

AUGUST 30, 2004 SPECIAL MEETING

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on August 30, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Councilors Adil, Cascio, Czernicki, Forrest, Fortunato, Montinieri, and Chairperson Morin.

Absent: Councilor Hemmann and Deputy Mayor Karangekis.

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 Councilor Fortunato.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HEARING

ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$5,200,000 FOR PHASE II OF TOWN HALL AND LIBRARY RENOVATIONS AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$5,200,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION

ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$2,920,000 FOR ROAD AND SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$2,920,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION

Betty Rosania, 88 Desmond Drive, spoke as Chairperson of the Economic Development and Improvement Commission (EDIC) and commented positively on the recent improvements to the Silas Deane Highway. She thanked Chairperson Morin, the Council, Town Manager Bonnie Therrien, and Peter Gillespie for all of the work done to promote new businesses on the Silas Deane Highway. Ms. Rosania said that the Town Hall building; however, does nothing to attract economic development. She said that it has deteriorated and is an eye-sore. Ms. Rosania said that she watched some of the video of the Town Hall walk-through and commented that the Town Hall employees are being expected to work under horrendous conditions. She begged the citizens of Wethersfield to pass the referendum to bring the Town Hall Building up to code and up to date.

Susan Grady, 25 Westlook Road, said that she watched the Town Hall walk-through video and found it to be very informative. She said that the work at the Town Hall needs to be done and the bonding has to be approved. Ms. Grady said that, most importantly, the quality of life for Wethersfield residents has to be maintained.

Cathy Boyes, 20 Westlook Road, saw the Town Hall walk-through video and said that she was pleased to see what the bond money will be used toward; however, she was quite upset to see just how deteriorated the building is. Ms. Boyes questioned how residents would be informed of their responsibility for 50% of the cost of sidewalk repairs, and if payment plans would be set forward.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, spoke on behalf of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. He said that the Association has supported much of the Town's new construction and he pointed out that had the Town's Strategic Plan been followed, the money spent on the new Police Facility would have been spent on the Town Hall building. He said that the Town Hall building, according to the Strategic Plan, was to be the center of Wethersfield. Mr. Orsini said that the Plan was not followed resulting in a lack of funding for the Town Hall building and the roads. He said that the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. is not against beautifying Wethersfield, but they would like to see a greater effort made toward debt management. He said that the Association would like to see more public input into the renovation of the Town Hall building. He said also that the Association does not feel that the funding for the roads is adequate. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. suggests that the Town slow down and take a break from renovations.

Ed Rosania, 88 Desmond Drive, said that he worked for forty-two years in the insurance business and commented that if an insurance company inspected the Town Hall building, they would not insure it. He said that the Council has a tremendous degree of responsibility upon them and that anyone who speaks in opposition to the renovations to the building does not know the facts.

Harry Lichtenbaum, 76 Towne House Lane, said that he also saw the video and found it to be quite revealing. He said that it provided a close-up, backstage view of the condition of the Town Hall/Library building and that after watching the video, Mr. Lichtenbaum has no doubt that the repairs and updating are not only necessary now, but long overdue. He said that the renovations are a quality of life issue dealing with serious structural needs, hazardous health problems, and inefficient systems.

Jim Clynch, 903 Ridge Road, said that he has been to numerous town halls in the area and commented that Wethersfield's is the most deplorable of any that he has visited. Mr. Clynch said that the roads in Wethersfield are also deplorable and that some of the sidewalks present a hazard. He said that the deterioration is due to years and years of neglect on the part of the Town.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented that the Town needs to take a time out and that he concurs with the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc.'s opinion. He said that there are a lot of unhappy, concerned taxpayers in Wethersfield. He said that government seems to work by not fixing anything along the way, but instead spend a lot when it falls apart. Mr. Ruhe commented on articles he's read regarding an economic house of cards and the unemployment rate in Wethersfield. Mr. Ruhe said that he does not believe that anyone can make a reasonable, managerial assessment of the conditions of the Town Hall just by viewing the recent video. He said that there is room for improvement at the Town Hall building; however, it should be done in a more measured way.

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

COUNCIL ACTION

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the Council needs to adopt each Bond Ordinance and to vote on the question to appear on the ballot for each.

Councilor Forrest moved for the adoption of the following bond ordinance:

**ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$5,200,000 FOR PHASE II OF TOWN HALL AND LIBRARY
RENOVATIONS AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$5,200,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE
THE APPROPRIATION**

BE IT ORDAINED,

- a. That the Town of Wethersfield appropriate FIVE MILLION TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$5,200,000) for design and construction of various renovations and improvements to Town Hall and the Library. The project will include replacement of the roof on Town Hall, the Town Hall lobby and the Library; improvements to the heating and cooling systems in Town Hall and the Library; hazardous material abatement in the first and second floor of Town Hall, the Town Hall stair towers and the main and mezzanine floors of the Library; replacement of flooring in the first and second floors and the stair towers in Town Hall and in the Town Council chambers; reconstruction of the podium in the Town Council chambers; replacement of lighting in the first and second floor corridors of Town Hall; replacement of ceiling tiles on the first and second floors, corridors and stair towers in Town Hall; accessibility improvements to the Town Clerk's vault; installation of water filtration systems at all drinking fountains in the first and second floors of Town Hall and the main and mezzanine floors of the Library; replacement of windows in Town Hall, the Town Hall lobby and the Library; installation of fire sprinkler system on the lobby ground, main and second floors of Town Hall and on the ground, main and mezzanine floors of the Library where needed; construction of new telephone and data equipment rooms and data administration offices on the ground floors of Town Hall and the Library; improvements to the telecommunications and computer systems in Town Hall and the Library; replacement of plumbing fixtures in the main and mezzanine level bathrooms in the Library; installation of self check out

system and security system in the Library; replacement of existing stairway from the main floor to the mezzanine floor in the Library; installation of new fixtures and furnishings on the main and mezzanine floors in the Library; improvements to existing masonry on the exterior of Town Hall and the Library; and various site improvements including relocation of signage and installation of exterior lighting and landscaping. The appropriation may be spent for design and construction costs, equipment, furnishings, materials, site improvements, architects' fees, engineering fees, legal fees, net interest on borrowings and other financing costs, and other expenses related to the project. The Town Council is authorized to determine the scope and particulars of the project. The Town Council may reduce or modify the scope of the project, and the entire appropriation may be spent on the project as so reduced or modified.

- b. That the Town issue bonds or notes, in an amount not to exceed FIVE MILLION TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$5,200,000) to finance the appropriation for the project. The amount of bonds or notes authorized to be issued shall be reduced by the amount of grants received by the Town for the project. The bonds or notes shall be issued pursuant to Section 7-369 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, Revision of 1958, as amended, and any other enabling acts. The bonds or notes shall be general obligations of the Town secured by the irrevocable pledge of the full faith and credit of the Town.
- c. That the Town issue and renew its temporary notes from time to time in anticipation of the receipt of the proceeds from the sale of the bonds or notes for the project. The amount of the notes outstanding at any time shall not exceed FIVE MILLION TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$5,200,000). The notes shall be issued pursuant to Section 7-378 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, Revision of 1958, as amended. The notes shall be general obligations of the Town and shall be secured by the irrevocable pledge of the full faith and credit of the Town. The Town shall comply with the provisions of Section 7-378a of the General Statutes if the notes do not mature within the time permitted by said Section 7-378.
- d. The Town Manager and the Treasurer of the Town shall sign the bonds or notes by their manual or facsimile signatures. The law firm of Day, Berry & Howard LLP is designated as bond counsel to approve the legality of the bonds or notes. The Town Manager and the Treasurer are authorized to determine the amounts, dates, interest rates, maturities, redemption provisions, form and other details of the bonds or notes; to designate one or more banks or trust companies to be certifying bank, registrar, transfer agent and paying agent for the bonds or notes; to provide for the keeping of a record of the bonds or notes; to designate a financial advisor to the Town in connection with the sale of the bonds or notes; to sell the bonds or notes at public or private sale; to deliver the bonds or notes; and to perform all other acts which are necessary or appropriate to issue the bonds or notes.
- e. That the Town hereby declares its official intent under Federal Income Tax Regulation Section 1.150-2 that project costs may be paid from temporary advances of available funds and that the Town reasonably expects to reimburse any such advances from the proceeds of borrowings in an aggregate principal amount not in excess of the amount of borrowing authorized above for the project. The Town Manager and the Treasurer are authorized to amend such declaration of official intent as they deem necessary or advisable and to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the bonds or notes authorized by this resolution, if issued on a tax-exempt basis, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years.
- f. That the Town Manager and the Treasurer are authorized to make representations and enter into written agreements for the benefit of holders of the bonds or notes to provide secondary market disclosure information, which agreements may include such terms as they deem advisable or appropriate in order to comply with applicable laws or rules pertaining to the sale or purchase of such bonds or notes.
- g. That the Town Manager, the Treasurer and other proper officers of the Town are authorized to take all other action which is necessary or desirable to complete the project and to issue bonds or notes to finance the aforesaid appropriation.
- h. That this ordinance shall become effective after publication and approval by the electors at referendum as provided in the Town Charter.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Councilor Adil commented that the Budget & Finance Committee and the Infrastructure Committee met together and voted unanimously to move the proposed ordinances forward.

Councilor Czernicki commented that information was provided by Mr. Coombs and Mr. Turner with reference to areas in the Town Hall and Library needing immediate addressing and also what could be done with an expanded budget. Councilor Czernicki asked if the lead in the water in the Town Hall is beyond trace. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she is not aware of this, but will have Health District Director Paul Hutcheon check into it. Councilor Czernicki said that in 1999 the Police Referendum addressed a portion of the Town Hall ground floor in terms of refitting the vacant areas. Councilor Czernicki said that she looks at the currently proposed bond ordinance for the Town Hall and the Library as something that is sorely needed. She stated that many previous Councils have done a terrible job of maintaining the Town Hall building and the Library. Councilor Czernicki said that along with any renovation and refitting, there has to be a well-defined maintenance plan for the future. She said that now seems to be a good time to borrow money and she is strongly in favor of going forward with the Town Hall and Library renovations.

Councilor Fortunato said that she looks at the renovations as an opportunity for a more thorough renovation of the Town Hall building. She said that the Infrastructure Committee arrived at the figure for road improvements through the guidance of Town Staff. The Committee was told that the Town can manage, with its manpower, \$1 million per year in renovation work on Wethersfield streets.

Councilor Cascio said that many years have gone by with discussion of the Town Hall building and now is the time for the opportunity for work to actually be done on the building. He said that this is a golden opportunity for the community to come together and lobby legislators in going forward for the STEAP grant. Councilor Cascio said that he wholeheartedly supports the ordinance and he looks forward to seeing the Town's ability to make change to its Town Hall.

Councilor Forrest agreed with Councilor Cascio that the Town is now at a turning point for renovations. He said that he is one member of a Council that is trying to solve the problems of the Town without laying blame. Councilor Forrest said that the Council has started to change the course of progress and development in Town. He said that the Town is not limited to fixing only one problem or building at a time, but can tackle more than one issue at a time. Councilor Forrest said that he commends the Council and wholeheartedly supports the renovations.

Councilor Montinieri expressed her support for the initiative as it addresses the issue of the Silas Deane Highway becoming rundown. She said that renovations to the Town Hall building are in line with the progress that has been made up and down the Silas Deane Highway. She said that in terms of attracting businesses to Wethersfield, an investment must be made in the Town Hall building. Councilor Montinieri said that with regard to residents' concerns about debt management, there has been advice given by the Town's financial analyst reporting that the Town can afford to borrow additional money. Councilor Montinieri said that reports have been coming to the Council for several months from the Building Committee and Town Engineer Mike Turner considering three different scenarios for renovations to the Town Hall/Library. She said that going with the \$5.2 million allows for efficiencies to be found and for the project to be done right and for a proper maintenance plan to be implemented.

Chairperson Morin thanked Councilor Fortunato and Councilor Adil and their committees for gathering information and working through the numbers to bring forth a consensus from the committees. He said that the Councilors sat in on the committee meetings to do what they think is best for the Town. Chairperson Morin said that the Town Hall needs to be addressed. He said that Town Staff and the Council are fighting so hard to attract people and businesses to Wethersfield by providing an exceptional quality of life and pride in the community. He said that this is underway with the new Police Facility, the Silas Deane Middle School, and the Webb building. It is now the opinion of the Council that the Town Hall/Library project needs to be done. Chairperson Morin said that the video tape presented is only one tool to help educate the public. There will be other means to provide information to the public.

The motion was approved by the following roll-call vote:

In Favor

Councilor Adil
Councilor Cascio
Councilor Czernicki

Opposed

Councilor Forrest
Councilor Fortunato
Councilor Montinieri
Chairperson Morin

Councilor Czernicki moved: that the bond ordinance approved at this meeting be submitted to a referendum vote in accordance with the Town Charter on November 2, 2004, between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M. under the following ballot heading:

"SHALL THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD APPROPRIATE \$5,200,000 FOR PHASE II OF THE TOWN HALL AND LIBRARY RENOVATIONS AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE SAID APPROPRIATION"

and that the Town Clerk publish a notice of passage and notice of such referendum and make absentee ballots available.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Forrest and approved by the following roll-call vote:

In Favor

Councilor Adil
Councilor Cascio
Councilor Czernicki
Councilor Forrest
Councilor Fortunato
Councilor Montinieri
Chairperson Morin

Opposed

Councilor Czernicki moved for the adoption of the following bond ordinance:

ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$2,920,000 FOR ROAD AND SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$2,920,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION

BE IT ORDAINED,

- a. That the Town of Wethersfield appropriate TWO MILLION NINE HUNDRED TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$2,920,000) for design and construction of improvements to various Town roads and sidewalks. The project will include milling and repaving of roads and replacement of catch basin tops and curbing where necessary on such Town roads as shall be determined by the Town Manager upon the recommendation of the Director of Public Works/Town Engineer; and installation of concrete sidewalks where needed on the west side of Mapleside Drive from Wells Road to Dale Road, the east side parking lot of Emerson Williams School, the west side of Willow Street, and both sides of Two Rod Highway from Old Reservoir Road to Highland Street. The appropriation may be spent for design and construction costs, equipment, materials, land and easement acquisition, site improvements, engineering fees, legal fees, net interest on borrowings and other financing costs, and other expenses related to the project. The Town Council is authorized to determine the scope and particulars of the project. The Town Council may reduce or modify the scope of the project, and the entire appropriation may be spent on the project as so reduced or modified.
- b. That the Town issue bonds or notes, in an amount not to exceed TWO MILLION NINE HUNDRED TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$2,920,000) to finance the appropriation for the project. The bonds or notes shall be issued pursuant to Section 7-369 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, Revision of 1958, as amended, and any other enabling acts. The bonds or notes shall be general obligations of the Town secured by the irrevocable pledge of the full faith and credit of the Town.
- c. That the Town issue and renew its temporary notes from time to time in anticipation of the receipt of the

- proceeds from the sale of the bonds or notes for the project. The amount of the notes outstanding at any time shall not exceed TWO MILLION NINE HUNDRED TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$2,920,000). The notes shall be issued pursuant to Section 7-378 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, Revision of 1958, as amended. The notes shall be general obligations of the Town and shall be secured by the irrevocable pledge of the full faith and credit of the Town. The Town shall comply with the provisions of Section 7-378a of the General Statutes if the notes do not mature within the time permitted by said Section 7-378.
- d. The Town Manager and the Treasurer of the Town shall sign the bonds or notes by their manual or facsimile signatures. The law firm of Day, Berry & Howard LLP is designated as bond counsel to approve the legality of the bonds or notes. The Town Manager and the Treasurer are authorized to determine the amounts, dates, interest rates, maturities, redemption provisions, form and other details of the bonds or notes; to designate one or more banks or trust companies to be certifying bank, registrar, transfer agent and paying agent for the bonds or notes; to provide for the keeping of a record of the bonds or notes; to designate a financial advisor to the Town in connection with the sale of the bonds or notes; to sell the bonds or notes at public or private sale; to deliver the bonds or notes; and to perform all other acts which are necessary or appropriate to issue the bonds or notes.
 - e. That the Town hereby declares its official intent under Federal Income Tax Regulation Section 1.150-2 that project costs may be paid from temporary advances of available funds and that the Town reasonably expects to reimburse any such advances from the proceeds of borrowings in an aggregate principal amount not in excess of the amount of borrowing authorized above for the project. The Town Manager and the Treasurer are authorized to amend such declaration of official intent as they deem necessary or advisable and to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the bonds or notes authorized by this resolution, if issued on a tax-exempt basis, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years.
 - f. That the Town Manager and the Treasurer are authorized to make representations and enter into written agreements for the benefit of holders of the bonds or notes to provide secondary market disclosure information, which agreements may include such terms as they deem advisable or appropriate in order to comply with applicable laws or rules pertaining to the sale or purchase of such bonds or notes.
 - g. That the Town Manager, the Treasurer and other proper officers of the Town are authorized to take all other action which is necessary or desirable to complete the project and to issue bonds or notes to finance the aforesaid appropriation.
 - h. That this ordinance shall become effective after publication and approval by the electors at referendum as provided in the Town Charter.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Adil.

Councilor Adil asked the Town Manager to confirm the choice of road repairs to be made. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the longer list chosen from the road repair software program better utilizes the funds available.

Councilor Adil confirmed that one or possibly two bus routes will be addressed when doing sidewalks. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that this is correct. Councilor Adil said that he feels more should be spent on roads and sidewalks; however there is only enough manpower to handle \$1 million of work per year. He supports the ordinance as it is a good start.

Councilor Montinieri said that the installation of concrete sidewalks will be on the west side of Mapleside Drive from Wells Road to Dale Road, the east side parking lot of Emerson Williams School, the west side of Willow Street, and both sides of Two Rod Highway from Old Reservoir Road to Highland Street will be included in the bonding.

Councilor Cascio stated that notice will be provided to individuals regarding their 50% responsibility for the cost of sidewalk installation. He also said that sidewalk repairs, per current ordinances, are the responsibility of the residents to report to the Town.

Chairperson Morin said that the proposed ordinance does not preclude the Town from properly funding the maintenance for the roads. He said that \$850,000 should be funded per year for the roads just to maintain them. Chairperson Morin said that the ordinance will not address every road considered by residents to be in poor condition,

but it will make huge steps to address some of the worst and problematic roads in Town. He said that he is happy that the Council chose to move forward with this project and hopes that the voters see the worth of it.

In Favor

Opposed

Councilor Adil
Councilor Cascio
Councilor Czernicki
Councilor Forrest
Councilor Fortunato
Councilor Montinieri
Chairperson Morin

Councilor Fortunato moved: that the bond ordinance approved at this meeting be submitted to a referendum vote in accordance with the Town Charter on November 2, 2004, between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M. under the following ballot heading:

"SHALL THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD APPROPRIATE \$2,920,000 FOR ROAD AND SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE SAID APPROPRIATION"

The motion was seconded by Councilor Cascio and approved by the following roll-call vote:

In Favor

Opposed

Councilor Adil
Councilor Cascio
Councilor Czernicki
Councilor Forrest
Councilor Fortunato
Councilor Montinieri
Chairperson Morin

Chairperson Morin announced that the video will be shown on Channel 16 at 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. and at 1:00, 2:00, 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. seven days per week.

Councilor Fortunato confirmed that the Planning & Zoning Commission met and took positive action to move forward with the two referendum questions. She asked that the Town Manager provide written information addressing the two questions.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she will be working on an explanatory text to be submitted to the State Elections Commission and that there may be an information brochure provided which is also required to be approved by the State Elections Commission. She said that a display and tours of the Town Hall and Library will be provided.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:05 p.m., Councilor Czernicki moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by vote of Council 9/7/04

