

**REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 6, 2013**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, May 6th, at 7:10 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Roberts - arrived at 7:10 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann. Councilor Montinieri arrived at 7:30 p.m. Absent: Councilors Kotkin, McAlister, Manousos.

Also present: John Cascio, Chairman Board of Education, Gina DeAngelo, Chairman, Budget & Finance Committee, Board of Education, also Martin Walsh, Tracy McDougal, Polly Moon of the Board of Education, Mike Turner, Town Engineer, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Hurley led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

GENERAL COMMENTS

John Cascio, Chairman of the Board of Education, 33 Colonel Drive, commented that to cut anything from the Board of Education budget would be detrimental to our students, faculty, staff and ultimately our Town. In fact, he said the 3.57% Board of Education budget, brought to Council, was not the original 6.02% budget. He stated that many initiatives in the original budget have been eliminated. Chairman Cascio also stated on how the staff remained available and has answered any and all questions from the Town Council. He hopes to have the support of the Town Council in favor of the Board of Education.

Gina DeAngelo, 16 Dennison Ridge, Chairperson of Finance Committee for the Board of Education. Mrs. DeAngelo said they due to unknown costs of some of the State mandates including the Smart Balance Testing which will require students to take these tests using computers, technology was important. The students also need computers and I-pads to access the on-line text books. She also thinks the 13-year old aging band uniforms need to be replaced as the band represents the Town. She urged the Council to vote on Wednesday for the Board of Education as presented and submitted.

Martin Walsh, 15 Laurel Way, member of the Board of Education commented that they are proud of the budget. They tried to put together a package that would give us the most responsible budget we could at the least amount of increase and came to this decision unanimously. It is for the good of the Town. He stated that there are things in this budget we need to move the school system forward. Mr. Walsh commented there should be no reason any Councilor has any outstanding questions. This is the most comprehensive budget that you've ever seen. Everything is right in front of you and we've had meetings to discuss it. Mr. Walsh commented that he hopes the Town Council will support this budget.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented on the Board of Education budget and urged the Council to look at some of the expenditures such as the AT&T and energy services. They are continuing to honor and pay Medicare Part B to the retirees which is about \$2,000 per year. Mr. Young commented on a number of payments that are being made to numerous entities and urged the Council to take a look at them.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave., commented that 82% of the budget goes toward benefits of the teachers and everyone who works there. He commented that they are looking for a 3.5% increase and are going to lose 4 or 5 positions and feels that it is a sin when you eliminate 4 or 5 position so teachers can increase their salary and benefits. Mr. Colantonio commented about sidewalk repairs and measurements regarding sidewalk placement on Morrison Ave. and questioned the safety of the roadway on Morrison Ave. He suggested to Council to take a look at all stop signs in town and eliminate the ones that are no longer needed.

Michael Cuddigan, 49 Westlook Rd., commented that he is confused regarding the budget process. He stated that on April 15<sup>th</sup> the Council held the Budget Public Hearing but in the past there were several budget workshops which were posted as special council meetings and the minutes were recorded. He stated that he hasn't seen anything posted this year for any of these workshop meetings at all and hasn't seen any minutes on the agenda from those meetings at all. Mr. Cuddigan commented that there have been no meetings at all since the budget hearing and he commented that it seems like something has been changed this year apparently.

Matt DeAngelo, 16 Dennison Ridge, commented that from knowing what has gone into this budget in terms of reporting and detail, that at the end of the day, if the Council makes a judgment that the budget has to be cut, then fine, do it because of the numbers. He stated he would be hard pressed to believe that you are cutting the budget because you don't have enough information.

### COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Hemmann reported that she attended the quarterly Pension Meetings for both the Town and the Fire Department this evening.

### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Hurley spoke about the Board of Education budget and commented that Councilor Manousos did send out a sheet that we wanted filled out starting with this year's budget and then walking down all the line items of mandatory increases and the line items of decreases and then all the new initiatives. He stated that he hasn't seen one that ties out to the bottom line that explains all of the different line items and he is hoping to see that on Wednesday and then would vote on the budget. He commented that he has not seen that yet and even though everybody said we got all the details, he hasn't seen that sheet filled out yet and added that we did not ever talk about cutting out laptops and uniforms; actually we said that would probably be a good thing for the students.

Mayor Hemmann reported that she attended the Central Connecticut Health District Volunteer Recognition Program and stated that in the spirit of volunteer week honored their volunteers. She reported that it was a very well attended event.

Mayor Hemmann reported that on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013 she attended the Arbor Day Ceremony and stated that a tree was planted at the Middle School and the fourth graders read their poems as they have done for many years. She stated that it was a very nice event.

Mayor Hemmann reported that on Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, she attended the Wethersfield Energy Oscars which was put together by the Energy Committee, honoring numerous people from the community for different aspects of energy conservation efforts.

Mayor Hemmann reported that she attended the company 2 awards banquet and the swearing in of Fire Chief Rich Bailey, the Assistant Chief, Mark Guerrera and Deputy Chief Art Abronziono.

Mayor Hemmann reported that we received communications from Honorary Mayor Lasher with some whimsies of Griswoldville and also a communication from Mr. Warren. If anybody would like to see that information, she will give that to the Town Manager.

Councilor Montinieri commented that the Board of Education has done a lot of work on the Board Budget and stated that we obviously have supported the Board of Education budget in the past and want to continue to support the education budget going forward. He hopes to get some continued input from the Board and, hopefully on Wednesday, when we meet jointly wants to maintain continued support of education. Councilor Montinieri commented that the Board did a terrific job. The thoroughness presented to us prior to our meetings has to be acknowledged and he hopes that they can continue that discussion. He stated that a unanimous passage by the Board is a pretty strong statement of support. He thinks they were, in his opinion, very thorough and aggressive about getting this budget as tight as possible to be presented. He is sure that all the Council will hopefully continue to hear that as we continue to go forward and finish up this week. He hopes our dialogue will be positive and wants to indicate his support going forward.

Councilor Roberts reported that along with Councilor Hurley and Montinieri she attended the Fire Chief's ceremony and commented that it was really quite an impressive ceremony.

Councilor Roberts commented on the Board Budget and commented that a 600-page document is pretty impressive. Gina said that only one person on the Council received it, but actually all Councilors received copies of it. Councilor Roberts commented that she has been on the Board of Education and the Council and stated that we have had times in town where the Board came in with a straight face and a 9% budget. She believes the amount of work that has gone into this year has been unbelievable. She thinks the Board has taken a realistic look at services needed. Councilor Roberts stated that, unfortunately, there are always more and more unfunded State mandates that come out, as a municipality, we really don't have a lot of say what comes out of Hartford. We try to make our case known. The thing that impressed her the most in the Board

Budget this year was they actually listed every salary of every employee. In terms of transparency in government, you can't ask for more. It was a bold thing to do and was the right thing to do. She sees in this budget major shifts; now Board of Education is looking at the budget and what they think is important and she wanted to commend them for their work.

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bridges clarified that the allocation between the Board of Education and the Town for health care expenses. Mr. Bridges explained that we are in a pool, a self-insurance program, so every year, Anthem or whatever carrier we are using along with our agent of record, will look at claim volume, the number of members in the groups and allocation rates for each different group of employee and come up with a split between what the Board of Education employees share of the total health insurance spend will be and what the Town of Wethersfield employees or non-board of Education members will be which include the Library. Mr. Bridges explained that a couple of years ago, we redid that audit of this health insurance spend and realized that the split needed to change from 25% to the town to 31% to the town, so it's not that we are picking up costs that are legitimately the Board of Education's, it's just that the true allocation of expenses for the self-insurance fund recognized a 69/31 percent split between the two bodies for health insurance. Mr. Bridges commented that it's not that we picked up somebody else's expenses, it just that the split realigned to its proper format. He explained that our numbers are audited every year and we do have a CPA who audits the Town and Board of Education every year--so those numbers are audited.

### TOWN CLERK

Dolores Sassano reported that she keeps receiving phone calls from residents who have received letters from a company that will charge them \$83.00 to get a copy of their deed or mortgage or anything on our land records. She wants to remind the public that anything in our vault that pertains to any parcel of land in town is available for a \$1.00 a page so you don't have to pay \$83.00 to get a copy of your deed. Ms. Sassano explained that it is usually \$2.00 or \$3.00 at the most, so please don't fall for this scam.

### COUNCIL ACTION

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT, IF AWARDED, A CONNECTICUT CLEAN FUEL PROGRAM GRANT FOR FUNDS TO ASSIST IN THE PURCHASE OF ALTERNATIVE/CLEAN FUEL VEHICLES,”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Mr. Bridges explained that this grant will offset the cost of purchasing a natural gas passenger van for Parks and Recreation and a natural gas Honda Civic. If awarded, the grant will provide \$12,000 toward the purchase of the van and \$6,000 toward the purchase of the Honda Civic. The

purchase of these vehicles is in keeping with the installation of the natural gas fueling station. Mr. Bridges explained that we have already purchase vehicles through this grant program and it works great. It basically pays the up charge for the hybrid vehicle and we benefit from the savings in the alternative fuel costs.

Mayor Hemmann asked if the vehicles have been appropriate and running well.

Mr. Bridges responded yes they are out there. The natural gas system works very well. We have developed a system for people to charge it appropriately and it works great.

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

### BIDS

Councilor Hurley moved to **“AWARD THE BID FOR POOL CHEMICALS TO H. KREVIT & CO. INC., IN THE AMOUNT OF \$25,250, SAVOL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,224 AND LESLIES POOL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,952”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Mr. Bridges explained this is an annual expense and we purchase through a cooperative with the Capital Region Council of Governments for these pool supplies for the summer, we are in the preparation stage of getting these pools up and running so this is a typical expense. He stated that we did get some good news from the MDC-- that once again this year, they will not charge us to fill the pool with water so that will be a savings. He reported that construction is going on at Millwoods for the drainage project; it is pretty impressive to see and it will be a good project when it is done.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved to **“AWARD A CONTRACT TO TREMCO INCORPORATED IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$45,000 FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE SOFFIT AT THE POLICE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING AND TO AUTHORIZE THE USE OF \$20,000 FROM THE CIP RESERVE FUND”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Mr. Bridges explained that a portion of the soffit had failed and Mike Turner is here this evening to talk about it. Mr. Bridges explained that it is a drive-it soffit which means there is a portion of what is called Styrofoam covered with stucco and the mechanism that held it up failed. He explained that basically there were three screws that hold a certain section of the soffit up and that section has failed and rather than just repair that one section, we are recommending replacing the entire thing with a different system which is more a metal-based soffit around the entire building to repair and replace that.

Questions were asked of Mr. Turner as to the problems with the police facility; the sprinkler

system; the windows and with the Soffit. Mr. Turner addressed each individually and when asked if there were any recourse to go after the manufacturer or someone else he stated it was not held in place securely enough. Some of the materials in the other instances were replaced as faulty but the labor to re-install fell to the Town.

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

Councilor Hurley moved to **“APPROVE BLUM SHAPIRO, 29 SOUTH MAIN ST., WEST HARTFORD, CT AS THE TOWN’S INDEPENDENT AUDITOR FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2013 AT THE PROPOSED FEE OF \$38,400”**, seconded by Councilor Drake.

Town Manager Bridges explained they would like to wait until next year before going out to bid. This would allow the new Finance Director to have input with the project. Susan L. Smith has resigned and has taken another position. They would like to have another CPA in that position.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 5-0-1. Deputy Mayor Console abstained.

#### ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

Introduction of a resolution requesting approval of the abandonment of a portion of Two Rod Highway abutting 31 Kimberly Lane.

Introduction of a Resolution approving the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-Pace) Agreement.

#### MINUTES

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 1, 2013”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

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

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE BUDGET HEARING MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 15, 2013”** seconded by Councilor. No second on the motion. Minutes will be voted on at the next Town Council meeting after people have had a chance to review them.

Not enough Councilors were present tonight and the meeting of April 15, 2013 to vote. The motion was not made and the minutes will be brought back at the May 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jim Clynch, 903 Ridge Rd., commented that it is hard to find the Council meeting minutes and the Manager's Report on the new town website.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented more on the Board Education expenditures, and encouraged the use of more shared services to save on costs. Mr. Young also suggested to knick away at some of the small items to bring the budget down. Mr. Young also commented on the ethics problem that we had in the town and questioned where the money came from to pay for that. Mr. Young questioned the extra money being spent on numerous accounts that wasn't budgeted and asked where the extra money came from.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:15 p.m., Councilor Hurley 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  
May 20, 2013