85 TO C-87)

Mr. Turner explained there is no increase in staff in the proposed budget; however he supports Mr. Lepper's request for the Maintainer II position. He said that the Physical Services budget includes \$135,000 for overtime and the current 2004-2005 budget stands at \$161,500. Mr. Turner said that, based on a five-year history, he feels comfortable with the proposed amount.

Councilor Adil asked if State funding will be coming in. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that slightly over \$75,000 will be received after July 1 and this money will go into the General Fund. Councilor Adil asked where the Town Manager's reduction of nearly \$200,000 from this budget is coming from. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the reduction includes the new position requested, contractual and materials. Mr. Turner said that the proposed budget includes \$13,000 for vegetation control in Town ponds, \$26,000 for mosquito control, and \$90,000 for sand and salt.

Ms. Hancock asked if this is the budget from which the Tree Warden's request for the new position was included. Mr. Turner said that the Tree Warden had requested \$51,670 and this was cut by the Town Manager to \$3,000.

Councilor Cascio stated that the current 2004-2005 budget does not include enough funding for the proper grooming of athletic fields and he asked Mr. Turner if the 2005-2006 budget includes enough money. Mr. Turner said that the 2005-2006 budget is essentially the same and the Town is looking at different ways to accomplish the required grooming. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that there is never enough money in the budget for this particular area and the use of the artificial surface field will help to get people off the other fields so as to decrease the maintenance required at those. She said that an additional 30% of funding could easily be used in this category. Mr. Turner provided a checklist of what his staff is doing to maintain the fields currently. Councilor Cascio asked if the Town currently has the proper and required equipment and manpower for the maintenance of Cottone Field. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Council approved the funding for the maintenance contract and a groomer has come in; however the funding for the striping of the field is still being worked on. Councilor Cascio asked if any thought has been given to bidding out for a private contractor to maintain the Town athletic fields, and if this would be cost-effective. Mr. Turner said that this was looked into in the past; however it was not looked at this year. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that when she was Town Manager in Berlin they did this and had a terrible experience since Town Staff had to spend so much time checking on the work being done. She said that Berlin went back to their own personnel doing it.

Councilor Adil asked what percentage of Wethersfield's athletic fields are at Mill Woods Park. Mr. Turner said that more than half are probably there. Councilor Adil asked if the proposed adoption and funding of the Mill Woods Master Plan would help to restore the fields to where they should be. Mr. Turner said that it will help to start with fields that are up to good standards since less materials and time will be required.

Councilor Forrest asked why there is a difference of four positions between the 04/05 adopted amount and the 05/06 proposed amount. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Physical Services Department has lost personnel; however the Department is not losing four positions therefore she will investigate this and get the information to the Council. Councilor Forrest asked if there is a possibility to obtain a flat contract for overtime pay. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that everything is negotiable; however she does not think that the Union will go for this. Mr. Turner stated that 90% of the overtime pay is due to snow removal. Councilor Forrest asked if it is cheaper or cost-effective to hire someone for this in order to lower the overtime pay. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Town used to have outside contractors and the Council cut them out of the budget. She said that most outside contractors no longer want to service municipalities. Councilor Forrest asked what the vegetation control does and what benefit it provides. Mr. Turner said that the copper sulfate is put into ponds to kill the weeds, which choke out the water. Councilor Forrest asked what the requested Snow & Ice Control amount of \$50,000 was for which was reduced to \$0 by the Town Manager. Mr. Turner said that this requested amount was for a private vendor, which is not

recommended by the Town Manager. Councilor Forrest asked what the \$90,000 is for under Snow & Ice Control and Mr. Turner told him that \$30,000 is for sand and \$60,000 is for salt. Councilor Forrest asked if a five-year breakdown of actual expenditures over the last five years has been prepared and Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that a five-year average is used to calculate estimates for snow and ice and she will obtain these amounts.

Councilor Cascio asked for clarification of the responsibility for maintenance of the plantings at the Silas Deane Middle School. Mr. Turner said that the Town will officially take responsibility beginning in November. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she will get the information for Councilor Cascio. Councilor Montinieri said that the Building Committee is having issues with the landscaper and they are currently on top of the situation. Councilor Cascio said that he can appreciate this; however the Town needs to be on top of the situation. Mr. Turner pointed out that it is still the Building Committee's project since the Town has not had to accept responsibility yet. The Town Manager said that now that she is aware of the situation she will immediately get on it. Councilor Cascio expressed his concerns over the Town's maintenance program. Councilor Cascio discussed the mailbox replacement and snow shelf repair policies due to snow removal. Mr. McDonald said that there has been a lot of damage and a crew is out everyday for the last couple weeks working on the list of damaged properties.

Councilor Czernicki asked the Town Manager to also provide a breakout of the total snow removal budget for 2005-2006. She asked Mr. Turner how much was allocated for road patching last year and he said that the amount was \$11,000 along with additional funding of \$35,000 from the Capital Budget. He said that not all of this amount; however, is specifically for patching. Councilor Czernicki said that the roads are currently in terrible condition and there should be some allocation to repair the roads that suffered this past winter. Councilor Czernicki asked if there was overtime required for leaf pickup. Mr. Turner said that the 2004-2005 overtime amount of \$161,000 includes leaf pickup since it is the overall overtime amount. He said that the snow removal overtime and fleet maintenance amount is \$159,101. Councilor Czernicki asked that next year's budget combine these to appear together and Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that this would provide a Program budget rather than a Department budget. Councilor Czernicki requested then that Departments have specific line item information more readily available for the Council in order to provide a better picture of program costs. Councilor Czernicki asked if the \$90,000 allocated for sand and salt is the total allocation and she was told that it is. Mr. Turner said that the actual current amount spent this year is \$117,000 and also provided information on the previous four years. Councilor Czernicki expressed her concerns over mosquito control and the funding for this year not being available until July 1. Councilor Czernicki asked how many man-hours were involved in the support of the Special Olympics Spring Games and the Beautification Committee. She also asked for information regarding overtime amounts for leaf collecting. Mr. Turner said that he will obtain this information and forward it to the Council. Councilor Czernicki asked if overtime costs are involved in the upkeep of the bike trail and Mr. Turner said that this is done during normal working hours. Councilor Czernicki asked for a breakout of these figures as well.

Councilor Fortunato asked if the Town has historically sprayed for mosquitos in the Spring and Mr. Turner said that this is only the third year that the Town has participated in the program. Councilor Fortunato questioned the drawbacks of waiting to spray rather than doing it in the Spring. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she will ask the Health Department about this. Councilor Fortunato asked what the total funding between the bonds and grant will be for roads. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the amount will be approximately \$3 million to be used over three years.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE - 555 (C-88 TO C-89)

Mr. Turner explained that there are no significant changes in this account and pointed out that the Salary line of \$333,000 includes \$30,000 of overtime funding. He said that the most significant cost increases relate to fuels and lubes.

Councilor Adil asked if there has been discussion of trucks to provide automatic pickup of bagged leaves. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she has information on this and the program is extremely expensive. Councilor Adil mentioned one pickup as being a cost saver and the Town Manager said that this would be the biggest cost saver. Mr. Turner said that one pickup would provide for a savings of \$25,000 to the Town.

Councilor Forrest asked how many vehicles are in the Town's fleet and the Town Manager said that between vehicles and small equipment there are seventy-two. Councilor Forrest asked if the fleet was reduced last year and the Town Manager said that the Police sedans have been passed down to other Departments. Councilor Forrest asked if the 6.5 positions in the Vehicle Maintenance budget work only on the maintenance of the Town's fleet or do they take on other tasks as well. Mr. Turner said that they are generally assigned only to vehicle maintenance; however certain equipment requires specially trained mechanics. Councilor Forrest asked Mr. Turner what he thinks is the next need for the entire Department of Public Works. Mr. Turner said that the Department is alright in terms of mechanic staff; however additional staff to work outside would provide that more work gets done. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she sees a need for additional trade personnel for building maintenance which would fall under the Physical Services budget as a Maintainer III Trades at a cost of \$65,000 - \$68,000 including benefits.

Councilor Cascio asked why other personnel in Physical Services can't help with painting since they all participate in snow removal. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that this has been done at times. Mr. McDonald said that his staff is always busy; however if the painter needs help, he will send him someone.

REFUSE & RECYCLING SERVICES - 560 (C-90 TO C-91)

Mr. Turner explained that this budget includes Paines Refuse and CRRA. He said that CRRA held the tipping fees for the upcoming year, which was good for the budget.

Councilor Adil asked if the Transfer Station comes under this budget and was told that it does. Councilor Adil stated that he has received numerous compliments on the workers at the Transfer Station. Mr. Turner said that 2005-2006 will be the third year in working toward the goal set to make the Transfer Station self-sufficient over a five-year period.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that she has reviewed the revenue flow at the Transfer Station and although the hours are kept constant during the winter, there is a sharp decline in revenue during this time. She suggested that the Council consider changing the schedule to provide for fewer hours during the winter.

Councilor Forrest asked if this change in hours in order to save money can be realized in the 2005-2006 budget. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it can be and she will discuss the issue with Mr. Turner and Mr. McDonald. Councilor Forrest asked for a breakdown of the line items in the Refuse & Recycling Services budget and Heather Vargas provided this information.

COUNCIL ACTION

One Day Drop Off - Transfer Station

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that for the past few years, the Town Council has voted to have a one time free drop off at the Transfer Station on two Saturdays in mid-May for residents. She said that the revenue lost last year was \$6,150 for the two days and she does not recommend offering the program this year.

Councilor Czernicki moved, **"TO APPROVE A ONE TIME PER HOUSEHOLD FREE DROP OFF PROGRAM FOR MAY 14, 2005 AND MAY 21, 2005"**, seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Councilor Forrest asked how this would affect the 2005-2006 budget. The Town Manager said that the projected revenues would decrease if this were approved for next year.

Councilor Cascio verified that the Council voted to include this in the 2004-2005 budget; therefore the service should be offered. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Council projected revenues in the 2004-2005 budget and offering this program in May will decrease what is received.

Councilor Montinieri asked the Town Manager how many families took part in the program last year. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she has the dollar amount, but not the number of families; however the two Saturdays are

quite busy. Councilor Montinieri asked what the charge is for dumping and was told that the fee is \$30. Councilor Montinieri pointed out that the Town is attempting to have more programs paid for by user fees; therefore she agrees with the Town Manager's recommendation.

Councilor Adil said that he agrees with Councilor Montinieri and since the Contingency Fund is so low, \$6,000 makes a difference in not having to tap into the General Fund.

Councilor Czernicki asked if last year's budget allocated funding for the program this year. The Town Manager believes that it was not included in the 2004-2005 budget and looked to Finance Director Lisa Hancock to provide information on revenue projections and actual revenue at the Transfer Station for 2004-2005. Ms. Hancock stated that the extra barrel account was budgeted to take in \$500 and as of March \$21,000 has been collected. She said that the recycling bins account was budgeted to take in \$8,000 and as of March approximately \$15,000 has come in. Councilor Czernicki verified that in both of these accounts more funds than anticipated have been received. Ms. Hancock said that some of the extra revenues will offset some of the shortfalls in other areas. Councilor Czernicki asked if a separate appropriation for a one-day pick up was approved by the Council during last year's budget sessions and the Town Manager said that this is not done during the budget process, but that the Council did approve it in May of 2004 when she brought it to them at that time. Councilor Czernicki said that \$6,100 of the extra revenues need to be used to offset the shortfall in last year's free drop off days since this is an important service that encourages internal and external cleanup of properties and provides for better curb appeal throughout Town.

Councilor Cascio reminded the Council that this program went into effect four years ago to provide an opportunity to residents a one time shot to rid their property of non-processibles free of charge rather than leaving unsightly items at the curb.

Councilor Fortunato moved, **"TO TABLE THE ITEM UNTIL THE MAY 2, 2005 COUNCIL MEETING IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE TOWN MANAGER AND FINANCE DIRECTOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO GATHER THE DATA RELATIVE TO THE REVENUES GENERATED FROM THIS"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Councilor Czernicki said that she is under the impression that no revenues are generated from the program, but that this is actually an expenditure that cuts into the revenues taken in by the Transfer Station. She said that the revenues she referred to are associated with the charges for extra barrels and recycling bins.

Councilor Fortunato said that she is referring to the revenues taken in for trash collection services.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Cascio voted NAY. The motion passed 6-1-0.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS (D-1 TO D-17)

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien introduced Les Cole, Chairman of the Capital Improvements Advisory Committee (CIAC).

Mr. Cole stated that the Capital budget has been approved by Town Manager Bonnie Therrien and he reviewed some important items for consideration, which originally appeared in the budget. Mr. Cole reviewed project items that were removed from the list, including funding for the Lights on Main Street Phase I for \$50,000, and Village Cemetery Gravesite repairs. He urged the Council to provide some funding for these items, as they are vital to the Town. Mr. Cole also reviewed items for which funding was decreased by the Town Manager, including the Silas Deane Highway Revitalization, Pavement Mill & Overlay, and the WHS Pool HVAC Replacement. Mr. Cole asked the Council to provide additional funding for these items. Mr. Cole said that the CIAC originally received requests totaling approximately \$6 million for 47 projects and the target figure given was \$1.4 - \$1.7 million. He said that the original Capital budget amounted to \$1.5 million for 28 projects, which as just discussed did not all make it into the final budget amount of \$1,412,330.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it pained her not to include in this budget, money for the Capital Reserve

Fund, in which most communities have \$250,000 - \$350,000. She said that she tried to put \$100,000 in this Fund, but the Town cannot afford it. Mr. Cole said that the Town cannot afford \$100,000; however it needs to start somewhere with money put aside as a sort of "petty cash" fund.

Mr. Cole asked the Council to provide the CIAC with as much money as possible, and they will put it to good use.

Councilor Fortunato said that as liaison to the CIAC, she has seen the fine job they do and the funding requested for road repair reflects the sentiment of the Council and Mayor regarding road maintenance. Councilor Fortunato said that she fully supports a Capital Reserve Fund and would have liked to see monies going into this fund. She asked the Town Manager if there are funds that the Town may realize over the year that can go into this fund and what monies would be prohibited. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Council needs to be aware of the Charter requirements and that bond money cannot go into this fund, but she is unaware of any other monies that are prohibited. Ms. Hancock said that it depends on the source of the funding, but a policy needs to be fine tuned before the money is even available.

Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Cole to review the \$30,000 Flood Study Project for the Middletown Avenue culvert. Mr. Turner said that there is an obstruction downstream of Maple Street and debris in the Beaver Brook floodway, and this funding is for the removal of the obstruction and regrading of the area. Councilor Czernicki asked why this was overlooked in the DOT project. Mr. Turner stated that it was not overlooked, but that the DOT did not include this in their original work, as it would have triggered their permit process from a general permit to an individual permit. Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Turner to outline the Miscellaneous Drainage Repairs. Mr. Turner said that this category was recommended several years ago by Councilor Hemmann that covers projects that come up on an as-needed basis. Councilor Czernicki asked which Basketball and Tennis courts are being resurfaced. Mr. Cole said that the funding is to do as many as possible starting with those in the most need. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she can obtain this information. Councilor Czernicki asked about the High School pool and Mr. Cole told her that the system needs to be replaced due to corrosion or the pool will be out of commission. Councilor Czernicki asked if \$140,000 is enough for this project. Mr. Cole said that a CIAC member with experience in this matter felt that the original \$150,000 requested was high. Councilor Czernicki commented on problems that are still occurring with the roof at the Standish House and Mr. McDonald said that although it is protected at this point, a new roof is necessary and \$35,000 will get the job done well.

Councilor Cascio thanked Mr. Cole and the CIAC committee for the fine job they've done. He asked if the roof replacement at the Standish House has to go before the Historical Society and was told that it has to go before the Historic District Commission. Councilor Cascio was told that there is wood on the roof now; therefore it has to be replaced with wood. Councilor Cascio asked if sidewalks around Hanmer and Stillman are included in the funding for new sidewalk construction. Mr. Turner stated that Councilor Cascio is talking about sidewalks around Standish Park and that this line item does not include enough funding for this and also no specific sidewalks locations have been determined yet. Councilor Cascio asked if the CIAC has discussed the Standish Park location. Mr. Cole said that it has been discussed, but it has not been earmarked.

Mr. Cole said that the CIAC's number one priority is any project regarding safety and also anything that has matching funds.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the Ivy Lane drainage situation is included in the Miscellaneous Drainage line and the Town Manager told her that there is a priority list and Ivy Lane is not up there yet. She said that she can find out how far down on the list the project is.

Councilor Czernicki asked for information on how far out the Ivy Lane drainage situation is.

Councilor Montinieri asked the Town Manager has approved only \$25,000 for the Silas Deane Highway Revitalization because of STEAP money that she expects to receive. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that money will come from the State and this needs to be spent down first. Councilor Montinieri asked if the funding for Fire Safety in 2006-2007 addresses some of the concerns they raised at the previous meeting. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the two items they requested were the architect, which went before the CIAC and was in the CIAC's original request, and a fire truck, which is under CNEF. Councilor Montinieri pointed out that there are funds allocated for new sidewalks at

Standish Park for 2006-2007 and asked if what is allocated in years out can be counted on or if everything is reshuffled. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it is all reshuffled; therefore any item could get pushed further out. Councilor Montinieri asked if the Webb parking lot is on anywhere on the priority list for pavement maintenance. Mr. Turner said that spot repairs will be taking place at the driveway entrance.

CAPITAL AND NONRECURRING EXPENDITURE FUND (CNEF) (E-12 TO E-17)

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien introduced Lance Hamilton, Motorola Account Manager to review the \$200,000 under the Town Wide Radio System line item of Radio System & Tower Replacement.

Mr. Hamilton stated that it is prudent to set money aside so that the Town does not have a large expenditure in the future when they need to replace the radio system. Mr. Hamilton said that the Town currently has an analog system and that growing technology of telecommunications has forced Motorola to go digital due to the trends of the industry.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that although the original amount was \$200,000, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Turner have decided that \$160,000 each year would be sufficient.

Mr. Hamilton said that Motorola will support the current system as long as there are parts available for it and they are guaranteeing seven years after the last shipment of a system which brings Wethersfield up to 2013 to 2015 before a new system will be needed.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked how long ago Motorola envisioned going digital. Mr. Hamilton said that there has been a rapid change in the last three or four years driving Motorola to this decision. He said that the occurrences of 9-11 have also pushed this. Deputy Mayor Karangekis said that at the time of negotiations for the radio system, Motorola did not communicate the digital idea to the Town. Mr. Hamilton said that digital interfaces had not yet been established at that time.

Mr. Turner said that the Town did look at a complete digital system at the time but it was decided to go with the analog system. He said that the digital system at that time would have cost an additional \$2 million. Mr. Turner said that planning for the replacement of the system isn't solely because it is an analog system, but rather that all systems have a finite life period.

Councilor Forrest asked if the Town has to purchase a Motorola system in the future and was told that the Town can switch to any other company, especially in ten years when there will be increased competition. Councilor Forrest asked if the Town can "pre-contract" with a company now to lock in rates for the replacement of a system ten years from now. Mr. Hamilton said that this would need to be discussed with the Finance Director. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she doubts that any company would be willing to lock into a rate at this time. Councilor Forrest asked what the Tower Replacement portion is for and the Town Manager said that the expenditure would be for the radio system only. Councilor Forrest asked if the Town's current infrastructure is expected to be suitable for a system in 2015. Mr. Hamilton said that, unless something deteriorates quickly, he expects the system will be suitable with the same amount of coverage and the same type of function capability.

Councilor Czernicki verified that the addition of a console position at the station would need to occur prior to the end of 2009 and Mr. Hamilton said that this is the guarantee date. Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Hamilton if the change over the digital would eliminate the interference that the Town currently experiences. Mr. Hamilton said that this is tough to answer due to many environmental reasons. Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Hamilton if, with so many more users, he anticipates more or less interference. Mr. Hamilton said that the new spectrum is being designed with a guard band for less interference. Councilor Czernicki asked how the Town can guarantee that they won't have to pay for new licensing. Mr. Hamilton said that public agencies never pay for their licenses. Councilor Czernicki asked what determines when people have to re-band. Mr. Hamilton said that there are four waves and the east and west coasts are done first due to population. He said that in the lower end of the spectrum there is a lot of mixed use and the FCC wants public safety agencies to have one section of that spectrum.

Councilor Cascio asked what the length of the current contract with Motorola is. Mr. Turner said that the current

contract is a one-year extended warranty that is budgeted for on a yearly basis.

Councilor Adil left the meeting at this time (9:25 p.m.).

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that other items in the CNEF fund include four Police patrol cars, two Hurst tool replacements for the Fire Department, two pick up trucks and one small dump truck for Physical Services, \$132,500 for the Reserve for Property Revaluation, \$180,000 for the new Munis system, a new telephone system for the Library, and \$3,166,095 for lease payments for patrol cars, artificial surface, and the fire truck.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:30 p.m., Councilor Fortunato moved "**TO ADJOURN TO THE BUDGET WORKSHOP SESSION ON APRIL 28, 2005 AT 5:45 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE TOWN HALL**" seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 6-0-0.

Dolores Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by vote of Council 5/16/05