

**REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 17, 2014**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, March 17, 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: Kathy Bagley, Director Parks & Recreation and Social Services, Michael Emmett, Superintendent of Schools, Fred Bushey, Director of Maintenance & Operations Schools, Timothy Howes, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Finances. Board of Education members: Chairperson Gina DeAngelo, Vice Chairperson Elaine Steinmiller-Paradise, Tracy McDougall, Charles Carey, John Cascio, Jodi Latina, Polly Moon, John Morris; Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Martino led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Mayor Montinieri invited Michael Emmett to the podium to present the Board of Education's fiscal budget for 2014-2015.

As outlined in the presentation (attached), Mr. Emmett explained that the proposed budget for the 2014-2015 school year is \$55,088,268 representing an increase of \$1,990,209 with a percentage increase of 3.75% over the current operating budget. Mr. Emmett explained that the initiatives with regard to this budget include: a Director of Security, an Instructional Supervisor for math and an Academic Leader Stipends both at Wethersfield High School and Silas Deane Middle School. They are actually replenishing positions that we already had with the exception of the Director of Security and Residency. Other requests that were put forth by the administrative team but not included in the budget (list on Slide 3) include Library Media Specialists who are certified, elementary social workers, security personnel, intramural activities at Silas Deane and a painter in the custodial department. Mr. Emmett stated that we are at an exciting time right now in Wethersfield with the Common Core State Standards, Smarter Balance Assessment Teacher Evaluation and that Educational reform is in full swing and for the Wethersfield Public Schools it has kept us very busy. We are certainly focused on the common core state standards and are very proud of the efforts that our district has put forward in terms of implementing these common core state standards. Interesting enough with our technology and what we have in place we feel that we are ready to implement this test and are ready to go. Certainly our 21st century schools and technology is a very important focal point for the district. He stated that professional development and instructional improvement is critical. We continue to focus on the workshop model both for reading and writing and that's Kindergarten through Grade 8. We will be seeing new curriculum coming forward for adoption by the Board of Education. Our high school renovation is a major component; Educator quality; and our new teacher evaluation instrument. It has been a rather challenging start to the implementation of this particular program but we are

well on our way. Finally, we talk about the whole child and making sure that we are focusing in on the support services as well as the academics to make sure that we are getting to the whole child. Mr. Emmett commented that we have done quite well with our contract negotiations again for the second year in a row; the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent have accepted a pay freeze again. We have negotiated favorable contracts with the nurses, custodians and teachers and have also realized savings by the board shift to define contribution pension. He added that we were very fortunate this year to have been awarded a WCRT grant for social services as well as a technology grant and a competitive school safety grant. He stated that we continue to look at shared services in terms of natural gas, electricity and diesel bids and work closely with Heather Vargas. We are also pursuing free software options. For example over February vacation, we just rolled out G-mail so our server which is old and kind of decrepit and outlives its usefulness is going by the wayside and we will be using Gmail from this point forward which is a free service. He stated that some of the increases are really nonnegotiable. We have our increases in negotiated contracts; we have increases in our fixed costs. Don't forget the State and Federal mandates, our increases in Town Calculated Cost of OPEB Trust and Pension. We did double our contribution to OPEB trust this year and again we also focused in on our improvements in our budget initiatives. In terms of our salaries, I am not going to line by line here and pointed out that the document is available at the podium and we will be posting it up on our website. He commented that if you look at some of the highlights here with regard to Supervision, you'll notice a 7.57% increase in Supervision. That is largely due to the increase of the Math Supervisor as well as the benefits. In terms of our benefits, retirement, we had seen some retirements, we expect to find some savings within the retirement line. In addition to that we also have the issue of health insurance. We were fortunate this year. We were a little bit skeptical about being able to level fund this. You see an increase actually of .35%. The only increase in Health Insurance is actually the benefit package for the proposed math instructional supervisor. He pointed out some justification for that on Slide 10. He stated some of that 53.73% is based upon the increased OPEB Trust contribution. In addition to that unemployment insurance increase of 85.71%., to get where we need to be one of the things we are looking at is the reduction of 12 paraprofessional positions in the district. He stated that this is something that we don't take lightly but we are looking ahead to the future and we recognize that we have to increase efficiencies in this area so we are looking to achieve this primarily through attrition. Mr. Emmett stated that 23.71% is for Instruction Program Improvement and that one of the things that he feels is nonnegotiable in budget is the provision of quality professional development for our teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, custodians and support staff. He stated that he has been very committed to the workshop model and that is certainly going to continue and we are entering year 4 with the workshop model. He stated with the technical increases, our software as a service subscription, our power school, data management system is one such example. Slide 13 is our proposed budget with regard to maintenance; overall an increase of 11.61%. Repairs, maintenance, building, and equipment again most of our buildings, late 60's early 70's in terms of the build date, and we certainly have components that are wearing out. You will also notice that Mr. Bushey has taken a decrease in the maintenance supplies. That is part of the process with regards to the high school renovation. Slide 14 - There are some impacts with regard to the Wethersfield High School renovation certainly the rental lease of building for storage. We see a

15% increase there and again the heat energy change. That has been budgeted to take into account the fact that we will be melding in the new construction over at Wethersfield High School into the existing building. Slide 16 - Our proposed transportation budget we have seen this year a rather large increase with regard to transportation of special education students in district. That's indicative of the 22.09% increase. The other component there, the transportation supplies, that is the diesel fuel. Slide 18 - Tuition and Other Services. Once again the tuition for both special education and ~~magnate~~ magnet school students has risen steadily over the past several years. There is a slide a little later in the presentation that gives you an idea of the tuition costs with regard to our ~~magnate~~ magnet schools as well as the number of students enrolling in magnet magnet schools. Slide 19 - In the Communications Services is really based upon post-rate increases. What we have done in terms of our wireless telephone service, we have done an audit of each of the lines to see if there were areas in which we could reduce the number of phones that we have in district and we will be doing that over the course of the summer. Slide 20 - He stated that back in 2003 we had a total of 46 students attending ~~magnate~~ magnet schools or charter schools and this current year we are up to 258. So you can see the number of students growing over the course of time. Slide 21 - Mr. Emmett stated that in terms of our ~~magnate~~ magnet school tuition, this is what we've looked at over the past six years. One of the ways we are able to offset this, I have increased the number of students coming in under the open choice grant and because of the fact that we meet the 2% threshold, we get additional funds so that we are able to offset this. The Open Choice Grant also provides us the opportunity for tutoring. So we will hire tutors with that particular grant. You will see that the number is going up pretty steadily. Slide 22 - Our student enrollment has dipped a little bit but has been pretty stable over the past seven years. We expect that trend is going to continue. Slide 23 - He stated that our class size is looking pretty favorable. I am projecting one area next year where we may have a bubble of 25-26 in a class. Other than that, that is it. We expect that we should be in pretty good shape with respect to class size. Slide 24 - Mr. Emmett stated that supplies and materials is an area where we have shown some pretty significant decrease. This was really done through the budget development process. Software and media supplies and textbooks have taken a big hit and that was done during the budget workshop process. With the conference and meetings supplies, you'll notice a rather robust increase of 84.45%. That's for supplies for professional development. Slide 26 With Capital Outlay you will notice a rather significant decrease. One of the reasons that we are looking at this decrease is because we are looking at the potential of leasing computer equipment as opposed to purchasing. We feel that this will allow our budget to be more stable over the course of time. It will allow us on the back side to pay some dividends with regard to getting equipment at a much lower rate. Slide 27 - He stated that replacement of custodial equipment and a new burner at Hanmer school was debated quite a bit during the budget workshops and Mr. Bushey had mentioned that this particular burner has really outlived its usefulness and it was one of the things that the board had looked at to replenish in order to get this particular finished. Slide 28 - Mr. Emmett stated that we remain committed to provide quality education for all of our students. We remain focused on continuous improvement while adhering to state & federal mandates that impact our budget and we know we have talked long and loud about these particular mandates. They often come without funding and we are left to fend for ourselves. We also know that families makes residency decisions based upon the quality

and reputation of the school system. I for one would like to say that I think that this school system has a very fine reputation in spite of what you may hear. He stated to not forget that school district quality impacts property values. Mr. Emmett then asked for any questions.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the ~~magnate~~ magnet school was supposed to be 100% reimbursed by the State and then over time, have we, not only do we have more kids, but are we responsible for an increase in share of the cost of having that child go to a ~~magnate~~ magnet school. Mr. Emmett responded that one of the things with the ~~magnate~~ magnet school is that we pay tuition up front for each individual student. In addition to that if that student is attending a ~~magnate~~ magnet school and is also eligible for Special Education services, we would pay for the Special Ed services on an a la carte basis. So yes, it has gone up. In addition, we also have the issue of preschool, at this point in time we are not required to pay tuition for our preschool students attending ~~magnate~~ magnet schools. But, you never know what is going to happen. It is always a wild card that is out there. We have seen increases in tuition for ~~magnate~~ magnet school students as well as the Special Ed services. Councilor Kotkin asked how much does the town, on average, pick up for a student attending a ~~magnate~~ magnet school. Mr. Emmett responded the tuitions do vary. For example, the Greater Hartford Academy for Math and Science, we have students that go for a full day and some that go for a half. Then we have some students that go to the Goodwin College Connecticut River Academy and that's actually a project learn ~~magnate~~ magnet school. That would have a different tuition rate, so it does vary based on the school. Councilor Kotkin asked if other schools are going to be needed to be heated at night when programs are moved out of the high school due to the renovation. Mr. Emmett responded with regard to the evening programs, the high school operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We always have programs there. With the construction project in place in full swing at this point in time, all of our evening activities with the exception of Adult Ed are moved out. All Park & Recreation programs are moved out to other schools. So we are finding it's a domino effect so you may not have a lot going on at the high school but every one of our other buildings is used consistently seven days a week. That is definitely part of the fact. The other thing we are going to face is as we move forward with the new construction, tying into the existing building. They are going to be starting on masonry so we are expecting there will be heat energy expended there. They may need to leave heat on to help paint cure or help the varnish in the gym cure so we have to be aware of that as well. Also, extended light energy as well because we are going to be looking at double shifts. Councilor Kotkin asked about the new burner in at Hanmer and it was expected this summer before the next school year. Mr. Emmett responded Mr. Bushey has done a remarkable job of limping it along in getting it through with consistent maintenance. We would rather do it when it is not being used. We certainly don't want to compromise the heating system in a winter situation like we've had this year. Councilor Kotkin assumes that it would be a huge increase in efficiency if we had a new burner. Is that reflected in your budget, the increase and efficiency? Mr. Emmett responded, no, it is not.

Councilor Hurley commented that in the past, we have received the Budget Appropriation history actual figures by object over that time period. He asked if that was in there because he didn't see it in the notebook. Mr. Emmett responded that if you take a look at Section 704, there's the

actual for the prior year. Councilor Hurley commented that he saw the actual over the prior year. The one here has it trended over several years the budget appropriation. He commented that in the past we had received the actuals trended over several years. Mr. Howes responded that this is the one that we usually give you but we could certainly go back and take a look at several years and give you the actual. Mr. Hurley responded ok.

Mayor Montinieri asked if our contract for transportation services to a private provider for busses is on a contract basis year-to-year or a longer term. Mr. Emmett responded that usually it is a 5-year contract. Mayor Montinieri asked how they provide documentation of the fuel costs to the school district. Mr. Emmett responded that in terms of the fuel costs one of the things that we are fortunate enough to do is work with Heather Vargas so we're able to project our fuel costs and when we do the RFP as we did with Durham Transportation who did win the bid most recently, we will have them figure in the diesel costs as well. Mayor Montinieri asked if it is independently reviewed to see if it is accurate. Mr. Emmett responded that with regard to all of our RFP's we reviewed each of those and took a look at a variety of different issues. We looked at formulas for diesel, the age of the busses, expecting a few if you have an old fleet and it's not going to run as efficiently and they are going to break down more frequently and cost more in terms of fuel. We've also looked from a perspective of do the companies actually have the equipment we need vis-à-vis a lift bus. He stated when we went through the RFPs we were pretty exhausted from looking at all of those particularly components. Mayor Montinieri asked do you know of any tendencies or trends where bus systems are going to look at alternative fuels like natural or alternative gas like some of the busses are doing in the municipalities. Mr. Emmett responded no we haven't seen that in this point and time. He stated that he would like to see some hybrid technology come out for some of our vans. We have students that would ride just a simple van like a Dodge Caravan minivan and if were able to see like a natural gas vehicle, that would be great. From what we have seen from both of our providers we have not seen a lot in the way of that type of green engineering. Mayor Montinieri commented that he knows there was some discussion over the last couple of years talking about the requirement to provide so many seats because of the district's numbers regardless of users and frequency and asked if he knew roughly the user percentage that is in play right now. Mr. Emmett responded that he would have to get that information for him. Mayor Montinieri commented it is an issue, right. Mr. Emmett responded absolutely it is an issue. We still see busses coming into the high school even with the renovation project well under way that are half full. The convenient piece is to bring your child and drop your child off and you watch him walk into the school building and you're on your way. The reality here is we got a lot of busses that are not filled to capacity at this point.

Mayor Montinieri commented that he realizes that this is one step in the process that will be continuing over the next 60 days or so as we move towards budget appropriation. He stated that he knows we are going to be scheduling a couple more follow-up meetings with the subcommittees as well as a joint meeting with the Board. Mayor Montinieri commented that having sat in on the board discussions through the finance and budget and then the full board as well has been helpful in watching the process get paired down and a lot of good work has been done and he is sure that we are going to continue to see more and stated that he appreciates the

work that has been done by the Board to date and expects that we are going to continue some helpful conversations over the next couple of months.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Montinieri asked if anyone wished to speak on the public hearing item regarding the Records Management Grant. Seeing no comments, Mayor Montinieri declared that hearing closed.

Mayor Montinieri asked if anyone wished to speak on the public hearing item regarding Amending the Other Post Employment Benefits Trust Document. Seeing no comments, Mayor Montinieri declared that hearing closed.

GENERAL COMMENTS

John Console, 38 Ivy Lane read a letter to the editor that he wrote entitled “Council Needs to Focus on Common Sense in Preserving Wethersfield’s History”. The article spoke against the selling of a piece of donated property referred to as the Deming-Standish House and that certain town elected officials are not committed in honoring the donors implicit intentions whether explicitly stated or not. The article mentioned future commercially reasonable leasing terms of the property to alleviate the town’s financial burden, previous council vetting of the property with a consensus to take no action on any proposal of sale and to put the issue to bed. Mr. Console doesn’t understand why the issue is coming up again and urged the Council to file for any grants that we think we can get. Mr. Console commented that Council should focus on the high school renovation, street repair and the Board of Education’s budget. He spoke about some of the costs being spent in town and urged the council to look at their fiduciary responsibility to this town and what really needs vetting and what really needs to be looked at.

Candace Holmes President member of the Governing Board of the Wethersfield Historical Society commented on some misconceptions concerning the selling of the Deming-Standish House. She spoke of the history of the house and its historic meaning to the town. A detailed letter will be included as an addendum to these minutes.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue commented on the lack of a stop sign on Morrison Ave. and Tifton Rd. Mr. Colantonio cited the recommended measurements that are warranted for stop signs.

Leigh Standish, 278 Hartford, Ave. was appalled to read of the Republican’s Town Council members intent to sell the Deming-Standish House to a private entity. His grandfather, Jared Butler Standish, entrusted the family’s property to the town, specifically so that it would be cared for in perpetuity and was offered to the town...”to preserve the rare setting and appearance of a most typical New England village” and his intent for historical preservation was quite clear. If the town chooses to treat the original intent with such disregard, he will do his best to publicize

its breach of trust and win public support for opposition to this move. This architectural treasure rightly belongs to Wethersfield's citizens and to posterity. His letter will be included as an addendum to these minutes.

John Porriello, 49 Dudley Rd., is opposed to the proposal to sell the Standish House. It is a breach of trust that the Standish family gave to the town. It would be a poor signal to future donors that their wishes are only as good as the legal wording that they attach to their gift. and the creativity of future council members to get around any loop holes that might be attached to deed restrictions. He stated that financially, selling the property wouldn't benefit the town with today's low interest rate environment. The proceeds of the sale of the money invested in a guaranteed investment that would not be at risk to lose principle wouldn't generate the current \$41,000 in rent that is being generated to the Historical Society. He commented that there is also a large risk that the building could fall into disrepair or the business could fail and the property be vacant like the Masonic Home which would be a black eye on the community. So for those reasons, I would ask that the council reconsider this flawed proposal and shelve it.

Tracey McDougall, 45 Nott Street, commented the word for the Board of Education budget this year is *frugal*. There is a procedure in place to monitor the amount of copies that are being made by the staff. She stated that over the past couple of years they have worked with Kelly Services on trying to find some savings with their substitute teachers and it has really been of great benefit to us in other ways and has been a great arrangement and they have found some savings there. She commented that moving from Outlook to Gmail has created some savings as well. She also stated that they are using teachers to develop curriculum which saves them quite a bit of money where other districts use out-of-district consultants for that project. She commented that they are reducing the number of paraprofessionals this year and working with parents and students to work more independently on their own. She commented that she was very pleased to see each line item detailed with the percentage of increase or decrease from prior years and to see an explanation this year for the increase or decrease of that line item.

Robert Cobb, 99 Meadowview Dr. welcomed the new councilors and hopes that they will be frugal with the taxpayer's money. He commented that he was disappointed that anyone would think about selling the Standish House. He stated that the house was a gift and it should stay that way and should be preserved in perpetuity and thinks that we should hold onto it and not sell it. Mr. Cobb commented on the budget and stated that when you crunch the numbers over 80% of the Board of Education budget is for compensation and benefits for the Board of Education employees. Less than 20%, .20 on the dollar goes for things like books, computers and desks and maintenance. He commented that he thinks a 3% increase for an already inflated dollar amount for the budget is not frugal.

Matt DeAngelo, 16 Dennison Ridge commented in support of the budget and spoke about party-line votes in previous years. He stated that the Board of Education's budget is a product of the two sides working together to try to arrive at a consensus. He stated that they are doing the very thing that Mayor Montinieri said he wanted to do on the council. He commented that the Mayor

has five votes on his side so he has the luxury of not having to do that. They work together because they really have no choice. He stated that the parties on the Board are generally not in lock-step on every issue and that's probably a good thing and urged the council to give some due consideration to this budget and commented that if you don't want a party-line vote, then don't vote along party lines.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle commented to concentrate on the important few as you go through the budget. He suggested to the council to rank everything by value, and concentrate on the 20% and forget about the minutia. He stated that we often times concentrate on the trivial many which is what you want to ignore. He stated that the discussion that he is hearing such as Mr. Bushey's new burner falls among the trivial many. He stated to work on the important few and skip the trivial many.

Dolores Sassano read a letter from Andrew Sanzaro concerning the Standish House. Mr. Sanzaro wrote that he is opposed to using town funds for upkeep of the Standish House. The letter will be attached as an addendum to these minutes.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Kotkin reported that the Library Board is conducting a search for a new Library Director and a number of applicants have submitted applications for it. There will be a community forum a week from tomorrow, Tuesday, March 25, @ 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room at the Library so if residents have thoughts about the selection, the Library Board will be there to listen.

Councilor Martino reported that the Capital Improvement Committee met since the last meeting and finalized the capital budget and that will be on the agenda tomorrow night for Planning & Zoning's 824 referral to us. Councilor Martino reported that the Economic Design and Infrastructure Committee has met and is in the process of updating the business directory and putting stuff up on the website and stated that they are working on a June breakfast meeting. He stated that the Farmer's Market came forward and talked about their objectives for the year and one of the things that they are looking at trying to do is the first Sunday of the month have a Farmer's Market on a Sunday at some point during the day.

Councilor Hemmann reported that she attended the Housing Authority Meeting last Monday and they continue to look at different opportunities to come forward in regards to seeking grants to help renovate the properties. She stated that they are very cognizant of the need to keep those buildings up and they continue to work hard in that area. Councilor Hemmann reported that she also attended the Conservation Commission meeting last Wednesday on the 12th and had a presentation from Jim Woodworth on prime farmland preservation which was informative and the Commission will be looking at that a little bit more closely to see any possible tie-ins and is continuing to work on their open space inventory, finalizing that there are a few things that they will be adding to that and looking to get that completely finalized shortly.

Deputy Mayor Barry reported that the Redevelopment Agency also met last week. They had not met in some time in about a year and a half. They are excited to be back looking at ways for the town to assist redevelopment and really focus on ways that we, as a town and a council, can assist in redeveloping underutilized property in the town. He stated that we will be moving forward and identifying areas where we can assist.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Hurley thanked everybody who came out to the St. Patrick's Day Parade and stated that it was a good event. He commented that Jeff Bridges and many of the council members came out and Paul sent his regrets because he was going to have a hard time marching, but he does appreciate it. He commented that Griffith Academy and the Wethersfield High School Band was there along with the Police and Fire Departments and it was a great turnout for our town.

Councilor Hurley commented on the Standish House and stated that one of the things that came up at the last council meeting is that we are putting in a \$60,000 ramp in and are looking at another \$500,000 for other capital improvements. He stated that he knows it would probably be irresponsible not to look at how we are spending this money on a property and knows most of the townspeople want us to look at how we are spending money. He stated that he believes what was said at the last review was that we should look at the property including selling the property but we should do a review of the property to see how much money that we are putting into it. He stated that he knows one of the gentlemen spoke about benefits to the town. We don't think that by selling it we are going to get a great benefit. We would think if that did come up as an option that then we wouldn't have to put so much money into it and that would have been the benefit. Councilor Hurley stated that he doesn't believe the place would ever be sold but we should look at how much money, this is almost \$600,000 into a house that the town has and we should look at what other ways we can do to maybe help the property.

Councilor Martino commented that on a personal note besides being St. Patrick's Day it is an important day for one of our Council members and wished a Happy Anniversary to Mike Rell and the Mrs.

Councilor Roberts commented that she has gotten a lot of complaints and calls about potholes but specifically, the area between Maple and the first section of Fox Hill from Maple down to basically the first stop sign there and stated that there are actually craters and they are multiplying and is starting to look like a moonscape. She stated that some of them look like they are around MDC manhole covers and asked if there is something that we can ask them to do and stated that it is very treacherous around there. She also stated that Back Lane in Newington which she is not sure, but knows one side is Wethersfield and one side is Newington, but doesn't know what the story is with the street, but that has down near Glen Oaks quite a few craters and, in fact, there is a turn into Glen Oaks with speed bumps and someone told her today that those are Wethersfield

speed bumps and are too high and they should be lowered and asked Jeff to add that to the list of things to look at.

Mr. Bridges responded that he doesn't think we own the speed bumps, but we will take care of the potholes.

Mayor Montinieri commented that we are using quite a bit of cold patch right now.

Mr. Bridges responded right and we are probably going to come back to council and ask for supplemental appropriation to handle the potholes and stated that we have expended a vast majority of the contingency fund to cover snow so the Director of Physical Services and the Assistant Director are working up a number on what pothole repairs are going to take so at our next meeting we are going to ask for a supplemental appropriation for that.

Deputy Mayor Barry congratulated the Wethersfield High School Jets team who won a National Award and certainly deserve recognition for their hard work. He commented that with the high school building process going on, the boys and girls basketball teams have been relocated and have had to play at different locations and they really have had no home games and they both made the State Tournament and thinks they deserve recognition and appreciation for really dealing with a change from what they are used to and really without complaint and fan fair from us and thinks they all should be congratulated.

Councilor Roberts commented that the Wethersfield High School band participated in the St. Patrick's Day Parade which they haven't done for a while and they had their new uniforms and they looked great. They had a repertoire of Irish music and a lot of positive comments from people along the way that heard them.

Mayor Montinieri commented that there is a report out today for those of you who may remember a 4-year ago graduate, Abigail Corning, who was one of our top basketball stars in the Town of Wethersfield and took our team during her senior year, to the State Championship Game in a very good battle with Hillcrest and lost in that game, but she went to Fordham. He stated that for those of you who may remember the year before she went to Fordham, her senior year, had not won a game, was 0-21 and many people who heard that Abigail was going to Fordham were like, why would you go to Fordham, you are this great player. This past weekend she was named the most valuable player in the championship game of the Atlantic 10. Fordham won the championship and finished the year 23 and 2 and the coach at the post game press conference identified that Abigail is the single largest reason that Fordham turned around in the last four years. Mayor Montinieri stated that they are going to the NCAA for the first time in 46 years and for those of you who remember Abigail, kudos to her and her family and what an accomplishment and recommends people to go on-line and read the story about her because it's an excellent story and just a great champion, a young lady with a lot of heart and an incredible academic performance too.

Mayor Montinieri commented that he had the second of five coffees this past week with residents in town which he has invited residents to come out in various locations. The first was at a Dunkin Donuts a few weeks ago. This past Friday was over at Aroma Bistro in the historic district and thanked Councilor Rell and Manousos for attending and Councilor Martino for taking copious notes for him during the course of over two hours of discussion with residents at the Aroma Bistro. He stated that quite a few residents came and is pleased to say that between the first and the second coffees that they have had almost 20 residents have come down to meet with them for several hours. All age groups, all issues, many of them are saying that they appreciate the setting as opposed to coming out to the public in front of a microphone and the TV's and prefer coming down to having a coffee at a more intimate location. Mayor Montinieri stated that he is pleased with the turnout and that other councilors are attending. He stated that the feedback that he is getting is very helpful and frankly is complementary to the feedback that we get back from our residents as we look at our priorities; feedback about how the town is doing, appropriate criticism and concerns and just the genuine sincerity of the residents coming down to talk with us. He stated that he is appreciative, so far, that it appears to be going very well and the next one is next Thursday at Panera and they are posted on the town website for anybody wishing to follow-up on any of the remaining three that are scheduled. He thanked those who have already come out and thanked the councilors who came out as well.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bridges reported that he found the email from Buzz Willard and read it into the record. The letter stated that he was opposed to the selling of the Standish House. The letter will be included as an addendum to the meeting minutes.

Mr. Bridges invited Kathy Bagley to talk about the fireworks.

Ms. Bagley explained that the Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce has been fundraising to actually fund the fireworks display and just last week they notified us that they were getting close to their goal and were prepared to move forward with the fireworks. Ms. Bagley stated that they had a brief meeting last week with a member of the Chamber and a couple of the fire marshals and a member of my staff to talk about some details and start to get ready to think about the fireworks show. She stated that the date is Saturday night, May 31st with a rain date of June 7th, which is the following Saturday night. Ms. Bagley stated that they met with them preliminarily just to talk through things and now we are here tonight just to give the council an overview and to get your approval to move forward before we make any further plans. Ms. Bagley explained that we have done some preliminary work just because you need different types of permits to do a fireworks show and because of our location, we kind of hit them all. We have to talk with the Coast Guard because of the Connecticut River and the Cove and we have to talk with the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection just because of any disturbance we might do to wildlife in the area or any other concerns that they might have. She stated that the Fire Marshal works with Brainard Airport to make them aware of what's going on and to go through that too. So we have done some preliminary work with all of that and all of those organizations

have said that we can be a go if we are ready to move forward. So that's kind of it in a nut shell our planning to date. Ms. Bagley stated that the Chamber will pay for the entire fireworks display itself and we are looking to see if the town through the Department's operating budgets for those departments that would be involved in it would also help with the logistics of the event. So that's currently where we are with our planning to date.

Mayor Montinieri asked what the budget was for our side of it roughly. Ms. Bagley responded that we are estimating roughly \$15,000. She stated that we looked at our budget from when we did the fireworks in 2009 and looked at those hours and used very roughly today's numbers.

Councilor Rell asked if the \$15,000 would cover any of the mosquito treatment if we were going to do anything like that. Ms. Bagley responded yes, that is in the budget.

Mr. Bridges commented that he wanted to add something to the end of the agenda and introduce a Resolution to Support Two CROCOG grants which is on the podium this evening. One is for regional data recovery center and the other is for human resources data center as well.

TOWN CLERK COMMUNICATIONS

Dolores Sassano commented that there is an American Warrior Connecticut Day of Honor project and it is going to be April 26th and what it does is allows our veterans to go to Washington DC to see the various memorials that have been set up that a lot of them don't have that opportunity to go to. It's free for the veterans, they have chaperons and if a family member wants to go and chaperon, there is a \$300 charge for each chaperon and every chaperon pays their own way. They fly out of Bradley in the morning and come back that same night. If anybody is interested we have forms for the veterans to fill out and we have forms for people who want to be guardians. Ms. Sassano stated that the town clerks have been involved with this for a number of years that it has been in operation. If you want any other information, we do have it.

Dolores Sassano reported that there is a Charter Revision Committee meeting on Thursday night at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

COUNCIL ACTION

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Roberts moved **"TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION FOR A GRANT FROM THE CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY FOR THE HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION PROGRAM"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

Mr. Bridges asked Dolores to provide the information.

Ms. Sassano explained that we have been able to apply for grants this year. The grant will be \$7500. She explained that her office deals with records management and all the land records that we keep in our vault date back quite a ways and we have a lot of costs to keep them up. She explained that the town itself collects \$1.00 for every document that we record and the \$2.00 more goes to the State of Connecticut, the public library, and by applying for their grants for historic documentation we can do several things with it. She stated that it's a way of getting it back, the money that we collect for the work that we do for them, to get it back to our towns and communities. This year it will be \$7500. Traditionally, we have used it for town-wide events, not just for something for my department. We did the records room downstairs. That is a secured room and we have done a lot of work in the sally port and all of the land use departments upstairs on the second floor, Engineering's building and planning all have documentation and all of their new filing system was through the grants that we received. She stated that whenever they offer competitive grants we do apply for them but for the last several years we have not, so we are back to getting, last year was \$6500, this year we get \$7500, but that is what we use it for.

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

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO AMEND THE OPEB TRUST DOCUMENTS TO CLARIFY THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR TRUSTEES”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Mr. Bridges explained that when we adopted the OPEB trusts last year, we made provisions for two nonpublic official town residents to participate as trustees but we did not clarify how they were appointed to their terms of office. This document in Section 14 clarifies that and provides terms of office and methods of appointment.

Councilor Kotkin commented that when we had adopted it, we did allow for certain members of the council including the Mayor or certain members of the Board of Education as well as town staff but we also put something in it allowing for the appointment of two residents with backgrounds in professional money management which, generally speaking, the other members of the council or the committee don't have. He stated that this is really just cleaning it up and thinks it was the right thing to do but, unfortunately, didn't say how those two people would be appointed or for over what terms they would be appointed, so this really cleans up something that the previous council put forth and we do have, on a bipartisan basis, we put together a very good plan to fund a very significant unfunded liability of the town over the next 10-15 years which hopefully as we go through the budget process will adhere to but this allows some professional money managers to oversee the process and also really look over the shoulder of the folks that we employ in order to help us make investment decisions. Councilor Kotkin stated that we are fortunate in Wethersfield to have a number of people who could qualify because the Hartford area is such a center for financial services so this is really to take advantage of that.

Councilor Hemmann commented that she is concerned about potential liability that could occur having residents serve, looking at the elected officials and town staff, it's kind of a given that you are going to be serving on different types of committees in this format but just concern about how you deal with potential liability if there could be liability and I'm not saying there would be but just to plan out and talk about some of those type of perceived or things that could happen and how would the commission or committee handle that or if there was a conflict of interest.

Councilor Kotkin commented if there is a conflict of interest just like there is one with a council, let's take the Insurance Committee who works with the insurance industry. If somebody works at Traveler's or somebody owns his own insurance agency. We've got somebody who has just stepped down as Chairman who is an attorney who has represented various folks in the insurance industry. So clearly if there is a conflict I think not only would they under our Conflict of Interest Ordinance have to step down but I suspect under their employers conflict of interest, perhaps even more important, they would have to recuse themselves. So I would imagine if anybody came into this position, they are pretty much precluding from voting on anything in any way that would affect their employer. In terms of liability, Planning and Zoning Commission members, Zoning Board of Appeal members, Inland and Wetlands members, they are not elected and they don't work for the town and I would assume that these folks would have similar protection from, I guess, malfeasance or whatever. There are two of them out of a group of seven and I think we are just taking advantage of some of the expertise that resides in this town.

Councilor Hemmann commented that she just wanted to raise her potential concern.

Councilor Manousos stated that he has a concern and stated that last year when he was Chair of Budget & Finance this was something that we did consider, but we decided not to act on, not just because of the conflict but because anybody that would have that experience would potentially be a bidder for that work and whoever is doing the job, to the liability question that Mayor Hemmann was talking about, if the company that we work with who is the investment advisor advises on some investment, this isn't like the Insurance Commission exactly because these people, don't they have a vote as to where the investments are going to be placed.

Councilor Kotkin responded that the FAI would make a recommendation just like the Insurance Committee makes a recommendation in terms of who the agent of record is and forwards it to us.

Councilor Manousos commented that this trustee though would have a direct responsibility and a vote in determining which investments are made for this OPEB Trust. To the liability question if the investment advisor makes a recommendation and the trustees opt not to take that recommendation because of two arguably experts from the public and it ends up being a poor decision, we can't go after the investment advisor for faulty advice because we had people that arguably are supposed to be experts.

Councilor Kotkin responded that he is not following him and asked there are seven members of the committee, correct. Councilor Manousos responded right and stated that none of the other

ones have experience except for the two that are going to be the residents that are appointed. Councilor Manousos asked isn't that why we are hiring a professional investment advisor to make that recommendation and suggestion for us. Councilor Kotkin commented that the question is whether you want to use the experience that we have. You're disqualifying somebody from serving on a trust because they have expertise in the field, I'm not sure if that is the way we should go about appointing people. If you know too much, you can't serve. Councilor Manousos commented the he is raising it because the potential liability and would certainly like the new Finance Director to weigh in on it because my conversation with him didn't seem like he thought it was necessarily a great idea.

Councilor Roberts commented that we passed this last year specifically wanting these two people on it and we've now wasted a year trying to get two people on here and now you are backtracking and because there happens to be a new Finance Director, you have gone to talk to that person. She stated that the Council's intention was clear that we wanted two citizens in town on here and it seems to me like there has been a lot of stonewalling to make sure that that doesn't happen and personally I'm happy where we are finally getting to the point where the Council's will is being implemented. Councilor Manousos commented then vote for it. Councilor Roberts commented I will and you can vote against it.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-1-0. Councilor Manousos voted no.

Councilor Martino moved **"TO APPROVE THE CHANGES TO THE PERSONNEL CLASSIFICATIONS & PAY GRADES FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

Mr. Bridges explained the administrative group is made up of department heads and non-union support staff of which there is one full-time, and over the years they have adopted a pay scale for those positions and with the combination of department's going on the scale doesn't necessarily fit any longer, particularly if you merge two directorships as we propose to do. So the change that is outlined in red would allow the council on a case-by-case basis to authorize a salary exceeding the maximum for a particular job if we are combining those with other functions in the administrative group and that is the proposed change in the salary and classification schedule.

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

Councilor Roberts moved **"TO APPROVE THE SALARY OF \$128,767 FOR THE DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND PARKS AND SOCIAL WORK AND YOUTH SERVICES EFFECTIVE MARCH 15, 2014"**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Mr. Bridges explained having amended the classification schedule to allow for this, Staff is recommending the merged position of Director of Social and Youth and Recreation Parks for Kathy Bagley with a commensurate salary of \$128,767 per year. He stated that the position will

be a combined position primarily for programmatic collaboration amongst the departments. They both have staff at the Town Hall. They both provide services to youth and senior citizens so the programmatic overlap is there and with Kathy directing both sides of that house it is going to become much more efficient. The plan is to hire an Assistant Director of Social and Youth Services which has been vacant for some time and that Assistant Director would have a primary focus on social work which would handle that side of the department's process along with the other staff members.

Mayor Montinieri commented that all of us would agree that your willingness to step up and assume these additional responsibilities not only is it economically efficient for the town but given your many years of service and familiarity with youth services, it is greatly appreciated and a nice piece of management work by our Town Manager to work with you on that. Mayor Montinieri commented that he actually thought that she negotiated a very reasonable increase in the salary given the amount of responsibility and thanked her for that.

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

Deputy Mayor Barry moved **“TO ACCEPT A GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$494,649 FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, BOR-BOATING DIVISION TO DESIGN, CONSTRUCT, INSTALL AND MAINTAIN FLOATING DOCKS, MOORINGS AND NAVIGATIONAL AIDS, ETC. AT COVE PARK TRANSIENT VESSELL MARINA IN THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD UPON THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS SET FORTH IN THE PERSONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT”**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Mr. Bridges asked Kathy to speak about this and stated that we have a grant opportunity that she has been working on for some time and her perseverance is unmatched.

Ms. Bagley explained that this grant before you over several years where we applied for the grant and got it accepted and have been working with the State and the Federal Government on the contract for the grant and now we have the personal agreement between the State and the Town for the actual acceptance of the grant. She stated that the \$494,000 will help to pay for the improvements to Wethersfield Cove for the boating traffic. The major part of it that you will see is the replacement of the docks. As we've talked about before, the docks will be replaced and there will actually be a floating dock that will float with the tide and with the high water and they will stay in year-round. She explained that the grant also covers some navigational aids in the cove and also some additional moorings out in the cove. So that's the grant behind it as part of the town's process, we submitted in-kind services to help towards the local match and also had to put up some additional funds towards that and that is in the grant packet. It's our local match for the \$494,000 is \$176,007 and that was both in-kind and cash-match and then the grant funds are partially pro-rated based on how the federal government looks at the grant. She stated that we had known that from day one and we've been saving money to be able to put money towards the project to complete it. So that's both from the Cove Preservation Fund which is made up of funds

from the boating fees and also over the past two years, we've been putting aside money in the Capital Improvement Program of \$25,000 each and the request for the proposal for budget year 2014-15 in Capital Improvements is an additional \$50,000 that altogether will give us the money we need to do the project down at the Cove.

Mr. Bridges commented that the remaining funds are in next year's CIP so you will approve it tonight but will be on hold awaiting the adoption of the budget.

Mayor Montinieri asked what is the timeframe for getting the project done once we get it initiated with the funding. Ms. Bagley responded that our goal would be potentially the fall of this year or next year in 2015, possible the spring or fall of 2015. Mayor Montinieri asked it is possible that it could be done before the end of this season but it would be the very end of this season. Ms. Bagley responded yes, but we still have to do the final design and bid specifications for the project and we can't award a project to do that yet until this contract is signed. Mayor Montinieri asked were there some delays with this that slowed it down and asked what the delay was. Ms. Bagley responded that we have been negotiating with the Federal and State government and the contract and the way the funds were going to be used in our in-kind service match. Based on what we had submitted they had some concerns whether or not all of that was eligible so we've been working through that process and just the contract itself with the State and Federal government. Mayor Montinieri asked if the docks that we have now are still usable or are they just problematic. Ms. Bagley responded yes, if you get that high water, they are not usable so that is why we started this project and this was also recommended in the Cove Master Plan so that was 2000, so we are working on it.

Councilor Kotkin asked Kathy to explain the difference between total cost and pro-rated costs of the project. Ms. Bagley explained that the federal and state government pro-rates projects based on, this grant is for transient boaters, so they look at it as they are only going to fund the piece that is for transient boaters use only. So when you look at the docks and look at some of the other things and the way that the docks are set up, they are pro-rating the docks. There are ten slips on the docks, three of them will be used by public safety or the Harbor Master, so there are seven slips on the docks that are available for transient boaters and other uses. So they look at pro-rating seven out of ten and they carry that very complicated formula through how this whole budget is set up. Councilor Kotkin asked if the dredging cost is different from the dredging that is going on now at the cove or is that \$450,000 that is listed for dredging part of this overall. Ms. Bagley responded that it is part of that and this grant was submitted way before we knew anything about the state money that we got for the dredging. So that will be something that we will be working with the State on as to how that will play out in the budget because the dredging is funded through the Department of Transportation, recently we got that grant, but this was submitted about two years ago and we didn't know at the time that we would get that money. Councilor Kotkin asked if this is likely going to change a little bit because of that what we are looking at on this sheet and ultimately in terms of taxpayer money beyond what's already been allocated is there another allocation that we are going to be making in a future year for this or are you pretty much covered for fees or what we've already appropriated. Ms. Bagley responded that

she doesn't believe as she looks at it today that they would be coming back looking for additional funding. She stated that partly we were able to use the new State money that we received for the dredging of the channel as also to help with the match for what we had already done as in-kind services so this is the budget as is, it has to be presented by the Federal and State government. Councilor Kotkin commented that this is good leveraging that you are doing. Ms. Bagley responded that was also a help that that came through. Ms. Bagley added that the dredging work is going on down there now and it is pretty exciting to have that happen.

Councilor Martino commented that just for housekeeping looking at Kathy's action required, he thinks we have to amend the motion to add **"JEFF BRIDGES IS DULY AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO AND SIGN CONTRACTS ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD. THE TOWN MANAGER IS FURTHER AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE SUCH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND EXECUTE SUCH OTHER DOCUMENTS AS MAY BE REQUIRED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTION WITH SAID CONTRACT UNTIL EXECUTED ANY AMENDMENTS, RECISIONS AND REVISIONS THERETO"**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

BIDS

None.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

Mr. Bridges introduced the following items.

A resolution concerning applications to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. (Authorization for execution of a Memorandum of Understanding for Homeland Security Grant Funds).

Resolution supporting CRCOG Grant Applications for a Regional Data Disaster Recovery Center and Human Resources On-line Clearing House and Templates.

MINUTES

Mayor Montinieri moved **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 3, 2013"**, seconded by Councilor Hemmann. Councilor Roberts noted some minor typos and Councilor Kotkin noted that on pg. 3 "Standard" should be changed to Standish".

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue commented on the Board of Education budget and asked who represents the taxpayers and the students. He commented that on page 12 of the presentation under proposed budget supplies and materials the amount was negative \$165,000. He commented that while salaries and benefits went up \$1.1 million dollars, supplies and materials went down and he is concerned that we are cutting down where we are not supposed to.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Cir., commented on the American Warrior Project and encouraged people to support the program and encouraged to advertise this to get people to attend. Mr. Ruhe commented that he received a letter from the Town to march in the Memorial Day Parade but there was not a single solitary word that talked about the real meaning of Memorial Day and that it is to memorialize those young men who got killed in the war and gave their lives to the country. Mr. Ruhe stated that he was kind of appalled by the letter. He stated that we need to stop and take stock of what it is we are doing on Memorial Day. Mr. Ruhe commented on the potholes between Maple Street and Two Brook Rd. and stated that it is pretty bad. He commented that if the Chamber wants to have fireworks, they should pay for it and the Town should not be subsidizing it and that the Chamber should pay for the whole thing. He commented that the Chamber meetings shouldn't be included on the Town calendar.

Stacy Hodges, commented that the Chamber is excited about the funds that they are going to raise. She introduced the fundraisers and stated that they have been working really hard raising money so the town could have fireworks. She stated that the Chamber is a public meeting and would be happy to have Mr. Ruhe attend. She stated that the fireworks is really to benefit the town and to bring people and businesses to view Old Wethersfield, spend money, maybe have dinner and attract them to the town. She commented that all she has been hearing is what people did when the fireworks were at Millwoods and those are some special memories and we got many phone calls to that affect. Ms. Hodges announced some fundraising events in April. April 8th there is a Rock Cats after hours event, April 11th, there will be a dinner at the Yacht Club, and on April 12th a car show at the DOL.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:05 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Roberts. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council
May 5, 2014

Minutes were revised to correct a spelling error. The word “magnate” was changed to “magnet” on pages 3 and 4