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**REGULAR MEETING**  
**March 2, 2015**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, March 2, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

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

Also present: Town Engineer Mike Turner, Director of Physical Services Sally Katz, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, Dolores Sassano, and Town Clerk.

Councilor Martino led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave. questioned the speed limit differences between some streets being higher than highway. Also feels the off ramp lane coming onto the Silas Deane Highway should have its own lane. After a storm, between Church and Morrison Avenue, a gentlemen was walking and had to walk onto the road because he could not go through the sidewalk as it had not been shoveled. A driver was on the wrong side of the road because of the confusion on March and Main Streets.

Paul Milne, 52 Livingston St., commented that he lives on a corner house it's a t-intersection and after the roads are cleared and people can get around and workers have done the safety issue they come back and do a little bit more work on the roads. However, he clears the intersection by directly putting the entire pile of snow right on the corner exactly where there is a widened sidewalk. He would like to know why that in the process of clearing, it has to go there and not just up 10 feet to the right of the corner or across to the other side. He called about it and it's frustrating because nothing is getting done after he was told they would take care of it. His next recourse was to come here and mention it.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd. commented he had made some negative comments regarding the Charter Revision Commission and a citizen wasn't happy. He looks at the Charter Revision Commission as being the leader of the rules and regulations for the town. He expects them to fine tune and develop new processes, so as issues happen, they can be taken care of going forward. The Charter Revision Commission needs to look at the things we need going into the future. We need an ombudsman in town, need more transparency on the website. Charter Revision should be setting up the policy and procedure. They should also address nepotism in this town. He doesn't think we are not elevating ourselves in our Town by setting the policies and processes for where problems can be handled.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Unapproved

Councilor Kotkin reported that earlier this evening the town's Other Post Employment Benefits Trust met with our financial advisors, fiduciary investment advisors. We meet semiannually to go over the performance of the Town's OPEB Trust. Formed about a year and half ago, it's basically to fund future retiree health obligations. We have contributed about \$10,000,000, between Town, including Board of Education, contributions and employee contributions. It has earned about \$1.3 million over that period of time. It's about an 8% return so it's done well. The committee decided tonight to implement a couple of changes in terms of the portfolios that we are going to invest in, particularly making some changes in the fixed income portion as well as the international equity portions of it which look to offer us higher returns with no incremental risks. The full committee met and heard a presentation from our advisors.

There was also a meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee. It was a joint meeting with the Board of Education's Finance Committee and the Town auditors. The meeting was to review an incorrect accounting for certain grants on the Board's side that were uncovered in the audit. We have reviewed them and the hope of all concerned is that this is just a one-time thing and that the report will go correctly next time. Also at the meeting we talked through the review of the budget for fiscal 15/16. Also, just as a reminder, we are going to be getting the Board budget at our next Council meeting. The Town Manager's budget is due to us the 1<sup>st</sup> week of April. The Public Hearing on the Town's budget is April 20<sup>th</sup> in the Council Chambers. The Council is going to spend a Saturday at the end of April reviewing presentations and discussions of the budget by the various department heads. The hope is that we are going to actually adopt the budget the first week of May. We need to have it done by May 15<sup>th</sup> so this is the schedule ahead of us.

Councilor Kotkin reported that he did not make an Insurance Committee meeting because he was travelling for work, but it appears that as opposed to being over budget, it appears that we are more or less on budget for health care costs this year which is better. As you may recall the last several years, we were \$1 and \$2 million dollars below budget which is one of the reasons we have \$11 plus million dollars in this OPEB Trust.

Councilor Martino reported that since the last meeting the two subcommittees of EDIC met. The Marketing subcommittee reviewed the shop business directory which has been adding more local businesses. People can find local vendors for whatever they need; and they continue to work on the web link called "Why Wethersfield" to tell people, looking to set up a business in Town or move to Town, where to find information. It will be a link to the existing information so they are not going to be recreating the wheel. They are working on that right now. Also, the Budget subcommittee of EDIC met to review their upcoming budget meeting. They increased some items and decreased others but overall their requirements are coming in at a lower budget than the current year.

Councilor Martino reported that the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee met; they continue to work on their Spring Fair on May 21<sup>st</sup> at the Community Center. He wanted seniors to know that

Unapproved

on July 12<sup>th</sup> the United Methodist Youth Camp with adult supervision will be back in Town. They will be here for the weekend to do home repairs and yard work for the elderly. Anyone who needs work done is asked to fill out an application through Social and Youth Services.

Councilor Hemmann asked where we were with the snow budget.

Mr. Bridges responded that we were over budget already and imagines that we will be more over budget. He stated that he will ask Physical Services to do an accounting this week. He stated that he imagines that we are somewhere around \$200,000 in the hole.

Councilor Martino wished the Mayor a Happy Birthday a day early.

### COUNCIL COMMENTS

No comments.

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bridges commented that hopefully we'll run out of winter before we run out of money. He stated that we did exhaust what was budgeted but we are still well within the contingency reserve in the general fund so we don't have budgetary issues or any issues with salt either. Mr. Bridges invited Mike Turner to the podium to talk about the intersection planning.

Mr. Turner explained that the Town held a public informational meeting on January 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss the initial plans we shared with you a few weeks back. It was a very positive meeting. Councilors were there, we probably had about 50 people in attendance that have been providing some very good comment to us. We heard our designers from Luch's Associates make a presentation to us and probably within the 3 to 4 week period after that, we've also received a lot of email comments. A lot of folks are just stopping into the Engineering Office to share their thoughts and concerns. Obviously we forwarded all of that information to the design firm. He explained that the design firm has compiled it all and what you see are slight revisions to the plan. He thought it was worth sharing with the Council and basically getting the green light from them to proceed with final design. The biggest change that this plan represents is we've relocated the cross walks more towards the center of the intersections. So it becomes more like a typical 4-way intersection. One of the most troublesome cross walks is the one that crosses right through the center of the island Marsh St. What we are proposing doing is eliminating that cross walk. Moving the cross walk forward to the intersection so we have adequate site distance from all four corners and basically the intersection will also, because of site line restrictions and the ability to see all these pedestrians, meet the warrants for a 4-way stop sign. Our recommendation is that it will be a 4-way stop at that intersection. We've obviously introduced a lot more green space by doing this. We are pulling all of the sidewalks and our intent would be to use brick sidewalks to extend all the brick sidewalks that are there to this intersection corner. The actual sidewalks that cross the road, the crosswalks themselves we are looking at something like an imprinted asphalt. Probably the best example is downtown Middletown, if you've driven through there you will see

Unapproved

it. It looks colored like a brick walk but it's actually just an imprint into the asphalt itself. So, Physical Services does not have to worry about plowing or hitting some dissimilar surfaces when we are maintaining the roads. There is no loss of parking with this plan. There is no addition of parking by this reconfiguration. Mr. Turner asked if there were any questions.

Councilor Hurley asked if there is going to be any loss of parking on Church Street because it looks like that goes back pretty far. Mr. Turner commented that the limits go back pretty far but right now because of a fire hydrant on the north side of the intersection and the driveway on the south side of the intersection, it's signed for no parking. So the existing limits of where there is no parking remain.

Councilor Hemmann asked Mike to help her understand again the purpose of that island on Church Street. It's not going to be raised she understands that. She understands it is an alert to something is different. Mr. Turner responded that when you are driving from Church Street to Marsh Street without that island, because of the differences in radiuses, you are going to have a tendency to drift towards the center. What this will do is channel you and align you with the lane on the opposite side on Marsh Street. Councilor Hemmann commented it doesn't happen today. As a frequent user of that intersection, I understand. Mr. Turner referred to the diagram and outlined where the existing curb lines are now on the back side of the green, obviously there is not much there, but on this side because of the wide radiuses, you're going to intend to align yourself towards the middle of the intersection and that puts you straight into that island on the Marsh Street side. So really we could accomplish the same thing with centerline striping but our designer has recommended just using a material similar probably to this imprinted asphalt to just denote where that lane is and channel the direction of the car straight into that lane.

Mayor Montinieri asked if it's going to be raised up. Mr. Turner responded it will not be raised up. Mayor Montinieri asked if there is anything demarcating that except the color. He asked Councilor Hemmann when you said it's not happening now Donna, you mean they are not drifting over now. Councilor Hemmann responded no they are not. When I come down, to go to the highway, coming across other than having to pull out so I can see, it is not happening now. You can't because of the car parking and there's always parking on both sides of the street, you have to be aware of where the cars are when you are coming through there.

Mayor Montinieri commented that this question came up in public comment as well. I remember heading west on Church coming from Main so assume you are taking a right-hand turn on Main to Church, there's parking there now, right, will that continue? Mr. Turner responded that will continue. Mayor Montinieri asked with this configuration and adding that center even though it's visual and the question that I recall came up from several people in the public is like aren't you narrowing that so that it's going to be difficult to pass going that way. Assuming you are not restricting somebody from drifting over onto that color. Mr. Bridge commented that there is no parking until you get to the end of that rumble strip, that demarcation because of the fire hydrant. Mayor Montinieri asked there is nothing heading west from Main Street until that demarcation ends. Mr. Turner responded that's correct. Where the cursor, is on the map, there is not an

Unapproved

existing 'no parking' sign. Councilor Hemmann commented it's that far out, ok, it's deceiving. Mr. Bridges commented when you look at the east side you can see how big that radius is now in front of the Standish House that is going to be significantly narrowed so channelization will be important. We can look at that through final design, but this is where we are today. Mayor Montinieri stated they are just trying to get people to stay on a straight path as opposed to this sort of cockeyed thing that is going on now. Mayor Montinieri asked if they are changing the sidewalk pattern in front of Standish House so that the existing sidewalk is that being superimposed on top. Can you just take me through that? Mr. Turner responded the existing folks walk straight down here to a handicap ramp, cross through the island itself and pick up on the other side and what we heard is part of the testimony with the folks from the museum when they have the kids on tour and they are walking them along like ducklings there, they are worried about the cars coming in from Main St. turning left, have no opportunity at all there are no controls there at all. Asked if there is a yield sign or any sign. Mr. Turner responded there is nothing. So starting at the main entrance by Standish House, we would bring them up to the corner essentially and have them cross at the corner. We'll extend the sidewalk on Marsh Street so you can still walk down towards Broad Street but we would eliminate that crossing here and through the island itself and would eliminate the ramp on the side here.

Councilor Hurley asked if all the business had a chance to look at the design. Mr. Turner responded yes. There were all specifically invited by hand to come to the meeting and we shared with them the smaller scale things. Councilor Hurley asked if they had any concerns. Mr. Turner responded, no issues. The biggest issue would have been parking and any loss of parking and there is none of that.

Mayor Montinieri asked what the timeline is now. Mr. Turner responded if we have a consensus to move forward we authorize the engineers to get into final design. We'll probably bid later this spring. I'm hoping maybe April we'll be out to bid and look to do construction this summer time.

Mr. Bridges added that part of the final design will be budget just to make sure we are within our budget, and if we are, then we can bid as soon as possible. The overall budget \$225,000 and that includes the design piece. Are you satisfied that based on the public hearing from several weeks ago and now these revisions that that will be sufficient to communicate to the public the changes or are you anticipating having another opportunity for them to come public with it. Mr. Turner responded we still have to go to Planning and Zoning with the plans because it is a change in the alignment of the roadway so there will be an opportunity for the public to again speak at that point. I guess we would have to hit the Historic District Commission just for material selections, the brick walks and any of the lights. We are going to add four street lights at the intersection as well and those would be the same style as they are there now. Mayor Montinieri commented that it looks like you've addressed everything that came out of public comment. Mr. Turner responded we took very detailed notes and went through them one by one. Mayor Montinieri commented it definitely looks like everything has been addressed.

Unapproved

Councilor Rell asked if there were any bike lanes in the previous rendition that we had for this. Mr. Turner responded yes. Councilor Rell asked and there are two on the north side of the intersection and the south side. Do the two 5-foot bike lanes continue further north and south or are they just in that intersection. Mr. Turner responded they are just through the intersection. Councilor Rell asked if that takes up any space in the lanes. He knows it's 10 total feet. Mr. Turner responded it does but it's psychological. Essentially, you are narrowing the width the vehicle will travel in. Obviously, there are state laws that require separating distances from bicyclists but this is not a designated bike route. Our Heritage Way comes down and goes down Hart Street actually. Councilor Rell asked so the bike lanes will not have a marking or anything. Mr. Turner responded that they will put a marking there. Councilor Rell commented but they won't be over by Broad Street. They've actually created green lanes for bikes, we won't have that. Mr. Turner responded no. It was our intention the DOT called them sharrows and it's basically the little symbol of a bicyclist that denotes their space in the road so to speak. Councilor Rell thanked Mr. Turner.

Councilor Hurley asked what did the Police Department think about the claim. Mr. Turner responded that they have been involved in every step of the process. Councilor Hurley asked if they thought that there would be backups on Main Street with the stop signs. Mr. Turner responded no.

Mayor Montinieri commented that he thinks that they did a great job addressing the issues that were at the public hearing and thinks it is time we move forward and get the process going.

Councilor Rell asked that now that there will be two additional stop signs, would we be doing PSA's, reminders or anything like that to people about the new stop signs. Mr. Turner responded absolutely, yes. Mr. Bridges commented that will be part of the project initiation once we open it up. There will be some warning signs.

Councilor Martino moved **"TO AUTHORIZE STAFF TO UNDERTAKE FINAL DESIGN OF THE INTERSECTION"**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

#### TOWN CLERK COMMUNICATIONS

None.

#### COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Barry moved **"TO APPOINT TO THE WETHERSFIELD FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES COMMITTEE, DAVID CARUK, 149 BROAD STREET FOR THE TERM 03-02-15 TO 06-30-16, HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION AS AN ALTERNATE, DANIEL BUCKNAM, 108 GARDEN STREET FOR THE TERM 03-02-15 TO 06-30-15, TO THE TOURISM COMMISSION, CHARLES FORD, 249 RIDGE RD, FOR THE TERM 03-02-15 TO 06-30-16, AND TO THE TOURISM COMMISSION,**

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**CHARLES LYLE, BUSINESS DISTRICT, WEBB/DEANE/STEVENS, FOR THE TERM 03-02-15 TO 06-30-16, SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, CORRECTION DATE OF TERM ENDING, HENRY HORLAT, 39 COLLIER RD. FOR THE TERM 02-17-15 TO 06-30-16**", seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

Councilor Martino moved **"TO ADD THE DIESEL AND FUEL OIL BILL TO THE AGENDA"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

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

Councilor Martino moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE SUBMISSION OF THE DISTRACTED DRIVING – HIGH VISIBILITY ENFORCEMENT GRANT"**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Mr. Bridges explained that we have done this before. As you can see from Chief Cetran's comments, last year resulted in 127 cell phone violation, 5 were motor vehicle violations and care seat violations. So this is important to the Police Department as they look at limiting distracted driving in Wethersfield so Staff would recommend a request that you allow for the grant application. Mayor Montinieri asked if we had a match on this for the overtime. Mr. Bridges responded yes and it's paid for by the Police Department. Mayor Montinieri asked if there were any questions.

Councilor Hemmann commented that she thinks it's a positive thing and thinks we need to let the public know the results of this in more than just here during our discussion. I think there has been comment from the public in the past about violations and I think we were very encouraged to get the grant last year to really see the emphasis put on this because I think it's very important.

Mayor Montinieri asked Mr. Bridges to pass on to the Chief if we can get a report at the completion of the two cycles after completion.

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

Councilor Martino moved **"TO APPROVE THE JOB RE-CLASSIFICATION AS REQUESTED EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 2015"**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Mr. Bridges explained this evening there are three requests for reclassifications. Two in the Park & Recreation Department to help facilitate the merging of those staffs as we talked about when we appointed Mrs. Bagley Director of both Social and Youth Services and Park & Recreation. So those two reclasses help facilitate that merger. The Maintainer I to Maintainer II in Physical Services, the sophistication of some of those duties has evolved and it more in line with the Maintainer II responsibilities than Maintainer I. Mr. Bridges asked if there were any questions.

Unapproved

Mr. Bridges responded that Budget and Finance did review these and he has addressed those comments.

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

Councilor Martino moved **“TO AUTHORIZE BY SALE OR AUCTION A 1981 AMERICAN LEFRANCE FIRE TRUCK”**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Mr. Bridges explained that we recently replaced this as a line vehicle with the new truck we received a few months ago which went on line a couple of weeks ago. So we are just requesting authorization to get rid of it. We don't need it and it no longer serves a purpose for us.

Mayor Montinieri asked if are likely to try and sell it privately to another town before we go to auction. Mr. Bridges responded we can just advertise it and there are websites where you can put old fire trucks for sale. We will just put it out there and see what comes back the best, the ladder does not work.

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

#### BIDS

Councilor Martino moved **“TO AWARD CRCOG BID #623 TO DIME OIL”**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Mr. Bridges explained that we got very favorable bids on diesel and heating oil from CRCOG for next year. Ms. Katz can go into details.

Ms. Katz explained there is a bid in front of you this evening for our fiscal year. The prices will be good for a 12-month period and they are for both the diesel and home heating oil. The diesel fuel on the agenda shows we have increased the number of gallons we want to purchase. We have noticed a trend over the past few years with all of the storms we have been using more diesel fuel. We want to be able to lock in at this price instead of running low and having to go out again, potentially pay a higher per gallon cost. She explained they did go through CRCOG and we got very favorable pricing while it was low. Once again, it's a commodity and as we all know it fluctuates. The pricing here is significantly lower than what we are paying this year and so it is something that we wanted to lock in and move forward as quickly as possible.

Mr. Kotkin asked if the Board of Education also buy under these bids or are they buying their own diesel for their school busses. Ms. Katz responded yes, they are but don't know what their contract is for their busses. Councilor Kotkin commented that his recollection just from when they attended the Board Budget meetings, is that they were budgeting something closer to \$3.00 per gallon for diesel so it might be helpful when we get to the next meeting which is when the Board presents its budget to know what they will be paying and perhaps what's imbedded in the budget as well.

Unapproved

Mayor Montinieri commented that he thinks it's a good question; he was at that last meeting and it looked like they were budgeting the same number as this year. They use considerably more diesel obviously for the busses. They do have to pay for that separately from the bus contracts. So that's definitely a question we have to pursue.

Ms. Katz responded they have shared that information. We were in the same office, so they are also aware of the fact that we have gone out to bid and locked in at this price. Councilor Kotkin commented that he thinks they indicated that that was not yet, and they had to make a guess in their budget. Councilor Kotkin asked if any of their buildings heat with oil or are they all on gas now. Ms. Katz responded that we are transitioning the Little Red School House from oil to gas this year. So yes, we are trying to transition as many as we can but we still do have some buildings that do use heating oil and as I said in the description here, last year we did not purchase oil for the tank here [Town Hall] because we were at a significant level. We had used some of that so it is advantageous for us to refuel that tank. Once again, with the cost going down per gallon, even though we are going to purchase more in-home heating oil, we still will come under our projected budget.

Councilor Kotkin asked if any of the Board of Education buildings heat with oil or are they all with gas. Ms. Katz responded that she doesn't know the answer to that question. Mayor Montinieri commented that he thinks Fred [Bushey] said that there were two left somewhere in the district. One of them was a backup and one was still in use. Councilor Kotkin asked if they buy through the CRCOG bid as well. Ms. Katz responded that she does not know what their process is at this point. Councilor Montinieri commented these items are to be explored.

Councilor Hemmann asked we can pursue in the light of a shared bidding process. It would make sense if it was looked at even more globally so that volume would do anything, probably not, but so that it's one bid and you know the accounting of it, it's just another piece that gets allocated to an account. Mr. Bridges commented we would just add gallons, it wouldn't change the price. We would just have the committed at the same time to lock in. Mayor Montinieri echoed Donna's same point and asked Sally if she can look into that tomorrow and just get back to Council by email what she learned whether or not that is an option because he does recall that they were going to hold the same number and if possible if that number could actually be adjusted in favor of the Town budget to have it before our next meeting when they are going to present their budget so that they can make that adjustment now. Mr. Bridges added that we would have to find out if we could add those gallons to the bid price. Ms. Katz responded we would have to see whether or not if we could add the gallons and whether or not the price that we locked in if we would be able to up our amount for that. Mayor Montinieri responded absolutely but at the same time even if that weren't true, it would be hard to understand the discrepancy with such big difference in gallon charges if they were on their own so I would love to hear more about that. He then thanked Sally.

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

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## ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

Introduction of a resolution authorizing the submission of a Historic Records Preservation Grant.

Introduction of a resolution authorizing state Local Capital Improvement Program Funds (LoCIP) to be used for the reconstruction of Fairlane Drive.

## MINUTES

Councilor Martino moved **“TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 17, 2015”**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin. Councilor Martino commented to make a change on page 2 changing “review of all the Department of Board of Education requests” to “review of all Town Departments and Board of Education requests.”

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

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave. commented he was glad to see that they were going to put a 4-way stop in that area. He also likes the idea that they are going to recycle the sidewalks and make it where it belongs. He is still puzzled on the island on Church St. and doesn't understand it. The north curb line on Church Street, as proposed goes in a couple of feet. He doesn't agree with that at all. He questioned the 11-ft lanes and asked why make it smaller. He also commented on the perpendicular parking.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd. commented on the way the Town purchases gas and diesel fuel. He commented that he thought the Town had shared services. Obviously the Town and Board doesn't have shared services; we should buy in volume.

Mr. Bridges commented that the Board of Education did bid through CRCOG like we did. They got the same price we did for 51,000 gallons of diesel fuel. The CRCOG bid include 30 towns, all buying at the same time so there's hundreds of thousands of gallons of diesel fuel bid at the same time. She wanted to verify to make sure that they did piggy back the CRCOG bid before she said anything.

Mayor Montinieri thanked Mr. Bridges for the correct facts on that.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:00 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Martino. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano Town Clerk

*Approved 6-0-2 [Roberts, Manousos; Montinieri absent 3/16] on 3/16/2015*