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**REGULAR MEETING**  
**November 9, 2015**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on November 9, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Councilors Bello, Hemmann, Hurley, Latina, Martino, Rell, Spinella, Deputy Mayor Barry and Mayor Montinieri.

Also present: Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks & Recreation; Mike Turner, Town Engineer and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Deputy Mayor Steve Barry.

Invocation given by Pastor Chris Skowronek from CenterPoint Church.

Mayor Paul Montinieri stated he would like to extend recognition of outgoing Councilor Stathis Manousos who has served the town with dedicated service for six years. "It would be a fair statement to say that it would be an understatement if people thought that we agreed on a lot of things but Stathis is a passionate leader in our community. His competitive spirit, his energy and his contributions over the last six years have been very important to all of us who have sat at the dais. I personally have great respect for him. He's a great family man, a great dad, a great husband, very dedicated to our community and I consider it a privilege to serve with him the whole time he's been here. I'm pleased to provide a really a small token of appreciation to Stathis for his service from the town."

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE TO COUNCILORS

Steve Barry, Amy Bello, Donna Hemmann, Mike Hurley, Jodi Latina, Tony Martino, Paul Montinieri, Michael Rell, Anthony Spinella

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HEARING

GENERAL COMMENTS

Individual comments to outgoing Councilor Stathis Manousos:

Councilor Hurley "I just want to say that I was honored just be a friend to Stathis and sit next to him for the last six years. I know he assured our town, stay in great financial health as the chairman of the budget and financial committee during our first two terms and I want to thank him for bringing his energy to all our council meetings."

Deputy Mayor Barry "I would also like to thank Stathis. Stathis has been a friend since we were kids, playing soccer in town together and no one in this community is as committed to doing what they think is best for the town and it's residents, and Stathis whether it's through soccer, whether it's through pine acres, whether it's through this body, it's been an honor to serve with you and Stathis definitely gives his all no matter what arena he's in so he will be missed and it has been honor to serve with you."

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Councilor Martino “Stathis, I, too, would like to wish you well. Your first two years in office you sat on one side of the budget table and I sat on the other side of the table as an employee and you really did grow and question every item in the budget so thank you for your years of service.”

Councilor Hemmann “Stathis, I’m gonna miss you. You bring a lot value to the town and you brought a lot of value to the council and certainly that is appreciated. Your financial skills really showed through during our budget sessions and your participation on budget and finance was very important to the town and we appreciate that and we’ll certainly miss you here.”

Councilor Rell “Stathis, I, too, will miss you. I kinda felt like a judge at Wimbledon, sitting between you and the Mayor, sometimes I would look this way and then that way, lobbying back and forth but you taught me a lot while I was on the council with you. Your knowledge and your commitment to the town of Wethersfield, be it through town council or through soccer is second to none and you will sorely be missed but I look forward to working with you in the future.”

Comments from Councilor Stathis Manousos:

“I really appreciate all the kind words, I truly do. I really enjoyed my time on the council these last six years and I really enjoyed serving with everybody here, believe it or not, I do, I did. And especially those councilors too that were in prior councils that may not be here tonight. Jeff Bridges I’ve worked closely with when I was chair budget and finance and I appreciate him on staff, department heads have all been great to work with. Very knowledgeable, very professional and I learned a lot from them. We had important work to do, we always managed to have you know fun at it. I think you have to enjoy what you’re doing to be successful at it and I certainly tried to do that here and I tried to make everyone around me to have that same feeling. I want to thank all those residents, friends, acquaintances who supported me over the years. Some I didn’t really have the chance to get to meet along the way but I hope that I will someday soon. Especially I want to thank my wife, Lisa, I’m not even sure if she got here yet but and I know my kids aren’t here; they still don’t like to hang out with dad yet. Anyways, I really want to thank my wife, Lisa and the kids and the family who unconditionally supported me over the years and even helped on the campaign trail. Know with as with any volunteer work, I think like Chris said, public service does come at the expense of family. And I’m thankful that my family understood this sacrifice and they supported me. And I know Lisa is very happy to see me at home right now. She didn’t waste any time. If you could see the size of the honey-do list, it would drive anybody back to public service right now. So some say that public service is a thankless volunteer job and in many cases, they may be right, however at the end when I look back at these years I feel that I have been generously rewarded in a couple of ways. First, by seeing our accomplishments and knowing that they were done for the betterment of the town and that’s everybody here who was a part of those and even more rewarding was just having the opportunity to meet with so many residents along the way, many of whom I’m happy to say I’ve become friends and these are people who I may not have otherwise had the chance to meet. So I feel blessed and thankful for my time on council and I wish the newly elected council the best of luck in the future and I’m sure they will serve the town very well. Thank you.”

## COUNCIL ACTION

Accept nominations for nominations for Chairperson or Mayor of Wethersfield.

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Councilor Martino commented that last week he saw an article by Wallet Hub.com which ranked more than 1,200 small cities in the US with a population between 25,000 and 100,000 residents according to various criteria including an analysis of affordability, economic health, education, health and overall quality of life. Last week the Courant published an article "What's the Best Small City in Connecticut?" Based on that study, Wethersfield was rated # 1. Surrounding towns in the top 10 were Manchester at #3, Newington #4 and West Hartford #6. This happened due to the leadership of our current Mayor. We need to keep Wethersfield #1 moving forward and he was proud to nominate Paul Montineri as Mayor of Wethersfield for a second term.

Councilor Spinella seconded the nomination of Mayor Montineri. He stated that Mayor Montineri over nearly of a decade has given his life to public service and serving this town. He has seen it grow both economically as well as in diversity. He's led not only the Democratic party but really the people of Wethersfield and over the last few months, Councilor Spinella has seen how much he truly cares about this town and didn't think there is any better choice to lead the town council than Mayor Montineri.

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

Mayor Paul Montineri thanked everyone for coming this evening and stated that it's an important night for them. It has been a culmination of several long months of campaigning and working on behalf of the town. He was pleased to be able to continue to service the Wethersfield that he loves, as the Mayor. It's been a very fun two years he is looking forward to working harder in the next two years. When he took the oath of office two years ago as the Mayor, he pledged a couple of things to our community. First, in the area of education that they would work very hard to open up negotiations with the Board of Education and work with the administration and have an open dialogue of fairness and collaboration. Over the two year period they met dozens of times with the Board, with the Administration and they drilled into many of the aspects of that derive what he would say was a sensible and fiscally prudent budget, but almost more importantly, those negotiations led to changes in the education system that got us a Security Director, a math program. You will all recall that we all did jointly as a full council support the CIP efforts that got us an Emerson Williams new gym floor which everybody was very pleased to see happen as well as the cafeteria. In the first year of our term, people might remember we ran into some difficult times with the High School renovation with the result of asbestos and PCB abatement that threatened to set back our community and take our flagship school that was online offline. Through the work of our delegation that Russ Morin, Paul Doyle and Tony Guerrara who were our fighters in the trenches that got us 10 million dollars of space waiver that kept our high school renovation on time and in budget. So that's a huge accomplishment and we all went in and worked hard on that. He mentioned that he talked about business and economic development, probably the most important thing that was worked on in the last two years. He said that he has been very fortunate in his life to have worked with some wonderful business mentors and to have the opportunity to run his own businesses and to learn a little bit about what makes business tick, what makes business decisions happen. When he took office two years ago as the Mayor, he absolutely committed himself to changing the playing field for Wethersfield. We needed to recognize that the sluggish stagnation that we saw, the empty buildings that we saw as we drove through town, particularly on the Silas Deane were an impediment to maintain the reputation that Wethersfield has always had as long as he's been here and beyond. He stated that he rolled up his sleeves and worked with business owners, worked with developers and the results speak for themselves. They are undeniable. Dozens of new businesses have come to town in the last two years. We have filled empty buildings

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everywhere and the stagnation is in the rear view mirror. The former Weight Watchers which was announced before the election is probably one of the bigger ones more notably, but not the most important. It's the little engines that could. It's the D & D Markets and the Wethersfield Diners and the Ear, Nose & Throat that went into the building that Harvey Sprawng did as a spec, the Walk-in Medical Center on Silas Deane, CBS up in Putnam Plaza, the list goes on and on. People are beginning to believe in Wethersfield again as an economic, viably strong and growing community. And when you talk about tax relief for our seniors and for our residents, which we all believe in, all sides of the isle, that grand list growth that come out of those efforts will really give us notable relief as we go into next year along with hopefully good fiscal prudence on the part of our full council. He indicated that he was not done yet. We're working on a lot of very significant projects. He has a beads eye on the next areas of concern. Everybody talks about the Fun Zone. A lot of work is being done on that project. Potentially, it's a vision that will make Wethersfield greater and that they are going continue to work very hard to see that happen. The last area that he talked a little bit about when he took office was across the aisle, Colegial Collaboration. And this has been probably the most difficult area, sitting in the Mayor seat that he raised and continues to raise for the progress of our town. He was told by former Mayors and Deputy Mayors and people that he knows in town, that use to be both sides were a little bit more civil, that descent was accepted as a little bit more of a part of the process but then in the end there would be a reach out an agreement and that people would even go out after council meetings across the aisle and share a drink for their successes. He knows having served on this council for almost ten years that regardless of who was in lead whether it was Donna as Mayor, or Andy as Mayor, or himself as Mayor, they all deeply believe in the Wethersfield that we want. We all do. It's not democrat. It's not republican. It's a Wethersfield that we all want to see better. We may disagree on how to get there. We may disagree about what the priority should be. But at the end of the day, we need to raise the bar to work together to get it there. He pledged again, as Mayor, for the next two years to respect those ideas and reach out again. He will turn to Councilor Hemmann, Councilor Rell, Councilor and Councilor Hurley and ask each of them to please bring their ideas NOW. Don't sit back and wait. He is open. Our team is open. He wants to achieve together and he wants them to be active with him, collegially, collaboratively, with great respect. If we do that, if we engage honestly now, not in May, when the budget process is done, but now, tell me their priorities and share them. He pledges to you to work very hard to make that a part of our agenda and a part of their achievement. He knows we can achieve together. He believes that they can do it together. And he pledges to do it. But we will have to raise the bar and then maybe everyone will share a toast at Lucky Lou's after they finish the budget together in the spring. He indicated that when we talk about accountability, accountability starts with us. People expect us to go beyond politics. The campaign's over. It's done. It was spirited. There were some good moments; there were some moments that weren't so great. But that's done and he pledged to work very hard with this group to make Wethersfield better. If you take that as our benchmark, each individually, they can make Wethersfield better. So he suggested that they change that starting tonight. He welcomes your insights and your ideas, your intelligence, your energy, your spirit. He knows that we can set a positive productive tone for the next two years for this town. Why? Because those sitting in the audience know why we are here. The Council is here because they love the residents and they love Wethersfield and nobody differs on that. Finally, he thanked the campaign committee. They had tons of campaign door knockers. Amazing strategists, some of whom were there tonight. They did have a miraculous group who could get a mailer out in the same day, believe it or not. And they also had some young Dems in great numbers who were working like dogs on election day to get out the vote. Many of whom were sitting in the Episcopal Church will know that it looked like the pit over at Wall Street. Phones were going, people are running, slips of paper are flying. It was very exciting. When they came over late in the afternoon, he realized that John Galvin had captured the spirit of our young Dems and that made a big difference. He pledged again, that they were going to work

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harder, get those results continuing and have a vision for Wethersfield that's even greater. He commented that he couldn't tell the people enough about how grateful he was to sit in the Mayor's seat and work for them.

Mayor Paul Montinieri indicated that they have an election for the Vice Chairperson and he had the distinct honor to nominate Steve Barry in that role. Steve Barry has served as Deputy Mayor for the last two years. The entire Barry family has a reputation in town for service and excellence. He stated that he knew his Mom and Dad were sitting in the audience tonight and that Deputy Mayor Barry's strength and commitment to service came from that very good lineage. He is a quietly competent leader. He speaks quietly, but he carries great strength. Mayor Montinieri has turned to him as a friend many, many many times outside the dais and he has always given him this quiet competent perspective and he's always on the mark. He has served our community in so many ways. Behind the scenes he's a great dad, a great husband. His wife, Lee and his kids were in the audience and he was sure they were all smiling back there. He is a representative of what we want Wethersfield to be at its best. H has served with the Building Committee, a huge task that has been very challenging but he has navigated that group through and kept them all informed about the progress. But his service goes far beyond that. It's got tentacles in our community in a lot of ways. He was proud to nominate him as Deputy Mayor and continue to serve by his side to do the great work that we have done; and most importantly, he was very proud to call him his friend.

Councilor Bello commented that it was her honor to second the nomination of Steve Barry as Deputy Mayor of the Town of Wethersfield. She said he is a neighbor and a friend and who has proven to be a thoughtful and capable Deputy Mayor over the past two years. She was confident that he will continue to work for the good of the community and help to lead us over the next two years.

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

Comments from Deputy Mayor Steve Barry:

"Thank you. I'll be brief. As I think I'm getting a reputation for being brief when I speak. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as Deputy Mayor for the past two years and I truly appreciate and appreciate your vote of confidence in me doing that for the next two years. I have to thank my family, my dad, Edith, my wife, Leah, my sons Matt, Mike and Brendan. Matt and Mike were able to come here from school so it's truly an honor to have them here and to share this time with me and with all of us. They recognize my commitment to this community and I appreciate them coming and recognizing me by being here as well. Moving forward, I'll echo Paul's comments, the Mayor's comments about why we all are involved and why we all do this. Everyone here, republican, democrat is giving to the town because they care about the town. I got involved in politics two years ago for that very reason. I came wanting to bring a positive energy, some vision and also a level of professionalism to how we conduct ourselves in council session. I hope I've done that. I think moving forward, we will all do that. I look forward to working with Mike Hurley, Jodi Latina, Mike Rell, Donna Hemmann and my councilors to my right and with the Mayor. We've got a big two years. We have to keep the momentum going on economic development. It does require hard work and determination. And it requires some vision. The high school in the next two years certainly will be turning over really into what is our flagship of our school system. It's an exciting time but that's going be done in the next in this term. So these are exciting times for this town. I know we can all work together and get what we think, get done what we think is best for the community. Again, we will disagree at times but at the end of the day, know that all

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of us care deeply about Wethersfield and want to make Wethersfield a community that we all can be proud of, that our children can come back to if they so choose and their children as well so I thank you for the honor and the privilege to serve again and let's have a great two years and do some very good things for our community.”

Councilor Hurley stated that he wanted to thank everybody who voted for him and he looks forward to working together for the good of the town with a commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparency. He indicated that they will disagree, but they are all doing what they think is right for the town.

Councilor Rell commented that he wanted to apologize because it was usually him who is reading his son bedtime stories that get him to fall asleep but it may just be the voice of politicians that does that. Most importantly he wanted to thank his family who was there. His wife, his two kids and his in-laws were here and thanked them for their support. He thanked them for staying up with him late on certain campaign nights as well as waking up early with him on others. He also wanted to thank the people of Wethersfield for entrusting in him two more years on the town council. He appreciated those, like Mike said, who came out and voted for him. He mentioned that going forward that he will take the Mayor at his word and that he will be part of the process. He indicated that they would also like to be a part of the process and know about of what's going on with decisions that are being made. Be it three days or three hours, a good heads up in knowledge of what's being discussed would be beneficial to their side of the aisle. He appreciated everybody coming out tonight.

Councilor Hemmann stated that she would also like to thank the community for their support. She looks forward to the next two years working together to try to move the town forward. She thought that she probably was the elder on the council now for sure and brings a lot of not only years of experience, but good insights. She looked forward to working with both sides of the aisle and moving the town forward.

Councilor Latina commented that she wanted to say thank you so much to everybody who supported her throughout the last two years on the Board of Education. It was not an easy job but it was one that she really learned a lot from. She was so proud to be there tonight before everybody. She wanted to thank all her republican, her democrat and independent colleagues who voted for her and supported her in this endeavor especially her family and her friends. Like everybody else on the Town Council she feels they all give of our time and they are away from a lot of the important things in their lives, but this obviously is bigger than all of them and they are here for that very reason. She indicated that she hoped that over the next two years they can all do some really wonderful things together. This town is fabulous and they really have much more to do and they are going to do it together.

Councilor Martino stated that he wanted to thank his family for giving him the opportunity to run and serve again and help the citizens of Wethersfield. Also to the voters for having the confidence to vote him back in again. When he retired he said he wanted to give back to the community that was so good to him and his family. The people gave him one term to do that. He got a lot done. Now they have given him a second term so he can continue with that process. He realizes that they have a lot of seniors in town on fixed incomes. He is one of them and he knows we have a lot of young families struggling to survive. They do want to keep the taxes as low as they can. Over the past two years they have worked to bring businesses to town. They have worked with the Board on shared services. They have made some efficiency improvements and there's more to be made. He said he looks forward over the next two years to continue that process so that they can do more for the benefit of the people of Wethersfield because he wants to see Wethersfield stay the best small city in Connecticut.

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Councilor Bello commented that she was very excited to be on the Town Council. It is her first experience in politics and elected office and she was glad she is going to share it with this great group of people. She, too, wanted to thank her family. They have put in hours helping her campaign, write postcards, make phone calls and she appreciated everything they have done for her, including the Democratic Town Committee and the young Dems. What a great group that she got to know and work with and all their support in everything they have done for her and the rest of the Council to get them elected. Lastly, she thanked the voters of Wethersfield for electing her. What an honor and what a great feeling to know that the people were trusting her to make the decisions on their behalf. She looks forward to spending the next two years working with everybody and hopefully put their political affiliations aside and do what's best for the town.

Councilor Spinella stated that he would like to take a minute to thank his family as well, most of whom were there. His wife, Shanelle, has been a huge support to him, his brother, Paul, has been his education advisor throughout this process. His brother, Tom, who really couldn't get involved as much as he would have like to because of his job. Lastly he thanked his parents who have been a huge help to him. He said his mom has been there for everything he has asked of her and he knows she always will be. His father who really is his hero who he looks up to on almost every decision he makes. Senators Doyle and Ceatato were his political mentors. He indicated that he is a complete novice to politics so he will have a learning curve but he could assure everyone that he would work as hard as he possibly could for the people of Wethersfield. He thought he was like a lot of politicians. He will represent everyone, the people who voted for him, the people who didn't vote for him and the people who didn't vote at all. He truly will represent what the people of Wethersfield want and do that to the best of his abilities. He thanked everybody for supporting him and is happy to be a member of the Town Council.

Mayor Montinieri commented that before they have the Benediction, he just wanted to acknowledge the Town Manager, Jeff Bridges. Jeff has been an outstanding "CEO" for the Town of Wethersfield for as long as he has been on Council. A tireless worker, very dedicated to the improvement of Wethersfield and he was sure he was cringing that he was recognizing him at the Dais, but the truth of the matter is, a lot of the great work that was done over the last seven years has been the result of his hard work and he deserves some real recognition.

Jeff Bridges wanted to report on two things. They did change E-mail domains that morning so if anyone wanted to stick around after the meeting, IT would be in the conference room and they would help reset their devices. For the new Council members, their iPads were also back there and there would be a training session for them on how to get their information.

Benediction: Pastor Chris Skowronek, of CenterPoint Community Church. Also serves as Chaplain of the Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:00 p.m., Councilor Martino moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Bello . All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council  
December 7, 2015