

**REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 4, 2013**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, March 4, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

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

Also present: Tom Santello, Wethersfield/Rocky Hill Elks; Dan & Mary Daversa, Mikey's Place, Kathy Bagley, Parks & Recreation; Paul Hutcheon, Director Health District, Lori DiPietro, Health Educator; Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Manousos led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Chairperson Hemmann introduced Tom Santello, Exalted Ruler of Wethersfield/Rocky Hill Elks who presented Mikey's Place with a check in the amount of \$1500.00. Mary Daversa thanked the Elks for their generosity.

PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor Hemmann presented a Proclamation declaring March 12th as Girl Scout Day.

Mayor Hemmann presented a Proclamation declaring April 1 through April 7, 2013 as National Public Health Week.

Mayor Hemmann introduced Paul Hutcheon who presented the Annual Report of the Central Connecticut Health District. Mr. Hutcheon explained the services that are provided by the Connecticut Health District and stated that the Annual Report and PowerPoint presentation can be found on the Central Connecticut Health District website at <http://www.ccthd.org>. After the presentation the Councilors asked questions.

Councilor Kotkin asked how Wethersfield faired with the flu this winter.

Mr. Hutcheon responded that it was one of the worst years recently for us and for the State. He explained that it seemed to hit the seniors and the elderly harder this year than in prior years so we had a lot of reported cases as compared to prior years. Mr. Hutcheon also explained that the effectiveness of the vaccine in the seniors wasn't at the level that it needed to be which probably resulted in so many cases.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Romeo LaFaive, 28 Carolina Dr., Rocky Hill, commented on predatory trespass towing, particularly at the Wethersfield Shopping Center on the Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Sheila Wells, 256 Hartford Ave., commented that she is glad that the Wilkus Farm decision was reversed and that the land is now going to be used as farm land. She also commented on the idea of the proceeds from the sale of the Wilkus farm will go to buy the development rights to benefit a very small group, just doesn't smell right.

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Rd., commented that he was offered a good deal by AT&T but did not take it yet. He asked, if Cox is the only way we can get our town council meetings at home, what is that being done for people who have AT&T or satellite to have access to our town council meetings as well. Mayor Hemmann responded that there is already access for the AT&T Uverse. Mr. Bridges explained to go to Channel 99 and you can pick any town in CT that has AT&T service. Mr. Sekas suggested, as businesses [storefronts] become vacant in town, there should be a requirement for future occupants to put in a ramp handicapped accessibility. Also, the black top on many places along Somerset Street has not been done properly and he feels the cracks will cause the road to wear down faster, which will add a cost which we don't need. Mayor Hemmann said, once they complete that area, they will repave that area to the way it was prior to the construction. Chairperson Hemmann explained that one of the issues right now is that the asphalt plants are closed, because of the weather. Once the asphalt plants open up in the spring, they will come back in and fix those. Mr. Sekas announced that May 25th will be the Memorial Day Parade and on April 5th, Friends of the Nature Center will hold a fundraising dance at the Community to benefit the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center.

Robert Cobb, 99 Meadow View Dr. complimented the Town Council and Town Manager for the great work that they have been doing in keeping down our costs and maintaining our budgets. An article in the Hartford Courant with people in other towns expressed their envy on how well our town was doing in terms of controlling our costs and economic conservatism. Mr. Cobb questioned why we were using taxpayer's money to buy development rights from a builder for the Goff Rd. property. The benefit of the town involvement would be restricted to a certain few, those in the immediate area surrounding this property; how does the town benefit from spending \$200,000. He is confused by using taxpayer money but we cannot walk on the land because it is private property, not town land. Mr. Cobb further commented that Planning & Zoning Commission whose job it is to oversee such issues made a decision that this transaction should not take place. He urged the Council to not overturn the Planning & Zoning Commission's decision.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented that we shouldn't be owning any property if we are not using it; we have much more important things. The State is in drastic financial straits. We are looking at reductions from the State Capitol and the Feds not only this year but going out years. We are dealing with this thing, we don't even need. He urged the Council not to override the Planning & Zoning Commission's decision. Mr. Young commented on the school bus

cameras and the revenue that will be collected by that and suggested that we should also do that about cell phones.

Leigh Standish, 278 Hartford Ave., thanked the Council for their voluntary services for the town. He serves as an Alternate on the Planning and Zoning Committee. They recently had a decision on the Goff Rd. property. It was a considered and deliberative decision in regard to land use within the Plan of Conservation and Development. He asked the Council to give credit to your deliberative boards and commissions and do not take up an override of that decision. He believes it is a decision that they have made in the best interest of the Town of Wethersfield.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Roberts reported that the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee met last week and asked Dolores if there were any pending vacancies on that Committee. Ms. Sassano responded yes, there are probably seven. Councilor Roberts stated that she will be contacting Ms. Sassano to coordinate filling those vacancies. Councilor Roberts next reported that May 4th is their Annual Educational Seminar which this year is on "Car Fit." Information will be coming out and people can sign up for an appointment. They will get all sorts of information on the car that they own and whether it is appropriate for them.

Councilor Drake reported that he attended the High School Building Project regarding the High School Renovation. Basically things are going very well and they have to have the design work, the budgets, and all the paperwork into the State by March 19th. Councilor Drake reported that everything seems to be on track, the design is good, the budgets seem to be on track, but there is an issue of PCB's in the building; the type of thing they chase down which started about two years ago. He explained that in 1992 during the last renovation everything seemed to be abated but they weren't looking for it. There is a little bit in the building and when they did the original tests a while ago PCB's were there but not that much. Councilor Drake explained they did more tests and the issue that has come up is that the State has requested that the EPA approve the remediation plan, by March 19th. He explained that Jeff has worked on it with a consultant who has a little more expertise to try and push this through, and hopefully, within the next two weeks it will get resolved.

Councilor Kotkin commented that the Insurance Committee met last week and stated that we are still in very good shape on health insurance probably \$1,000,000 below budget or so. He explained that there is one area where the trend isn't as good and that is in workman's compensation; it's not any one particular area. It was in the Board of Education but that's not true anymore. Councilor Kotkin stated that it is actually several areas of the town employee workforce, but we've had a few sort of difficult years in a row and I think when we see our workman's compensation budget we are going to see probably about \$150,000 increase for the next fiscal year versus the most recent one. He explained that while the property casualty is going reasonably well and health is really going very well, workman's compensation is not.

There is some work the town is doing now to try to reinforce safe work practices among the employees, that's one trend that is not favorable for the town currently.

Mayor Hemmann asked if they had any particular trends that were identified.

Councilor Kotkin responded that it really seems to come from several of the departments, some from the police, some from education, public works, so it's not as though they were all repetitive stress or lifting, it's a variety. Councilor Kotkin also point out that our insurance agent of record is talking about having some seminars with the department heads in town to reinforce safe work practices.

Mr. Bridges commented that Councilor Kotkin is absolutely right. It is across the board and it is no one department or one single issue and stated that what drives the increase somewhat is we have a relatively low worker compensation premium. He explained that on the town side, its \$453,000, so it doesn't take a lot of claims against the policy to put us in a negative environment. We have held that \$453,000 for the last three years and the last couple of years we have had one or two big claims. Mr. Bridges commented that we are going to experience that next year and the goal is to smooth that out with some training, revisiting or workplace safety issues, which our agent of record is working on to see if we can smooth that out.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Hemmann commented that the Council is aware of the Planning and Zoning opinion regarding the 8-24 referral for the Wilkus Farm and the Goff Rd. property transactions and that the Staff and the Town Manager are still ironing out some of the final details and it is likely that these items will be on the agenda for discussion and potential action at our next council meeting on March 18th.

Councilor Roberts commented that she has been getting phone calls regarding the site over at Keisha Farms over on Highland Street. Councilor Roberts asked the Town Manager if MDC is working in town now and asked where.

Mr. Bridges responded that this site is only for the Town of Wethersfield work and stated that VMS may have other crews in other towns but they are not staging here and going there. He explained that we have been assured by MDC that this worksite is only for Wethersfield.

Councilor Roberts commented that the site gets worse looking every day. It's winter and she can't picture they are doing large amounts of work. She stated that there were four pay loaders there, a ton of trucks and peoples' cars. She commented that there was a kid there all summer holding a truck entrance sign and today there was a guy parked out there in a car with Massachusetts plates on it. Councilor Roberts stated that when you drive around Wethersfield, she doesn't see that many projects, using those trucks at the sites. It just seems that something more going on there than what they keep telling us.

Mr. Bridges responded that we can go back to MDC and ask again and he's sure we'll get the same answer. He asked if it was the Town Council's request for them to vacate the site.

Councilor Roberts responded that it looks like a construction site instead of a farm that's renting land. She doesn't know if they should be doing that on the property. She understands that there are neighbors in other parts of town that don't want these trucks on their street, but it needs to be looked into.

Mr. Bridges responded that MDC has an inspector onsite all day to make sure that only the contractor that MDC is contracting with is on the site. Mr. Bridges commented that we can have MDC to come here and answer questions, but at the end of the day, if we don't want them here, we'll have to tell him. Mr. Bridges commented that he doesn't think anything short of that is going to resolve the issue. They are going to be there; it's going to be ugly and it's going to be noisy. Mr. Bridges explained the ~~Town~~ *Towns* just approved, system-wide, another \$800,000,000 to update these sewer lines and water lines. If we don't want them there, we'll tell them to move and we'll have to find them another spot.

Deputy Mayor Console responded that he thought that this site was to be used for doing the Meadowgate and Randy Lane area. He read that the site was supposed to be used for those streets. Deputy Mayor Console commented that he appreciates the Town Manager's report that they received the other day. He commented that, all this equipment there, the town should be taxing them on the equipment if it's going to be there that long. Deputy Mayor Console followed two trucks one day to the bus way and back. They unloaded some soil and brought some soil back, unfortunately, he did not have access to a camera. A discussion ensued regarding the activity on that property.

Mr. Bridges commented that if the Council wants them off the site we can get them off the site.

Deputy Mayor Console responded that with the phone calls that he's been receiving—I don't know how many Councilor Roberts has been receiving, but he thinks the time has come to clean it up.

Councilor Drake asked if the landowner is allowed to just rent it out for that purpose.

Mr. Bridges responded that it is temporary.

Councilor Drake responded that he just can't imagine that he can do that and suggested that maybe we need to have more discussion about it.

Mr. Bridges asked if they want to have MDC come here.

Councilor Roberts commented that she would like to know when it is going to end. It seems to have taken on a life of its own. She would like to know from Mike Turner if there is any kind of violations of town ordinances, town zoning permits, anything like that and if anyone is checking the dirt that is being brought in, in terms of contaminants. She does need to have a discussion about it. It looks like a disaster and it is blight. She stated that at some point we should discuss it and decide what we want to do with it and what our rights are. If it's a private property owner who leased it, do we even have any rights to deal with it or are we stuck with it. There are a bunch of questions that need answers.

Mr. Bridges responded that as members of the MDC, I am sure we expressed our displeasure with them and as members of the MDC they'll make any changes that we are asking them to make.

Councilor Drake commented that if someone had an answer as to when would be the end, he would be comfortable with that. Right now, he doesn't even see an end.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he was told at one point that it wasn't supposed to be an active site all winter and it was all winter.

Mr. Bridges responded that's right, but then they decided to do as much as they could on manholes during the winter time to be done faster. Again, this is the third spot in town where we've put them because there is nowhere else, but if we don't want them there, we can move them.

Councilor Manousos commented that he would like to know how many other projects they are working on in town, so we have an idea.

Councilor Drake asked why they don't just stay where they are doing the project. Why do they have to go somewhere else?

Mr. Bridges replied they have to store the material somewhere.

Councilor Drake commented that it would be nice if someone stated an end date.

Councilor Manousos asked how many other projects in town are they actually working on.

Mayor Hemmann commented that maybe it would be easier to have them come.

Councilor Roberts commented that it seems to be like the story without an end.

Mr. Bridges asked the Council if they want them to come here.

Mayor Hemmann responded that she thinks it would be helpful that there are enough questions where she thinks it would be helpful.

Councilor Roberts suggested that contractors come as well as the MDC.

Mr. Bridges responded that he will reach out to them and get these answers and see if they can come to a meeting.

Deputy Mayor Console attended the meeting regarding the town seeking ideas for some historic buildings; the Mayor and about 30 or 40 other people also attended. They are putting together a plan, it was informative but he questions the grant funding of \$50,000 to study privately owned properties, and also, the cost benefit is questionable. When Comstock ferry owners bought the property, something similar to this was at Planning and Zoning and it was turned down. He knows there is more to come and April we will get the final report and discussion. He will go there, but what it will prove to the town or how it is going to help the historic area in Old Wethersfield, he doesn't know.

Deputy Mayor Console said he has received a lot of calls and questions on Goff Rd because it seems very unclear on what's going on. He has been putting together all the bullets and calling this topic, "follow the money" from the original Wilkus Farm purchase, and what the intents were and what has happened since and up to the Goff Rd. events. He will put it all together and will share it with Council members and the Town Manager. Perhaps he could even get something in the paper so people really get a good idea of what's happened, how it's happened and where your tax dollars are going.

Deputy Mayor Console commented on a letter he received from Andrew Jackson, of 36 Old Pepperidge Lane which had some information of the Foundation of All American Law is the U.S. Constitution outlining some information on the Constitution, the Oath of Office and the Patriot Act and things of that nature. Deputy Mayor Console asked Dolores if she could enter it into the minutes.

Councilor Kotkin commented on the resident that spoke earlier suggesting that because of the proximity of his house to the Goff Rd. property that he had a conflict of interest. Councilor Kotkin stated that he is sorry that the resident left subsequent to his comments. This is probably the third or fourth meeting where he has noted he had that same question given the proximity. The Town Manager did inquire about his concerns with the town attorney as to whether in his [the town attorney's] view Mr. Kotkin would have a conflict. Town attorney Forsyth concluded that he did not. It wasn't until after that was relayed to Mr. Kotkin that he began participating in the discussion about the Goff Rd. property.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bridges reported that in response to the issue of trespass tows, Chief Cetran and RaeAnn Palmer have worked extensively on this issue and invited them to brief the Council on how those are handled and protocol on those type of things.

Chief Cetran explained that we do have some procedures in regards to trespass tow and that there is a State law that we follow. He stated that we really don't have too much to do with it because it's from private property and by law owners of property can tow vehicles that they don't want on their property. Chief Cetran explained that they have to notify us but they really don't have to report to us. He stated the Department of Motor Vehicle are the true regulators of the towing companies in the State. Chief Cetran asked if there were any questions.

Councilor Drake asked if you park on some business property do they have to call you?

Chief Cetran responded that they call us and notify us and tell us that they are towing vehicles. Chief Cetran reiterated that it is not something that we can control because we are not the regulating agency in regard to that. We try to keep everything on the up-and-up but in the case of the Wethersfield Shopping Center, it's the management company. He explained that they post signs around the parking lot stating that they will tow a car that is parked there over night and stated that Chimiras van was towed from the parking lot. Chief Cetran stated that according to the management company of the shopping center, they notified all the manager's of the businesses that are there. They have a number to call if any of their employees are going to be in the parking lot after midnight. Chief Cetran stated that he understands the concern; it's just that police are somewhat limited as to what we can actually do.

A discussion then ensued regarding placement of a larger sign being placed somewhere in the shopping center parking lot so people could see that their cars will be towed after midnight.

Chief Cetran stated that he has given out several tickets for cell phone use as well as his officers, and commented that they are enforcing that law as much as they can.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO APPOINT KATHLEEN KANYA, 27 MEADOW VIEW DR. TO THE WETHERSFIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FOR THE TERM 3/4/13 TO 6/30/14" AND TO APPOINT NERMIN DURIC, 123 GOODWIN AVE. TO THE INSURANCE COMMITTEE FOR THE TERM 3/4/13 TO 6/30/17"**, seconded by Councilor Roberts.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY FOR A HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$245,000 TO REPLACE EIGHT GENERATORS IN TOWN BUILDINGS AND TO ACCEPT THE GRANT, IF AWARDED AND TO UTILIZE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FUNDS FOR THE TOWN MATCH OF \$81,750”**, seconded by Councilor Drake.

RayAnne Palmer explained that this is a grant that the Physical Services Department requested authorization to apply for and essentially it would allow us to apply for funds to pay 75% of the cost of replacing generators in eight of our town buildings and each of those town buildings is involved in our emergency management response or our storm response. Ms. Palmer explained that the current generators are reaching the end of their useful life cycle and in some cases, parts are no longer available for repair. Ms. Palmer also explained that if we can, if the gas flow is sufficient we will replace the generators with natural gas generators which will be both cost savings and energy savings.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the new generator at the Town Hall would also run the Library.

Ms. Katz responded that one of the plans that we were hoping to do is to utilize potentially the older generator that is currently here to place in the Library if we needed to be able to use those spaces and keep the new generator, which has a greater capacity and better energy efficiency for use in the Emergency Command Center.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if it would be possible to use a larger generator to run the entire facility here.

Ms. Katz responded no, not the way the buildings are architected; they are actually two separate buildings that do not share systems so the generators are independent.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE DISPOSAL OF THREE CHEVY CAVALIER VEHICLES, TWO THROUGH AUCTION AND ONE BY SALE AS SALVAGE”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges explained that two of the three vehicles have structural issues due to undercarriage rusting and cannot be repaired. One was involved in an accident and is now a salvage vehicle so we ask to dispose of these through auction as we typically do with unusable vehicles. They are all 2002 vehicles.

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

BIDS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AWARD A BID FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE WILLARD POOL CHEMICAL CONTROL SYSTEM TO CONSTRUCTION SERVICES OF NEW ENGLAND, INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$28,500”**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges explained that this project continues the upgrade to the Willard Pool facility operation and stated that in 2011, we replaced the three filters with two new filters and tanks. The tablet chlorine delivery system and controller replacement is phase 2 of this upgrade. Mr. Bridges explained that we received an excellent low bid for this project and confirmed the firm’s ability to do this work. He commented that CSNE renovated Willard Pool in 1996 and is familiar with the pool facility. Our pool consultant has worked with CSNE and has recommended them for this project.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that there is quite a difference in the dollar amount and questioned what the correlation is.

Kathy Bagley responded that the company that received the bid does a lot of pool business and we’ve done a lot of checking with them and went over the bid with them, almost line item by line item to make sure they understood the bid and they told us absolutely that they can handle it and that they are in the business and do a lot of these types of conversions.

Deputy Mayor Console asked who we used last year.

Kathy Bagley responded that the new filters were through a different company and it was a different type of system.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AWARD THE BID FOR EMERSON WILLIAMS SCHOOL PIPE REPAIRS TO J. A. ROSA CONSTRUCTION OF WOLCOTT, CT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$45,450 AND TO AUTHORIZE THE USE OF DRAINAGE RESERVE FUNDS”**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges explained that as part of the CIP Project it was approved to include the installation of rear-yard drainage along the Emerson School boundary with the neighborhood. He explained that we solicited the bids and the bids came in at \$45,000, \$5,000 over, but that was the lowest bid. He stated that the bids range from \$45,450 to \$123,000 so we had quite a spread and more than 10 bidders. Mr. Bridges explained that the drainage work to be done not only includes pipe paralleling the property line but if you look at the map, we also have some perpendicular pipes that provide better overall drainage to the site through the perforated perpendicular pipes. Mr. Bridges added that the Staff is recommending approval of this project and it is going to do a lot to make those fields more usable and help the drainage in that neighborhood.

Councilor Kotkin asked do you know which private properties are subject to flooding.

Mr. Bridges responded that it's the ones at the bottom of the hill.

Councilor Kotkin commented along the walkway and asked is it like one, two, three.

Mr. Bridges responded that there are three and there are actually some trees that are falling over because it is too wet.

A discussed then ensued regarding the condition of the property.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

None.

MINUTES

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 19, 2013”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Councilor Kotkin commented that on pg. 3, rates should be changed to REITs.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Barbara Ruhe, 79 Main St. commented that it would be a brilliant idea to have a generator to run the Library and stated that it would be a delightful place to go and get warm during an outage. She also commented that while growing up, her many years of girl scouting was a very positive experience and that the Girl Scouts provide an opportunity to learn many things and to learn to stand up and speak out and she is delighted that the Girl Scouts were recognized.

Romano LaFaive, 28 Carolina Dr., Rocky Hill, commented on the lack of “tow signs” at the Wethersfield Shopping Center and stated that signs are only posted at some of the entrances and not all. He also commented on the lack of response from the parties involved when trying to gather information regarding the placement of towing signs and towing regulations.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., asked the Council to consider all the seniors in town and the unemployment rate when creating the new budget. Mr. Young urged the Council to reduce our costs in town. He also commented that the private property up on Highland Street should be used for whatever the owners want to use it for and that we shouldn't try to chase the people with

the trucks out of there as long as they are paying their taxes and registrations and are doing their business.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:00 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Deputy Mayor Console. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 6-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council
March 18, 2013

Meeting minutes were amended to correct a grammatical error made on page 5, paragraph 3, changing the word Town to Towns.