

**REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 19, 2013**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Tuesday, February 19, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann. Absent: Councilor McAlister.

Also present: Attorney Christopher Stone, Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, Glenn Chalder, Planimetrics, Dana Meineke, Student Guardian Safety Bus Program, Nancy Stilwell, Director Social & Youth Services, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Kotkin led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Mayor Hemmann introduced Attorney Stone who gave a presentation on the MDC-UCONN Water Proposal. See Attorney Stone's presentation is attached to the end of these minutes. Note that throughout the presentation Councilors posed questions to Attorney Stone.

Mayor Hemmann next called upon Peter Gillespie, Town Planner and Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics to present the Economic Development Report. Note a copy of the 2013 Plan of Conservation & Development is available on the Town website. Mr. Gillespie explained that there is a public hearing scheduled for the plan on April 2, 2013 at 6.30 p.m. in the Council Chambers and is the official public hearing scheduled for this plan. Mr. Gillespie asked Mr. Chalder to lead the presentation. Note that after the presentation Councilors posed questions to Mr. Gillespie regarding the plan.

Councilor Hurley moved **"TO ADD AN AGENDA ITEM AS 3D: TO WAIVE RENTAL FEES FOR THE USE OF THE SHOW MOBILE"**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave., commented on the inaccurate measurements that have been taking along Tifton Rd. over the years. He wants a review of the situation for a stop sign.

Joel Wagner, 203 Clearfield Rd., thanked the Council for reconsidering the bid to sell the Wilkus Farm to a local resident and is very pleased that they were able to come to that decision and believes that the local resident will restore the Wilkus farmstead to its original glory.

Harry Lichtenbaum, 16 Town Line Rd., commented on the February issue of Hartford Magazine,

regarding a story on Wethersfield which stated some inaccurate information. The article listed Windsor as the oldest town in our state and that information is incorrect as Windsor only established a trading post and no one resided or settled there. Mr. Lichtenbaum stated that he researched this topic and the oldest settlement in Connecticut is Wethersfield. He added that Windsor had the first trading post but Wethersfield is the first settlement and the oldest town in Connecticut. He wrote a letter expressing his desire for information to be corrected.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., said he is hoping that the real estate market picks up. He commented on business development in Wethersfield and a bill in front of the legislature that wants to tax small businesses that have liquid cash on hand. He feels that it is ironic that Connecticut want businesses to come here while they continue to hammer them. Mr. Young mentioned that the rate of return from the \$2 million trust fund is a pretty good rate of return and hopes that we are able to generate that kind of return. He also spoke of a newspaper article regarding eliminating car tax on vehicles evaluated at \$28,000 and the town losing \$5.6 million dollars on taxes because of that.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented that it was a good idea that the town did not dump the snow back into people's driveways during the big snowstorm even if the streets are a little narrower. It saved people the trouble of having to go out and reshovel their driveway and sidewalks again. Mr. Ruhe also urged the Council to think carefully as they approach the issue of security in the schools. He stated there is much that can be done but nothing will make them completely safe. He stated suggested the Council should think of ways to tighten security without making prison's out of them. Mr. Ruhe suggested to have policemen patrol school property within the town on a regular basis and not to have a kneejerk reaction and to think about what might really enhance the security and wellbeing of all of our children.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Drake reported that the School Project Building Committee met last week, basically it was the High School Renovation Committee, and stated that the design is substantially done. They expect to have their first final costing done by mid-March. Councilor Drake explained that the two issues that they are working on right now are some environmental issues which could be no money or a little money, but it's a budget item that they are still working on. He explained that the other thing is that they spent the last two or three weeks on changes to security due to some of the issues which could affect the budget a little bit. They may have to take it from somewhere else. They are looking at around 100 video cameras, changes to the doors, the glass; it's a lot of small things but it could add up to some significant money.

Deputy Mayor Console reported that they had a Public Safety meeting on February 5th to discuss school security and the StudentGuardian program for school buses. In attendance were Councilors Drake, Hurley, Roberts; Mr. Bridges; Rae Ann Palmer; Chief of Police James Cetran, Mike Emmett, Superintendent of Schools, Fred Bushey and former Police Officer Tom Dillon. Deputy Mayor Console reported they discussed generalities of what to do going forward for added safety to the school system. They will take a proactive approach and not to jump into

anything but not to play a waiting game to see what the State of Connecticut will do. He explained the Chief and others came up with some suggestions for another meeting. Deputy Mayor Console took away, whatever we are doing, locking systems for the doors, things teachers can do immediately or securing the building a little better, is to add time. As people said in the audience, you are never going to make things 100% better and make anyone totally safe, but to add some time to get other people to a facility. Deputy Mayor Console explained that we also discussed all public buildings, the Libraries, our Town Hall, the Board of Education building, and that there has to be a sense of some security, especially when the public is there so they can feel a little bit safe. He added that they are discussing quite a few different options and there will be more coming out in the future. Deputy Mayor Console stated that the Police Dept. suggested a School Safety Liaison Team in response to the Sandy Hook elementary tragedy. The team will be comprised of a group of selected officers who want to be more actively involved in the safety of the schools and the mentoring of the children within the community. He explained that the general concept behind the creation of this team is that every school will be assigned an individual officer to act as a direct liaison between the school's administration, faculty, parents, and students and that a general overview of this team and the anticipated duties, responsibilities and commitment level that will be expected for any officer will be discussed in the future. Deputy Mayor Console commented that things do have to be done and that we need to take a proactive approach to this and this is one small step in the right direction.

Deputy Mayor Console reported that they discussed the School Student Guardian Program and the addition of cameras on the school busses so when the stop signs go out on the school busses they will track any people going through and not stopping for the red lights on the school busses. He also stated that the Council will be voting on that motion tonight.

Councilor Manousos reported that the Budget Finance Committee met and reviewed our financial statement, reports through December. If the current trend continues through the rest of the fiscal year, we should see revenue and expenses favorable to budget and if there are no unexpected expenses that are incurred, we should have a surplus of close to \$200,000. Councilor Manousos stated that the other item on the agenda was the OPEB Trust and how we are going to be funding that and that is on the agenda for tonight, but one of the reasons, somebody had mentioned the rate of return on that fund, is because that initial funding, that asset allocation is going to be 60% equities, 5% ~~rates~~, *reits* and 35% fixed income assets.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Deputy Mayor Console commended the Town Manager, the Assistant Town Manager and the Physical Services Department and stated that with the monumental job that came with the snow storm and the amount of equipment we have, he thinks that they did a pretty outstanding job.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he noticed that they have been leveling off a lot of the soil over on the staging area on Highland Street and he is concerned if any of that soil is getting into that stream that is nearby and asked Mr. Bridges to have Mr. Turner or somebody check that out and let us know because that stream feeds the swimming ponds.

Deputy Mayor Console asked Mr. Bridges if he has been getting any calls on the beaver situation at the 1860 reservoir and asked if anything was being done as far as the beaver population and the dams that are being built?

Mr. Bridges responded that he will cover it in the Manager's Report.

Councilor Roberts thanked Councilor Drake for the reports that he gives on the Building Committee because they are very thorough and it keeps Council up-to-date and thanked him for keeping everyone informed in a timely manner.

Mayor Hemmann reported that we received a letter from a resident and everyone received it and if you want to bring anything forward for further discussion we can do that and it is in regards to the Constitution so if anybody would like to discuss it, we can put it back on the agenda for some discussion.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bridges reported on the budget, proposed by the Governor, if the bill on the car tax is still in play by the time we have to produce the Manager's budget, we will probably produce, not three separate budgets, but at least three separate summaries. Mr. Bridges stated that the main budget will be based upon still being able to tax motor vehicle. The feedback that we are getting back from our own legislators is that the bill has some problems, so we are going to put the base budget together based upon having the property tax on the vehicle. He stated that we will also provide summaries if the vehicle tax goes away and the entire amount that would have raised is shifted then to the property tax--what that would do to the mill levy and then how much we would have to reduce the budget if there was a desire not to shift that to the property tax, so there would be three separate budget calculations for the presentation. Mr. Bridges stated that he met with Senator Fonfara as the Finance Chair last week and with COST and informed them of the issues. The First Selectwoman from Westin was there who is our prime [COST] spokesperson as well as the First Selectman from Old Lyme and there will be other hearings as we go along on that issue.

Mr. Bridges stated that the other issue with the revenue sharing proposals from the Governor, he is correct that he's totaled dollars the towns are kept whole. I don't think from Wethersfield's point of view we have enough uses for the different pots he's mixed and matched with but we can come out even on the general revenue sharing proposals. It does limit the flexibility because it takes money away from what we would have put in the general fund, i.e., the Pequot money and moves it to LOCIP which is more of a Capital Improvement Fund but given that we have always transferred money from the general fund to the Capital Improvement Fund replacing that general fund transfer with LOCIP funds, it's a wash for us so, I think there is enough in there for us to make use of and come out even and there is a little bit of benefit to the schools so the big issue for us is going to be the motor vehicle tax and the impact it has on the overall mill rate.

Mr. Bridges reported that he visited the Art Institute and stated that it is a phenomenal operation there. He stated that the kitchen equipment alone was close to \$1,000,000 and it is two professional grade kitchens, graphic design, computerized and manual graphic design, fine arts and is a very impressive operation and hopefully once they open for business we can get other tours in there, but that's going to be a tremendous community asset. He stated that they offer a full four-year degree in some form of art and it is a tremendous deal for the town and the community.

Mr. Bridges reported that on Morrison Avenue, Gus is correct that at 15 ft. off the intersection it is 240 ft. at 10 ft. off the intersection it is 380 ft., so both of us are right depending on where you start. Mr. Bridges stated that Mr. Turner did a full report on the new measurement and I actually asked today for an evaluation the impact on the snow banks and the site distance issues today, so we are going to be meeting on that to see if that changes the outcomes with the warrants so we are looking into that.

Mr. Bridges reported that the Trust Fund, as Councilor Manousos has stated, there is a mixture of equities and fixed incomes. He explained that fixed income products we can invest that money. It's separate from a bank account and that's the benefit of the Trust that allows the town to invest in different things other than just a straight bank account so that is where the 4% comes from and actually under this particular statute, there is a limit on what items can be used in the Trust and it is more towards fixed income and governmental assets.

Mr. Bridges reported that we got a DEEP [Department of Energy & Environmental Protection] licensed trapper in there and we believe there are four beavers in there and he has trapped two already and there is two more to go. Mr. Bridges reported that we are leaving the things in place at this time that way if there is disturbance of the dams now may cause it more difficult to track so we are going to leave it in place until we trap the beavers out and then clean up the site. Mr. Bridges stated that we have been in there about six weeks with a trapper and stated that the DEEP trapper will take the beavers away.

Councilor Kotkin wanted to reiterate John's comments about the storm cleanup and asked Mr. Bridges if there was anything that he wanted to add.

Mr. Bridges commended Physical Services for staying out all night and stated that by 1:00 p.m., the State had pulled their trucks off the road and we ended plowing people to hospitals, got them to doctors, got them out of their houses, got the police to different residences, got the ambulance to different places and stayed out all night and it was just a tremendous effort on their part. He stated that the Police Officers, the Firefighters, the Ambulance Company all worked all night long and it was just an amazing effort so if there is someone to thank, it is that group of people. Mr. Bridges stated that for those of you who haven't cleared your sidewalks or hydrants, please do so. There are probably about 100 of them left out there. He added that starting Wednesday, Engineering was out there making lists to give to police and starting Friday, we were causing the sidewalk to be cleared and the property owners will get a bill or lien on their property for clearing

that sidewalk, so please clear your sidewalks, there are still several out there that need to be finished.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF THERESA URBANSKI AND WAYNE URBANSKI, 46 MARMOUR COURT FROM THE WETHERSFIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None to report.

OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT A STATE MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORTATION (DIAL-A-RIDE EXPANSION GRANT) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$31,773 FOR WETHERSFIELD AND \$89,436 TOTAL, AND TO NEGOTIATE AND SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE TOWNS OF NEWINGTON AND ROCKY HILL TO PROVIDE A TRI-TOWN MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICE”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Dr. Stilwell stated that as of February 19, 2013, the money has not yet been cut out of the State budget. This grant will not affect the Monday – Thursday medical transportation to the basic area. It is a specific to the Friday, out of Town locations, not normally served by Dial-A-Ride.

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

Councilor Manousos moved to

- “1. MOTION TO APPROVE THE OPEB FUNDING POLICY.**
- 2. MOTION TO TRANSFER \$3,800,000 OF FUND BALANCE FROM THE SELF-INSURANCE RESERVE FUND (FUND 6001) TO THE OPEB TRUST FUND (FUND 8705).**
- 3. MOTION TO TRANSFER \$2,750,000 OF FUND BALANCE FROM THE RETIREE RESERVE FUND (FUND 8700) TO THE OPEB TRUST FUND (FUND 8705)”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Mr. Bridges explained that the Budget Finance Committee along with a group that will

eventually be Trustees for the OPEB Trust Fund have been working on a series of actions and policies to a) initiate the OPEB Trust Fund, and b) provide for its long-term care and trust oversight. Mr. Bridges stated that this evening's actions would be to take the money that we have had in reserve for the retirees medical expenses basically collected from the employees over the last several years as part of payroll deductions and shift that to OPEB in addition take excess funds from what we call the active employees fund basically claims dollars we budgeted but didn't spend on claims and shift that to the OPEB fund to provide a seed of roughly \$6.5 million towards fully funding our OPEB obligations. Mr. Bridges explained that today, we have an OPEB obligation of roughly \$65 million dollars based upon the actuarial assumptions, so that your first step is to transfer those funds. The second step is to adopt the OPEB Funding Policy which provides that the Town of Wethersfield, which means both the Town and the Board combined will fund annually first the \$200,000 next year and for every year after that adding \$200,000 to that amount until we have reached what is called the annual required contribution which will be 10-12 years from now. Mr. Bridges explained that next budget year, we will put in \$200,000 with the split being 72% town, 28% board and the following year it will be \$400,000, and then \$600,000 and so on until we meet the arch and that's what the OPEB funding policy says. He explained that the funding policy also provides for responsibilities of the Trustee, Custodian, the Finance Department and Staff within the matrix of caring for the OPEB Trust. That, in a nut shell is what is being asked of you this evening.

Councilor Drake asked if 10 years from now we will have a line item of about \$2 million a year going into it every year in our budget. When do you expect that the \$2 million will start slowing back down because years from now retirees won't have the health care, it will be more like private sector.

Mr. Bridges stated that it is beyond our horizon.

Councilor Drake asked if the \$2 million per year will do it when we get there.

Mr. Bridges replied eventually, and stated that the actuaries have encouraged us to put more in quicker and that would allow us to hit that horizon much sooner but there is a balance between budget and capability. Mr. Bridges stated that this policy can always be amended. Since we haven't met the arch, we do have the unfunded obligation; this policy is used to show people who buy our bonds that we are committed to it and we have a plan. Mr. Bridges explained that one of the other elements of this plan is, if at the end of a fiscal year, there is significant dollars left over in what we call the "Active Self-insurance Fund" leaving a certain percentage according to policy roughly 10 percent or three months worth of claims, we can move that to the OPEB and enhance the contribution of that year as well in addition to the \$200,000, so it provides flexibility on how we can fund this as well.

Councilor Manousos commented that once it is fully fund, that OPEB Fund, the Self-insurance Fund would go away, and at the end of the day OPEB when it is fully funded it will be self-sustaining.

Mr. Bridges stated that in the Trust Document that was created we added a Board of Trustees for the OPEB and we included within that two citizens of the community to serve. The Trust document doesn't really flush out how they are appointed or their term of office so we will be bringing back an amendment to the trust ordinance that fleshes out those details for the council to consider probably sometime in April.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“MOTION TO APPROVE THE SG SYSTEM BUS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BY AND AMONG REDFLEX GUARDIAN, INC., D/B/A STUDENT GUARDIAN, TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT, TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT POLICE DEPARTMENT WITH CHANGES AS PROPOSED BY TOWN ATTORNEY”**, seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Mr. Bridges explained that the Board of Education and Police Chief realized that we have a problem with people passing stopped school buses and sought a solution. The Student Guardian Program was determined to be an answer at the public safety meeting. Dana Meineke is here to talk about it.

Ms. Meineke explained that they work with the town and law enforcement to put cameras on the outside of school buses to monitor for illegal stop on violations. It's a no-cost program, not to the school, town or residents and explained that we are able to put the technology on the buses for no cost and as tickets get paid, it funds the program and you are actually able to net a little bit of revenue for each ticket paid. The ticket for this kind of violation is \$465, the municipality will keep 85% of that for every ticket paid and of that \$235.00 goes back to the vendor to pay for the program and the equipment. She stated that they are seeing great results and a little bit of a deterrent in towns where they have been working for a few years now and it is a great safety initiative.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if voted upon tonight, when we could expect to have them on our school buses.

Ms. Meineke responded that we would do a thorough analysis process first, including driver's surveys, we would coordinate with the Transportation Dept. and then we would use temporary cameras to monitor the buses for a period of time so that we could identify the buses that have the biggest problem. She explained that we would anticipate loading anywhere from 10 – 15 percent of the fleet and we could have the first bus loaded within two weeks of the contract being approved.

Councilor Drake asked if we can back off from this if we decide we don't want to do it in two or three years.

Ms. Meineke responded that it is a five-year term.

Councilor Manousos asked if they are using LPR cameras for this.

Ms. Meineke responded that it is done by a human, so we have live monitors that watch three cameras as the buses are making their stops and as they see cars go by they isolate the plate, identify what the characters are and upload it for police review.

Councilor Manousos asked who is doing the actual collections.

Ms. Meineke responded that the fine money follows the exact flow as any other citation and stated that on a quarterly basis, the monies will go back to the municipality, will submit an invoice for the number of tickets issued and will be reimbursed that way.

Councilor Manousos asked if noticing is done by their company or by the town.

Ms. Meineke responded that it is done by the town.

Councilor Roberts asked Ms. Meineke to go over the numbers again and asked what the fine was?

Ms. Meineke responded that the fine is technically \$465.00, but \$15.00 of that is used for court administration fees so the percentages are based on a \$450.00. She stated that it is written so that 8% goes to the general fund, 12% to the special transportation fund and then 80% goes to the municipality and then of that \$235.00 to the vendor, \$125.00 to the municipality.

Mayor Hemmann commented that she looked at the slide presentation and it was interesting to see the statistics from other communities in the number of violations. She stated that she was very surprised to see that high of a number of cars that would pass a school bus enough to get ticketed.

Ms. Meineke stated that we are seeing about a state average of one pass per bus per day and nationally it is about 88.

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

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO WAIVE THE SHOW MOBILE RENTAL FEE OF \$250 FOR THE HARTFORD MARATHON FOUNDATION SANDY HOOK RUN FOR FAMILIES, WHICH WILL DONATE 100% OF THE PROCEEDS TO THE SANDY HOOK SCHOOL SUPPORT FUND”**, seconded by Manousos.

RaeAnn Palmer explained that the Parks and Recreation Department had a request for use of the Show Mobile by the Hartford Marathon Foundation. She stated that they are sponsoring a Sandy Hook Run for Families for which the proceeds will all go to the fund to help support the families

from the Sandy Hook tragedy and essentially they are asking you to waive the \$250.00 fees for the Show Mobile rental. Ms. Palmer explained that the labor to set this Show Mobile up will be taken out of our show mobile fund and absorbed so it won't cost any general fund tax dollars.

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

BIDS

None.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

None.

MINUTES

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 2, 2013”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-1. Councilor Hurley abstained.

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 4, 2013”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-1. Councilor Drake abstained.

Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO APPROVE THE AMENDED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 4, 2013”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Deputy Mayor Console indicated a correction on Pg. 6 stating that the \$205 amount should be \$205,000.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-1. Councilor Drake abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle commented that he agrees with Deputy Mayor Console on the school and that a proactive approach is required, but he wants to make sure is that we approach that proactive report from some pragmatic, questioning attitude to make sure that we don't get panicked into reacting as an elected body by police officials or school officials. Mr. Ruhe also urged the practice of gun safety and licensing to help prevent gun violence. He also

urged the Council to be careful in adding a lot of additional costs while making decisions.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented that he is glad that the Town Manager spoke about the State budget because he has been following that especially the municipal aid portion. Mr. Young commented that Governor Malloy has indicated that the State is making hard decisions and setting priorities and there is no question that the local government will need to do the same. Mr. Young commented that the State of Connecticut is reducing their money that is going out to the towns and we need to cut back on our spending over the next several years and urged the Council to reduce their spending.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:15 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Drake. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council
March 4, 2013

Minutes were amended on pg. 3, paragraph 3, changing the word "rates" to "reits".