

**REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 6, 2014**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, January 6, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Hemmann, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, Martino, Rell, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Barry, and Chairperson Montinieri

Also present: Rob Garrey, Wethersfield Village Improvement Association, Central Connecticut Health District: Director, Paul Hutcheon, Chairman Judy Sartucci, Chief of Environmental Health Services, Nancy Brault (Acting Director, Health District effective February 1, 2014), Dr. Diane Doot, Board of Health Representative, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Rell led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Mayor Montinieri invited Rob Garrey from the Wethersfield Village Improvement Association to present an award to the Lenocis Family, owners of the Amidon Building (Cove Deli).

Mr. Garrey explained every year the Wethersfield Village Improvement Association presents a Salute to Business award for business beautification for a business who has done significant improvements to their physical plant. Mr. Garrey presented a plaque that was made from the wood of the great Elm tree to the Lenocis family. They are owners of the Amidon Building. Mr. Garrey then gave a brief history of the building and recognized all the work that was done to the building by the Lenocis family.

Mayor Montinieri encouraged residents to take a look at the building and the wonderful work they have done there to renovate it.

Mayor Montinieri explained every ten years the Charter Revision process is initiated. It gives us an opportunity as a community to take a look at our founding document that guides us through much of our governance. The ten-year process allows us to be sure that the language within the Charter itself as well as the overriding tone and tenure of it is visited by residents who have an awareness and an appreciation of the Town. They have a very solid volunteer group that has been appointed to this commission and will be sworn in shortly by Dolores. Mayor Montinieri thanked them not only for the work that they are about to do but for their previous service to the community. He stated that each of them has served the community in a range of services over the last 30 years and it is a talented group that brings a lot of experience. Mayor Montinieri stated they are qualified to handle the task ahead. He expects the completion of the process within the year; they will deliver their recommendations for the community to this Council. He thanked them in advance.

Ms. Sassano invited the Charter Commission to gather up front to be sworn in: T. William

Knapp, John J. McAuliffe, Jr., Steve A. Kirsche, Mary R. Pelletier, Louis Laccavole and Mike Zaleski; Dan Silver was previously sworn in and would be late. After the swearing in, the Charter Commission and Attorney Duncan Forsyth adjourned to the Manager's Conference Room for a meeting.

Mayor Montinieri invited members of the Central Connecticut Health District to present their Annual Report.

Judy Sartucci, Chairman of the Board of Health for the Central Connecticut Health District approached the podium to present the Central Connecticut Health District Annual Report. A copy of the Annual Report is available on-line and at the Health District's office located at the Town Hall in Wethersfield.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave., spoke about the lack of a stop sign on Morrison Avenue. Mr. Colantonio commented on a police report previously prepared regarding measurements at the stop sign area. After reviewing the stop sign measurements he questioned how it can be against the law to install a stop sign in this location.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented shared services efforts between the Town and Board of Education regarding finance should take precedence. He thinks the savings really will be there. He urged the Council to consider hiring someone from the Robert Half Group to provide the town with a very good accountant. Someone with a new set of eyes and new thoughts, not another government finance person. He urged the Council to give Mr. Colantonio a stop sign on Morrison Avenue stating that it is a substandard road.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented on the Chamber's efforts to bring back the fireworks to Wethersfield. He disagrees that the Friends of the Library, a town entity, donating money to the cause. Mr. Ruhe also took offense that the fireworks are to be held on Memorial Day. It is a day to honor and respect the men and women that have given up their life. Council should not offer a nickel of support to this group or any other group that wants to denigrate this sacred holiday for the sake of fireworks and a picnic and having fun. Mr. Ruhe, as a Veteran of World War II, urged the Council to provide the kind of leadership they can and to exercise it properly.

Rob Garrey, 10 Morrison Ave., said he thinks it's a great idea in hiring a Zoning Enforcement Officer. He questioned the need for a part-time sidewalk inspector and felt the Zoning Officer could inspect the sidewalks as well. Mr. Garrey also commented on two of the most successful projects in this Town. They were the Board of Education offices and the Silas Deane Middle School because of David Drake's hard work.

Kyle McCormick, 19 Buckland Rd., hopes to become involved this year in some of the meetings and to learn more about the Town. In the past five years, he has seen things improving in Town

encouraging more young people to move in. It feels like it is going in the right direction. He urged the Council to continue to bring more corporate into the Town to help out with some of the taxes and to encourage more young people to move in. As the Town is close to Hartford, it's a great commutable distance and feels there is a lot of opportunity here if we can reach out and grab more corporate businesses.

Micah Keer, 553 Maple Street, commented that he is very interested in getting involved in the town that he lives in. He stated that he has been a resident in town for four years. He is interested in a lot of different aspects in terms of development, economic, social, and cultural issues. Getting involved in important and supporting each other's ideas is important. He commented that it is important to have some fresh, young blood and he looks forward to the next four years.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Martino commented on an Infrastructure meeting held with two items on the agenda. He explained that one was a request for improvements at the Standish House where we have asked staff for more information before moving forward on it. The next item was improvements to Main Street intersections. He stated staff provided an overview on where things stand right now. As soon as the grant money is received, within the next month, they will set up public hearings for comments from interested residents. The intersections of Hartford Ave. and Main Street, State Street and Main Street and Church Street and Main Street will be discussed.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Hurley asked what was going on with the High School bids and asked if we could have the Building Committee back in to talk to us about the High School renovation project.

Mr. Bridges explained the bids came in. There was a tremendous amount of scoping to be done with all the contractors. Given the holiday season and trying to work through roughly \$40 million worth of improvements. Some of the bids came in higher so the committee and contractor are trying to put it together and then have the Building Committee come back with the product.

Mayor Montinieri commented he knows that Mr. Hurley is referring to a couple of scheduled meetings we had tentatively in place. A couple of the bids were withdrawn in response to some concerns from the contractors which were ones we were going to talk about as a group. We had to regroup and wanted to finish that process. Mayor Montinieri stated that O&G is working on this as we speak. He thanked Councilor Hurley for asking. We are going to circle back very quickly.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bridges commented that he put a list on the dais this evening of the top eight unpaid property tax parcel owners. He explained the tax sale is scheduled for March 22nd and they are finalizing

that process in the first public notice. Publication will occur later this week and they will get that started. Once the notification takes place there are several notices that go to the property owners, the last registered address, any type of mortgage holder. He explained they get that information and then the day of the actual sale, even if someone buys the property, the property owner of record today has six months to make good on the taxes and redeem the property. He stated although the sale is set for March, there are ample opportunities for the property owners to hold on to the property and move forward. These again are the top eight and add up to well over a half of a million dollars. We will continue that process as we go.

COUNCIL ACTION

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS FOR ACTION

Councilor Hemmann moved **“TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF ELLYN LARAMIE, 65 NOTT STREET FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD FROM 7-23-13 TO 6-30-16.”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Hemmann moved **“TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF PAUL J. LEBLANC, 215 CLEARFIELD ROAD AS AN ALTERNATE FROM THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS FROM 8-20-12 TO 6-30-14”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO APPROVE THE CREATION OF THE ZONING ENFORCEMENT / PROPERTY MAINTENANCE OFFICER POSITION AND THE CREATION OF THE ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN / PART TIME / SIDEWALK INSPECTOR POSITION”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Mr. Bridges explained you have two modifications to the current personnel design for the town. We currently have a Sidewalk Inspector that is full-time that acts as an Engineering Assistant. When we upgraded the property maintenance responsibilities of the town and reorganized it, the same person is doing the property maintenance as well. That is a lot on their plate. Mr. Bridges explained in the current year budget we put in the budget for a Zoning Enforcement Officer to help the Building Department. They are working on the CREC Building, the High School project and a lot of big things that require heavy attention to in addition to helping the Planning Department. They monitor and make sure of the special uses with the historic district decisions.

all get enforced. Mr. Bridges said, in looking at that and talking with the different departments, we thought it would be a better use of time to create the position. And to take the full-time Sidewalk Inspection position and make that part-time with a focus just on sidewalks. They are clearer on their responsibilities. To move the zoning and the property maintenance position into one full-time position it also could provide some engineering support and support to the other departments. Mr. Bridges explained that is the thought process in terms of total number of employees and total dollars spent, but it creates a Zoning Enforcement Officer position. We have not had one because the Building Inspector does it now. We think it is a better use of resources and focuses where we need the energy.

Councilor Kotkin asked if these changes were anticipated when the current year's budget was developed so there is no positive or negative impact versus what we expected when we approved the budget back in May.

Mr. Bridges responded correct. The difference is rather than having a part-time Zoning Enforcement Officer which we put in the budget we are actually just going to have a part-time Sidewalk Inspector. It's the same number of dollars and the same number of people so it is a wash.

Councilor Rell asked if there have been any claims against the town for any accidents on sidewalks in the last ten years.

Mr. Bridges responded that they are not common but they are not uncommon.

Councilor Rell asked if one of the duties of the part-time sidewalk inspector would be is to obviously look at any hazards or dangers that public walkways provide or maybe keep us liable or have us liable for.

Mr. Bridges responded that what this does is allows that person to refocus their efforts on that particular function because right now they are doing so many different things that it is hard to focus on sidewalks so it takes this person and focuses them on sidewalks which is where we think we need the energy.

Mayor Montinieri asked when do we expect to post that position.

Mr. Bridges responded that we expect to post next week some time and it's rather a unique skill set that we are looking for. He stated that it will take a couple of months to get someone on board. The current person doing the sidewalks is eligible to retire but is not in any hurry and will stay on.

Councilor Hemmann commented it is also important to note in looking at the sidewalk inspector position and the role they serve. It helps us [Wethersfield] with our property insurance. We were in a very good place several years ago with the programs we had put in place through CIRMA. Our rates were kept in a favorable position because of that and I know we just haven't had the

time to do a lot because of other things going on.

Mr. Bridges added that it's a really good point because as the system ages, it's going to require that much more oversight on these sidewalks.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

BIDS

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO AWARD A BID TO XEROX CORPORATION FOR 5 YEARS FOR THE TOWN’S LAND RECORD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ESTIMATED COST TO BE \$23,423 PER YEAR”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

Dolores Sassano explained this contract is for land records recording. This is the basic function in our office. We have the property records of ownership for every parcel in town. Ms. Sassano explained this is our current vendor but, by Charter, she was required to get three bids which are provided. Ms. Sassano reviewed the bids with the Council and recommended staying with Xerox.

Councilor Kotkin noted that Dolores did present this to the Budget and Finance Committee at the last meeting. They asked for some clarification as to how she compared the bids, which she did in the document that is in the agenda tonight. Councilor Kotkin stated that he should have clarified that we are authorizing the Town Manager to sign a contract for this which he did not make in the motion so he just wanted to clarify that.

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO AMEND THE MOTION TO AWARD THE BID TO XEROX FOR 5 YEARS AT THE SAME RATE PER DOCUMENT \$4.50 AND TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN THE CONTRACT WITH XEROX”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

None.

MINUTES

Councilor Hemmann moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 16, 2014 WITH CHANGES”**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Councilor Martino commented that he was not present at the December 12th Salute to Business meeting.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave., commented against the property tax sale. He also questioned the intersection of Wolcott Hill and Beverly. He stated the Town Manager said the site line distance for that intersection was good only for about 25 miles per hour. The posted speed on Wolcott Hill is 35 mph. He was wondering if anything was going to get done or if things improved for any reason. Also he was wondering if we were going to get any answer.

Jim Clynych, 903 Ridge Rd., commented that Fireworks on Memorial Day is not a good idea and that Memorial Day is for Veterans that have made the ultimate sacrifice. He hopes the Town Council who oversees Parks and Recreation and the Library Board stifle that idea before it gets off the ground.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd. commented he agrees with Mr. Clynych and Mr. Ruhe regarding the fireworks on Memorial Day and hopes that the Council goes against it. He commented on the Police Retirement issue and asked how long this is going to drag on, how much is this going to cost the town and he asked for an accounting of it. Also, he commented on the MDC water bill increases. Mr. Young thinks the town needs to take care of its buildings and schools and should have a strategy in place so that things don't get run down. He also spoke of nepotism within the town.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle asked if the new sidewalk inspector can take a look at the section of sidewalk that starts at 956 Cloverdale Circle and heads westward to his neighbor which is in very bad condition. Mr. Bridges responded that there's an inspector on staff now and we can have him look at it tomorrow.

At 8:35 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **"TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

At 9:15 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **"TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION"**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT WITH THE POLICE RETIREES AS NEGOTIATED BY THE TOWN ATTORNEYS"**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council
February 3, 2014