

Approved
REGULAR MEETING
February 16, 2016

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on February 16, 2016 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; Sally Dastoli, Assistant Superintendent of Board of Education; Kimberly Bobin, Program Coordinator of The Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative; Martha Conneely, Accountability Coordinator of The Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative; Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Councilor Rell.

PRESENTATION: The Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative (WECC) which is a diverse group of community members and local organizations. WECC connects advocates, parents, programs and services for young children. Data drives their work and their objective is to identify areas of focus and getting everyone toward the mutual goal of making children in Wethersfield better off. They track issues and engage partners to take action. WECC is part of ten year initiative called the Discovery Initiative to help towns in Connecticut develop local early childhood infrastructures. They have been funded by the Graustein Memorial Fund, the State of Connecticut, the Town of Wethersfield and the Board of Education.

Here's the link to the slide presentation:

http://prezi.com/hnooie3js-f2/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=ex0share

You will find the narratives to the presentation following the meeting minutes on Page 9.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Robert Young of 20 Coppermill Road commented on the discussion for a collaborative effort to increase more education to the children at even more cost to the town. We have a school system with preschool learning right up to high school and age 21. There is a whole gambit of expenses here that we are currently faced with without adding more. If there are other organizations in town doing some of these things, let them do them. All of this belongs in the school. As a citizen I should not be funding more for other opportunities. On the agenda tonight is an item for town attorney. He would say that the Jackson O'Keefe law firm looks better to him than others. He doesn't know who they are or what their performance is but they look better than the others. Numerous towns are coming out with their grand list dollar amounts or what their increases are. Last year Wethersfield was 1.34%. Are we are doing any better? When will we be hearing that number? It is a big driver to any tax increase. We keep seeing these tax increases to support government here. He has been calling the Governor trying to give him his two cents. He has never taken his calls. By his actions, we continue to see more cuts and slow growth throughout our community. You are always voting on grants. Where do you think all the grant money comes from? It's all borrowed, not out of anybody's taxable revenue.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Martino reported that the Capitol Improvement Advisory Commission has picked the list of projects to be considered next year. They stayed within the \$905,000 budget they were given. They are currently taking their list and preparing it for forwarding it to Planning & Zoning for the annual 8-24 referral. They also prioritized some other projects so that if funds do come available they can add without having to reconvene that group. The Budget and Finance Committee met and considered and interviewed individuals for the town attorney position. Their recommendation is being considered tonight under item B3a on the agenda. The Public Works Infrastructure Committee met. They had discussions regarding the purchasing of street lights, maintaining them ourselves, converting them to LEDs and hiring a contractor to do the job for us which will save us a substantial amount of money. What they voted on was instead of creating a subcommittee, was to have our town staff first go through who are the experts on this to analyze with the three vendors that CCM has recommended and get their input and then come back to the committee for further discussion and presentation to Council. We figured their expertise was more prudent than us committee members trying to do it ourselves. There was supposed to be a Conservation meeting but due to a lack of quorum it did not meet.

Deputy Mayor Barry attended the Building Committee meeting and the project moves toward completion by the end of this calendar year and highlights we do have a matter on the agenda this evening. The projectors were a change order, but the most significantly is the auditorium is scheduled to come online by the end of March. There is a drama play that is being held at Webb in March but when that is finished the auditorium is slated to open which will be used by students and many members of the community which is most exciting.

Councilor Hemmann asked if the committee finalized the FF&E budget.

Deputy Mayor Barry indicated that there was nothing new at the last meeting.

Town Manager Bridges stated that the BOE has an estimate of \$1.2 million for FF&E and they are just locking down that number to make sure that is the number but they should be at or about that number when they are done. That's the estimate so far. But they are getting an estimate from their furniture vendor on the final phase of the construction.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Martino commented that the Board of Education has been having budget workshops the past few Saturdays. They should be having their final one tomorrow night because they plan to get their finalized budget on the agenda for their next meeting. Some of the Councilors have been attending them and plan on attending tomorrow also just to get input on their progress. He also reminded people out there that this Sunday is the annual UNICO pasta dinner. They normally serve about 1,000 people. Their sauce and meatballs are made from scratch with a secret recipe and the fundraiser helps various organizations for the town.

Councilor Hurley stated that the Wethersfield Boys Track team won the Class L State Champions this past weekend. They have the overall State Championship this weekend and four of the boys will be going to Nationals in March. Manager Bridges asked if one of them is Pat Hurley, the councilor's son.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Bridges stated that there have been over 20 different fire calls in the past 24 hours. They have been busy. CO2 alarms, broken pipes, damaged heaters, a lot of those public service calls that you rely on a volunteer fire department to make and keep the community going. They have been busy but they have done a great job and it has been very cold, so if you see them, thank them because they are out there all the time.

TOWN CLERK COMMUNICATION

Town Clerk Sassano reported the flags in front of Town Hall were not lowered as they were frozen in place. The lists of candidates scheduled for the Presidential Preference Primary on April 26th in Connecticut: Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders for the Democrats; Jeb Bush, Ben Carson, Ted Cruz, John Kasich, Marco Rubio and Donald Trump. There will be a ballot lottery for the actual placement on the ballot. It is not too late to register to vote; you have up until April 21st so the registrars are expecting more people to come. MDC sent notices out about the quality of water which you get in your bill once a year; also, some of their bills are mixed up this time. You may have the wrong bill or two bills in your envelope so check carefully.

Deputy Mayor Barry moved to **“ADD TO AGENDA ITEM B3C TO REQUEST A REFERRAL UNDER C.G.S. 8-24 THE LEASING OF 370 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY FOR USE AS THE WETHERSFIELD TRANSITION ACADEMY”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

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

COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Barry moved to **“ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF PHIL KNECHT FROM THE WETHERSFIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITES and FAIR RENT COMMISSION”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

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

Councilor Martino moved to **“ACCEPT THE APPOINTMENT OF ANDREW BRESCIA TO THE COX CABLE TELEVISION ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE TERM 2-16-16 TO 6-30-18”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

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

Councilor Bello moved to **“DISBAND THE FOLLOWING BUILDING COMMITTEES DUE TO COMPLETION OF THEIR PROJECTS EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY: TOWN HALL/LIBRARY BUILDING COMMITTEE; TOWN HALL/LIBRARY BUILDING COMMITTEE II; COMMUNITY CENTER BUILDING COMMITTEE; SILAS DEANE MIDDLE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE; WEBB/STILLMAN/PHYSICAL SERVICES BUILDING COMMITTEE”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

Town Manager Bridges stated that these Building Committees have finished their work and are recommending disbanding them by action of the Council since you all created them, you have to disband them.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Martino moved to **“TO APPOINT THE LAW FIRM OF ROME MCGUIGAN AS TOWN ATTORNEY FOR 2015-2017”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

Town Manager Bridges stated that in accordance with the Charter the town is required to solicit our fees for town attorney services every two years. The firm or the person is selected for a two year term and at the conclusion of that term there is another process to select a town attorney which could be the same one or could be a different one but there is a process required. The process was undertaken starting in December. That process resulted in the solicitation of proposals from seven firms. Those seven firms were narrowed down to two firms which were interviewed and the committee is recommending the appointment or retention of Rome McGuigan for another two year term.

Councilor Martino commented that the committee reviewed and first selected the firms to be interviewed. Based on the firm’s expertise in the multifarious that the town legal needs to be performed, the majority selected Rome McGuigan to be the town attorney.

Councilor Hurley commented that in the Finance Committee meeting they talked about appointing Halloran & Sage as an Assistant Town Attorney. We would have flexibility to use more than one firm if it was in the best interest of the town and we let the town professionals direct the legal dollars to the most efficient services. We have two insurance agents. We have several engineering firms on call.

Councilor Hurley moved to **“TO AMEND TO ALLOW FOR HALLORAN & SAGE AS AN ASSISTANT TOWN ATTORNEY”**, seconded by Councilor Latina.

Mayor Montinieri invited John Bradley to the podium and he stated that he worked on the tax incentive agreement for Ridge Road. As his proposal indicated they have the capability to handle most matters and when conflicts arise they certainly have referred and continue to refer matters to Halloran & Sage the need arises. Back in the 90’s that was when one individual person could handle the legal work of the town and there was one town attorney and there was one individual who was an assistant town attorney. He knows this because he was the assistant town attorney back in the early 90’s and then it went to a system of where a firm generally was the Town Attorney and that is how they have functioned since then.

Vote: After discussion, all Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted. The motion failed 4-5-0. [amendment]

Councilor Martino moved to **“TO APPOINT THE LAW FIRM OF ROME MCGUIGAN AS TOWN ATTORNEY FOR 2015-2017”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry

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

Deputy Mayor Barry moved to **“REQUEST REFERRAL OF THE WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION UNDER C.G.S.§8-24 ON WHETHER THE PAPER STREET KNOWN AS PRINCETON STREET SHOULD BE ACCEPTED BY THE TOWN AS A PUBLIC ROAD”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Town Manager Bridges explained that Princeton Street is what we call a paper street originally designed or platted back in 1915 but never developed or dedicated to the town. There are a series of four lots that are off the main street that would have been fronting on Princeton Street had it been constructed. The owner of those lots would now like to construct those but needs a public road to make that happen. The developer is willing to build a full scale, as required, a public street and develop those lots. Council would have to go back to Planning & Zoning and request that the street be dedicated or accepted as a public street.

Town Attorney Bradley was invited back to the podium to explain that anytime you consider purchasing land, selling land, locating public utilities, accepting roads, it must go first to Planning & Zoning Commission for a report. Princeton Street runs off of Nott Street and many are familiar with the many Ivy League streets like Yale and Harvard. They are on old, old subdivision maps and most of them were built but some of them were not built and Princeton Street is one which was never actually constructed so for the past ten years or so various developers have sought to develop a couple of lots on Princeton Street and they have come up with a plan to build a viable four lot subdivision. So you are not approving any subdivision. You are not accepting any street. You are sending it to Planning & Zoning to consider it as a planning matter and they will then make a recommendation to you. At some point it may come back to the Council to whether you want to accept it as a street. It's a very preliminary step by sending it off to Planning & Zoning for a report. The neighbors have been notified because the developer brought a lawsuit to what they call "quiet title" to say that he has a right to use that old street and that lawsuit is pending. About a year and a half ago a settlement proposal was brought to the Council that was not acted on and is still out there and it seems to be moving in a direction where it could be workable and this is a step that is required along the way.

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

Councilor Martino moved to **"TO REQUEST A REFERRAL UNDER C.G.S. 8-24 THE LEASING OF 370 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY FOR USE AS THE WETHERSFIELD TRANSITION ACADEMY"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

Town Manager Bridges explained that the Superintendent of Schools has asked that the Council refer the use of 370 Silas Deane Highway for use as the Transition Academy to the Planning & Zoning Commission. As the Town Attorney has stated anytime we do these types of thing, we need some kind of report from the Planning & Zoning Commission so we asking to refer it to them for their report.

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

BIDS

Councilor Spinella moved **"TO ACCEPT THE BID FROM GENERAL BUILDERS, LLC FOR \$47,000 FOUNDATION REPAIRS AND \$20.00 PER SQUARE FOOT FOR ADDITIONAL DRYWALL/PLASTER WALL REPAIRS FOR THE SOLOMON WELLS HOUSE"**, seconded by Councilor Bello.

Kathy Bagley was invited to the podium to explain that this work is to do a permanent repair of the foundation on the north side of the Solomon Welles house. A few months ago they did a temporary repair when they noticed that the kitchen floor was sinking a little bit. They brought in a structural engineer to check it out. They had to go in and do a temporary repair and as part of

that you have to do the permanent repair fairly quickly so that is what this piece is about. We did a walk through with 12 vendors and they all had different methods of how to do the repair. The engineer told us that the current foundation was sitting on a wood beam that was notched into the supports of the house and somehow that wood beam twisted and the supports of the house came out of those notches. So when they had to go in to do the temporary shoring they had to dig under that and support the whole thing and the permanent repair will be the digging up of the foundation from the outside of the house doing temporary shoring and jacking it up to get it level and then putting in a concrete foundation.

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

Deputy Mayor Barry moved **“TO APPROVE PROPOSED CHANGE ORDER #546 WITH FERGUSON ELECTRIC IN THE AMOUNT OF \$27,329 FOR DATA CABLING AND POWER SUPPLY FOR CLASSROOM PROJECTORS”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Town Manager Bridges explained that this a change order to do some additional electrical work to accommodate some overhead projectors in the classrooms. The original specifications called for some wireless connections which now that technology just isn't there yet for a wireless connection to move with the speed of a wire connection would, they are going to run some cables and power supplies.

Town Engineer Mike Turner was invited to the podium to explain that the change in the direction that the Board wanted to make in terms of the teaching platform in the 72 classrooms and the original concept was to use smart screen TVs. The swap over was to the short throw projectors which gives more flexibility to the teachers and allows the teachers to sit at their desks using their laptops and project anything and everything onto the board. What this change does is provides power and data drops between the projectors and the teacher stations. The projectors were purchased separately so they are mounted in the classrooms that have been prepared so far. Originally Ferguson had quoted us \$47,000 for this work but the architect and O&G sat down with them and what we are doing now is using unit prices that were set in their original bid to provide the power. The price came down substantially and this was voted on and recommended by the Building Committee at their last meeting. This is for all of the projectors in all of the classrooms what has been completed and what is to come.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION – Public Hearing for 3-1-16 for Resolution in support of CRCOG Regional Performance Incentive Grants.

**Resolution of Support
Capitol Region Council of Governments
Office of Policy and Management Regional Performance Incentive Program**

Whereas Section 4-124s as amended by Section 251 and 253 of Public Act 13-247 passed by the Connecticut General Assembly provides statewide incentive grants to regional planning organizations for projects that involve shared services; and

Whereas the Capitol Region Council of Governments is acting as a convener and facilitator of service sharing projects around the CRCOG region; and

Whereas on November 24th, 2015 and January 27th, 2016 the Policy Board of CRCOG passed resolutions authorizing development and submittal of an application packages to the State Office of Policy and

Management for funding under the Regional Performance Incentive Grant Program, on behalf of the Council's member municipalities, and municipalities of other regions, which are participating in Council initiatives; and

Whereas, the Chief Elected Officials and municipal staff of the Capitol Region have developed a list of service sharing project proposals that will be included in this application package, to the benefit of individual municipalities and the region as a whole; and

Whereas the Town of Wethersfield has expressed an interest in taking part in the project proposal(s) entitled

1. Stop Loss Captive Insurance
2. Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory
3. Code Enforcement Software
4. Call Handling and Response Triage

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved that the Wethersfield Town Council does hereby endorse the above referenced Regional Performance Incentive Program project proposal and authorizes the Town Manager to sign all necessary agreements and take all necessary actions to allow for the Town's participation in this program.

MINUTES

Councilor Bello moved **“TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 1, 2016 WITH THE CORRECTION ON PAGE 3 TO ADD AN E TO THE END OF NORANN ”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

Note: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-1 (Councilor Hemmann was absent).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Robert Young of 20 Coppermill Road commented that your choice of attorney was not the low bidder. Regarding the repairing of the foundation of the Solomon Welles house, he didn't realize they were going to replace it, but thought there would be stones put back underneath there to keep it to the idea that it is a historic house. When you consider the fact that that building as a house, just the building, not historic value or anything like that, is not worth a lot of money. And then to put \$47,000+ plastering and who knows whatever else, it seems like you are throwing a lot of money into something doesn't have a lot of worth as a building. It's not like it's a \$600,000 house. It doesn't seem right. Divesture would save the town a lot of money. There was an article in the paper regarding people who were having some problems with concrete cracking in homes that were 30 and 40 years old. Nobody really knows why the cracks and now you are going to put in concrete. We continue to have hard times here and he urged the Council to do something about the budget and reducing it. We can only pay so much and he thinks we pay much more than what we should have to pay. The entire state lives way beyond its means. He asked to please give a lot of consideration to the tax issues in this town.

Mayor Montinieri responded that the on behalf of all the Councilors. In this budget season that the comments Mr. Young brings up are important topics and challenges for our residents and our state. But every one of the Councilors here will agree that the tax challenge for our town, our budget challenges as they extend into the state are very challenging time for Connecticut. The Mayor believes sincerely that there is not a member of this Council who does not approach these dialogues without sincere interest in our community, our tax payers individually and collectively. He also believes every one of our Councilors understands the choices that they make, as difficult as they are, have impact on the lives of the residents that have put us at this desk. And so while we recognize there is a push pull and many of the topics that Mr. Young talks about weigh on us, it isn't about caring about our residents. It's about deliberating the challenges that we face and have been asked to face. So on behalf of our residents it bears repeating that nobody is approaching the budget dialogue without that in their minds. He knows that this group collectively and individually could not be more sincere about their belief. The time that they are spending in the budget process to get to the absolute best for our community, taking into account all sides and all perspectives. He doesn't mean to be disrespectful to what Mr. Young said, because he listens carefully to his comments but he does take issue with the perception that anyone of them doesn't care because that is absolutely not accurate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:20 p.m., Councilor Spinella moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Martino. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council
March 7, 2016

**Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative
Presentation to Wethersfield Town Council
Early Childhood Investment
February 16, 2016**

Link to Prezi shared at meeting: https://prezi.com/hnooie3js-f2/early-childhood-investment-2/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

Slide 1

Introductions:

Kim Bobin – WECC Program Coordinator

Martha Conneely – WECC Accountability Coordinator

We are here tonight to talk to you about Investing in Early Childhood. We have a brief presentation and will have time for questions at the end.

Slide 2 (Kim)

The Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative or WECC is a diverse group of community members and local organizations. WECC CONNECTS advocates, parents, programs and services for young children.

- Data Drives our work
- Our objective is to identify areas of focus and get everyone working toward the mutual goal of making children in Wethersfield better off.
- We track issues and engage partners to take action

WECC is part of a 10 year initiative called the Discovery Initiative. The purpose of the Discovery initiative was to help towns in Connecticut develop local early childhood infrastructures. Martha will tell you a little more about this. WECC has been funded by the Graustein Memorial Fund, the State of Connecticut and the Town of Wethersfield.

We are here tonight because this 10 year initiative is sun setting and we would like to begin a community conversation about next steps for early childhood in Wethersfield. In the past, the Town and the Board of Education have each contributed \$2500 annually to WECC. We are looking for the Town and the Board to increase their investment in Early Childhood so that Wethersfield children get the start that will allow them to be successful when they enter our school system.

Slide 3 (Kim)

WHY invest in WECC?

This is a time when we are all being asked to do more with less and the needs of our families are becoming greater. The Good News is WECC has created an engaged network of Community Partners.

Our biggest success has been in bringing people together to talk about issues and take action. Before the collaborative, each of these groups operated in silos. WECC has succeeded in engaging these partners to work together so that the collective impact of our work is greater.

Our partners understand the needs of our families support the work and are ready to continue to work collaboratively to ensure that all Wethersfield Children are healthy, ready for school and connected to the community.

Slide 4 (Martha)

As a collaborative the use of Data has sharpened the focus of our work

- Most Council members attended our annual meeting where we took an in depth look at the data, members of public have seen our Community Plan, and we have spent the last year visiting PTOs and community organization spreading the word, so we aren't going in depth on the data picture tonight, but for those of you in the audience who haven't seen our numbers yet, we wanted to take a quick look.
- Investigating local data has highlighted areas of need in our community
- For instance, we have learned about issue with health. For example, data shows us almost 30% of moms in Wethersfield are not receiving adequate prenatal care. This is above state average and out of step with our neighbors
- In terms of School Readiness, we have seen a concerning decline in preschool preparation
- What is very helpful is that the Data allows to look at our community as a whole or to disaggregate the numbers and look at specific groups.
- By example let's take a look at an at risk Population Group by taking a peek at the number of our children who qualify for free and reduced priced lunch – this is an indicator we connect to both health and school readiness
- First we'll look at our community as a whole. The red line represents the state of Connecticut and the blue line is the Town of Wethersfield. While we remain below the state average, you can see the number of children receiving free and reduced lunch has doubled in the past 10 years
- When we Drill down into a specific community – in this case Webb Elementary - we can see a pocket of much greater need. In this graph the red line represent Wethersfield and the blue line represents Webb. As you can see there is a more dramatic turn of the curve for Webb – in that same 10 year period 3 times as many children are receiving free and reduced priced lunch

Slide 5 (Martha)

- The data also allows us to look at our community vs other communities. Let's take a look at how our birth rate compares to one of our neighbors.
- A lot of us have heard the birthrate in Connecticut is declining - about 15% in the last 10 years. On this graph we can see how this is playing out in Glastonbury – they're the orange line. About 100 less babies born in Glastonbury in 2012 than 2005. This the kind of data that plays into Glastonbury's decisions about closing schools
- But that is not the case in Wethersfield - we are the blue line – we've actually seen a slight increase in our birthrate – it's up about 1.6%. We have a stable population of young families in Wethersfield – they're buying our houses, eating in our restaurants, and, of course, going to our schools. As a community we need to think about how we are meeting the needs of our youngest residents.

Slide 6 (Martha)

So what is the vision for how our community can meet these challenges? We

believe we need to develop our Early Childhood Infrastructure

- Typically when we think a town's infrastructure we think of road, sidewalks, buildings
- When it comes to Early Childhood Infrastructure, we're talking about making deliberate choices to create and support a coordinated and strategic system that expands Wethersfield's capacity to meet the needs of young children and their families
- We envision an infrastructure that includes physical plants such as a family resource center, an effort to support and expand high quality early care and preschool slots, a coordinated effort to address the health and well being of very young children through programs such as home visitation and maternal health outreach, and a plan to engage the families of young children and connect them to our community
- We know there's a need – a focused effort to build our infrastructure will allow us to be proactive in meeting it.

Slide 7 (Martha)

BIG QUESTION: Is this worth it?

- Time and time again, research has shown early interventions pay off in terms of both the health and learning success of the child, so I think we can all see the direct benefit to the child and their family.
- We know that investing in early childhood infrastructure will improve our children's health, help them get ready for school, and strengthen their families connection to the community.
- Let's look past that immediate impact to the **wider community** and the more pragmatic point of view of why we believe investment in early education will benefit all Wethersfield taxpayers

Slide 8 –

We'll start by looking at the issue from the point of view of Economic Development

- Whether we are talking about a business looking to set up shop in Wethersfield or families considering the purchase of a home here, the prestige of our local early care system should be both a strong selling point for our community and a source of economic growth.
- High quality early care allows **parents** to hold jobs, work longer hours, and even enhances productivity because of the knowledge that their children are in good hands while they are at work.
- It's good for **businesses** because it leads to a reduction in employee absenteeism and turnover, which increases worker output.
- Finally Early Care and Education is an important **economic sector**, generating jobs and demand for goods and services. Last year this industry generated revenue of \$41.5 billion and employed 873,000 individuals in the United States. The spillover impact of these programs (purchases of goods and services) generated an additional \$42 billion for local economies
- WECC can work with partners to connect the care dots, facilitate family access, and enhance the quality of early care in Wethersfield

Slide 9 – Heckman (Martha)

- **Secondly, research shows that this is an investment that will pay off for our community.** As the council is well aware, a typical K-12 education in Wethersfield costs about \$14,000 per child annually while the education of a child requiring interventions can cost many times that amount.
- Is there a way to avert some of these costs? To answer that question, we look to the research of Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman and what is known as the Heckman Equation.
- Heckman's extensive research in this area has influenced federal and state legislation with support coming from both sides of the aisle

- The basic idea is that the earlier we invest in our children the greater the long term saving.
- A conservative estimate is that \$1 invested in early care saves \$7 in the long run but we have heard upwards of \$20 of long terms saving for each dollar invested
- This cost saving would be broadly shared and benefit entire community

Slide 10 – Communities (Martha)

Finally, developing our local early childhood infrastructure will put us in the right position to take advantage of external community investment.

- As part of our work, our collaborative tracks public and private funding opportunities related to the expansion of Connecticut’s early childhood system and advocates for Wethersfield to be included in appropriate programs
- The message we’ve gotten for our community from both public and private funders is that Infrastructure attracts external investment
- A local commitment to being partners in early childhood investment will help to steer resources and funding our way
- Throughout Connecticut, communities that have built some form of local infrastructure are benefiting from the financial support of state and philanthropic organizations. We are showing examples of just a few of the communities where this has played out, but I’m going to use West Hartford as an example. Though larger than Wethersfield, West Hartford is also an inner ring suburb that has seen a shift in community demographics over the last 10-20 years and has similar patterns of need.
- In the case of West Hartford, I think it is fair to say they have been more proactive in setting up a system to meet this need
- West Harford Schools have supported an Early Childhood Curriculum Specialist, a dynamic family resource center, home visitation programs, school based NAEYC accredited preschool programs, and parent leadership programs. School and private providers share professional development opportunities. Their comprehensive system, took years to create, but their local investment has paid off in the form of state and philanthropic funding to expand and enrich those programs
- Without that infrastructure in place here in Wethersfield, we’re leaving money on the table
- But as I said, Local Investment is the KEY – public and private funders want to see a local commitment before are willing to bring in their resources.

Slide 11 (Kim)

In January we shared this presentation with the Board of Education. We are happy to report that the Board of Education has put funding for WECC into their proposed budget.

We hope that the Town will consider our proposal. We look forward to working with the Town and the Board regarding ways we can build on the work of the past few years to ensure a solid infrastructure to support our youngest children and their families.

Unapproved