

REGULAR MEETING
November 19, 2012

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, November 19, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, McAlister, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console (arrived 7:10), and Chairperson Hemmann.

Also present: Mike Turner, Town Engineer, Nancy Stilwell, Director of Social and Youth Services, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Town Manager Jeff Bridges led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Kotkin reported that there was an Insurance Committee meeting last week and the amount that we have in surplus versus where we expect to be in so far this year is around \$650,000 and explained that that is a combination of just mostly town and school employees having been so healthy and reported that we have received the \$58,000 Part D Medicare subsidy for retirees. He explained that that looks good and it continues to build up and that they are looking at using a large chunk of the already established surplus to fund our Health Care Trust. Councilor Kotkin stated that the other piece is that we may be asking the Council at some point down the road whether we want to pursue an audit of health care claims by town employees and retirees just to ensure that our Anthem Blue Cross is paying them correctly based on the plan, so the Committee is looking at that, but it's not a sure thing that they are going to ask us to approve. Councilor Kotkin mentioned that it would be approximately \$40 or \$50 thousand dollars to do the full audit.

Mayor Hemmann asked if there has been an audit by Anthem in the past?

Councilor Kotkin responded not in the seven or eight years that he has been a liaison. He stated that the question is, if we ultimately bid out the insurance plan and the committee recommends that we switch, then there is no reason to audit somebody in the future who won't be the carrier.

Councilor Drake asked what would be the reason why we do an audit.

Councilor Kotkin responded that it is something that some towns will do just to ensure that we have multiple plans and just to ensure that they are being paid properly and that there is no town money being spent improperly—not saying that anybody would do that on purpose, but we just want to make sure that there is some significant differences in some of our plans, especially with the retirees based on when they retire there are various coverage's and so do we want to make sure that we pay \$10 million a year and it is done properly.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Hemmann read a letter from the Mayor of Nagaya, Japan, our sister city. The Mayor of Nagaya extended a wish of safety and well-being for anyone being caught in Hurricane Sandy's path and looks forward to developing a relationship with the Town of Wethersfield in the future.

Mayor Hemmann announced that the Wethersfield High School Civics students are conducting an Animal Supply Drive, helping the animals of the Human Society, on December 1st and 2nd from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the bus entrance of the Silas Deane Middle School and that they will be collecting donations of cat and dog supplies.

Mayor Hemmann reported that the Deputy Mayor and Councilor Roberts were at the Second Annual Veterans Day Ceremony that was held at the Town Hall and that it was a very nice ceremony with a lot of folks in attendance. She commented that there was a Girl Scout Troop there who made thank you cards for the Veterans who were present and that it was a really nice thing for them to do and was well received by the Veterans in attendance and she thanked everyone who attended.

Deputy Mayor Console reported that he has been receiving many phone calls from the residents on Highland Street at the MDC staging site. He asked if there was another company besides the original company at the staging area at this point. He also was that told truck traffic has increased at least three-fold. It seems the volume of land being used at Keisha Farm has also increased by double and the piles of fill that have to be removed is also in question and asked when is that going to be accomplished. Deputy Mayor Console asked what the timing was when that project will be done or if there are going to continue to use the site once the original projects are completed and asked if Mr. Bridges if he could just check that out. Deputy Mayor Console also asked if the companies up there are bonded and what's going to happen to the Keisha Farm property once the project is done, is it going to go back as a farm or be used in the future as a site staging area?

Councilor Roberts commented that she goes by there all the time and was wondering herself what was going on and also questioned the large mounds of dirt and metal boxes there. It looks like it is expanding.

Mr. Turner explained that the extra dirt is a result of MDC excavation work and constant flow of material (pipes, bedding, support boxes, etc.) is being taken out of the trench and being replaced

with new material. He also stated that VMS Construction is the only contractor that has the permission but they have subcontractors working for them so you will see their trucks in and out of there as well.

Deputy Mayor Console asked Mr. Turner that if he could just check that out, it would be good.

Mayor Hemmann reported that she attended an Eagle Scout Ceremony yesterday for Matt Dugan, Troop 243 and that it is the third ceremony that she attended in the last three years and all of the Eagle Scouts have been from Troop 243 and it is very impressive with the young men that have done all of that work and received the recognition of Eagle Scouts.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bridges commented that all of his comments are included in the Manager's Report this week and he has nothing further.

TOWN CLERK COMMUNICATIONS

Dolores Sassano reported that she received a thank you note from the Pancreatic Cancer Society for the Proclamation that we had done and mailed out to them.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Hurley moved to add an agenda item "**AUTHORIZATION TO AUCTION THE FOLLOWING VEHICLES, THREE FORD DUMPTRUCKS AND TWO CAVELIERS**", seconded by Councilor McAlister.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved "**TO APPOINT JOSEPH AGUIAR, 147 CLOVERCREST ROAD TO THE LIBRARY BOARD FOR THE TERM NOVEMBER 19, 2012 TO JUNE 30, 2014**", seconded by Councilor McAlister.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Hurley moved "**TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE, AMEND AND DELIVER IN THE NAME AND ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD A CONTRACT FOR \$8,878 WITH THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR A SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (SSBG)**", seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Mr. Bridges explained that this grant supports case management services by the Town for elderly residents whose incomes fall at or below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines. He explained that the town uses this to offset the expenses that we have for salary in this Department and added that Dr. Stillwell is here to answer any questions.

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

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE TOWN, BOARD OF EDUCATION, NURSES, AND CLERICAL/PARAPROFESSIONAL/SECRETARIAL UNIONS”**, seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Mr. Bridges explained that consistent with what we have done with the other bargaining units on the town side, we negotiated changes to two of the three unions on the Board of Ed side that are also participating in the town’s Defined Benefit Plan. He stated that the teachers and the administrators are with the State for pension purposes where the other non-classified bargaining units are in our Defined Benefit Pension Plan, so when their contracts were up last year along with the Board of Education negotiating their bargaining agreements, we included proposed changes to the Pension Agreements that mirror what we have done on the town side, the same stoppage for new employees, the same enhanced multiplier for existing employees at 1% increase in the cost of the pension for the employees and so forth. Mr. Bridges stated that both of these for the secretarial and clerical union and nurses union are identical agreements to what we have done for 818, our secretaries, our admin group and so forth.

Councilor Manousos asked what it would take on the Board of Education side to get those contracts in line with the rest of our other negotiations as far as the Defined Benefit Program.

Mr. Bridges responded that there is only one remaining and we are going to talk about it in Executive Session. He added that the only other ones are the teachers and the administrative group which we have to abide by State Statute.

Councilor Manousos stated that the only way to change that is to go to our State delegate and get that changed.

Mr. Bridges commented that we are not funding that pension per say, it is funded at the State level.

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

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE SALE BY AUCTION OF THE FOLLOWING VEHICLES”**, seconded by Councilor McAlister.

- 1996 Ford Dump Truck with 110,789 miles.

- 1996 Ford Dump Truck with 102,350 miles.
- 1995 Ford Dump Truck with 77,691 miles.
- 2002 Chevy Cavalier, salvage, from a motor vehicle accident.
- 2002 Chevy Cavalier, with a rusted A frame, hazardous.

Mr. Bridges explained that this is consistent of what we have done in the past where we auction off fleet vehicles that have lived beyond the useful lives and take those dollars and put them back into the fund that we use to buy new fleet vehicles and stated that that Staff is requesting that these particular vehicles be sent to the auction for disposal.

Councilor Drake asked if the 1995 Ford Dump Truck with 77,691 miles is just not used or is it shot at 77,691 miles?

Mr. Bridges responded that it is shot at 77,691 miles and that we wouldn't be sending them out if we couldn't use them.

Deputy Mayor Console requested a list of the dollars that we get back once they are auctioned off.

Mr. Bridges responded yes.

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

BIDS

Deputy Mayor Console moved to **“TO AWARD A CHANGE ORDER TO QUISENBERRY ARCARI ARCHITECTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ 43,750 FOR ENERGY MODELING, SECURITY SYSTEM DESIGN, AND CULINARY KITCHEN DESIGN SERVICES RELATED TO THE HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION PROJECT, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUILDING COMMITTEE”**, seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Mr. Bridges explained that the Building Committee is looking at three additional projects as part of the high school renovation. He explained that one is the security consultant that will actually design the security system for the new building, the next is the enhanced culinary curriculum kitchen, they have made a decision that the school has to enhance their culinary program from a mere home economics perspective to a more culinary professional kitchen perspective and this contract would design that system in collaboration with the curriculum. Mr. Bridges explained that the third project is an energy project from CL&P which, when the review is done, those benefits would be rolled into the project as energy grants. He added that Mike Turner and the Chair of the Building Committee is here this evening if anyone has any questions.

Deputy Mayor Console requested a listing of all additional costs as the project goes on. He also asked why these costs weren't added in the original budget.

Mr. Bridges responded that these elements were in the original budget, the difference was we could either have contracted them directly ourselves or the Architect could contract them directly themselves. He stated that the Building Committee decided that the Architect for consistency purposes with design would take that on as a subcontract to them and it would be part of their project, so these costs were included in the original project but they weren't part of the original Architect's contract, we could have done it separately with a separate consultant.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if there were others that will be coming up as we move forward with the High School Project.

Mr. Turner responded that we have contracted with ourselves for the surveyor, the soil borings, the geotech work for the geothermal well. Those were identified as costs that the owner would typically do along with the Enviromed Firm with the asbestos and PCB testing, those are typically outside the Architect's services. Looking forward there will be things like special inspections, peer reviews, material testing during construction those are not services that are offered by the Architect, those are things that the Town will take care of and they are all budgeted items.

Mr. Bridges added that the culinary piece is a new item.

Deputy Mayor Console confirmed that the \$12,750 is a new item.

Mr. Bridges responded that it is a new item.

Mr. Turner added that it is a program change.

Mr. McAlister asked that anytime in the future when we get a request to Council to approve something for this Board of Ed building project, if we can get a clear summary of where they are to date and the actual spend, where they were to date with the budgeted spend and how this changes the budget. Like this one, it would have said impact to budge \$12,750, so we get sort of a running guide as to where they're at and what their end budget looks like. This way it doesn't just start slipping out and if we consistently see that they're on budget as we approve these things, it might give the Council a good feeling rather than an uneasy feeling.

Mr. Bridges stated that starting next month you will be receiving a monthly budget.

Mr. Manousos stated that one of the concerns is that not that we're over budget it's that we are pulling it from contingencies so early in the process and that's where we'll have to make sure we keep an eye on.

Mr. Bridges commented that this is design contingency, it's not construction contingency.

Mr. Turner responded that this money is actually set aside in the construction budget anticipating that there will be changes to the design as the Manager pointed out, that our outside Architect's scope of services Construction Manager has a construction contingency line but also a design contingency and I think in this case here we have about \$574,000 of design contingency. Once we reach the construction stage that will all get lumped together into one big contingency for construction.

Deputy Mayor Console asked that with the State possibly being in the hole \$1.3 billion dollars at the end of the year and going forward would that have any effect on the percentage that we are getting from the State as the match program?

Mr. Bridges replied that we have not heard of any statutory proposal to change those reimbursement rates.

Mr. Turner stated that we are in the queue and we are set to meet with the Architectural Staff, the Review Staff in March of next year for them to bless our plan. We won't know until the legislature passes the budget next July.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if we have a contingency plan going forward if those numbers change from the State.

Mr. Bridges replied that we won't bid anything until the spring, so if there is trouble on the horizon, we'll know about it before we get to the bid phase.

Deputy Mayor Console commented with our budgets coming up it's not going to be long and we'll be budgeting for it, we should have a real good head start to see and have a plan in place months ahead of time.

Mr. Bridges stated that we are not anticipating any budgetary impacts from this project in next year's budget.

Mr. McAlister asked if the State does decide that they are going to keep it as is right now and we get the check mark, can they change their mind a year or two years down the road or once you go through the queue and you get reviewed and approved, you are locked in and you are grandfathered in no matter what they change.

Mr. Turner responded that they make a grant commitment.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-1. Councilor Kotkin abstained.

Mr. Manousos asked Mr. Turner if he was still involved in the meetings regarding the Rte. 3 corridor that DOT was reviewing. He asked if it was a good time to look at the intersection at Elm Street coming off of Rte. 3 to see if there us anything that can be done to help that pathway onto Elm coming from over the river?

Mr. Turner responded that it is outside the scope of work and that corridor study was basically in Rocky Hill at the intersections with Brook Street and New Britain Avenue was the northerly end going towards Wethersfield and that's why we were involved, whether or not they would make improvements that would encourage traffic to Wethersfield or divert everybody westbound down New Britain Ave. With something like that we would have to request PROG to do a separate corridor study of something like that.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

None.

MINUTES

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO APPROVE THE AMENDED SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 15, 2012”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 6-0-3.

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 8, 2012”**, seconded by Councilor McAlister.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

James Clynch, 903 Ridge Rd., asked why Wilkus Farms was not brought up at this meeting and why the Town Manager's report was not accessible on the site as it usually is.

Mr. Bridges replied that they will put it up and that it should be there.

Mayor Hemmann replied that they will look to get the Wilkus Farm discussion on the next meeting agenda.

At 7:35, Councilor Kotkin moved to **“GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION”**, seconded by Councilor McAlister.

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

At 8:01, Councilor McAlister moved to “**LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION**”, seconded by Councilor Roberts.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:02, Councilor Kotkin moved to “**ADJOURN THE MEETING**”, seconded by Councilor Montinieri.

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 17, 2012