

Unapproved  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 16, 2010**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Tuesday, February 16, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

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

Absent: Chairperson Hemmann

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Drake led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, took attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, said that he is complaining about his taxes again. He worked for a private company and the pay was better than the public sector but the benefits were not as good. Now the public sector pay is 20 percent higher than the private sector and the benefits are better. It is because of the unions. In government no one takes advantage of the employees so there is no place for unions. He has friends that teach in private schools that would like to teach in public schools because the pay is better. Too much money is spent on education. The taxes keep going up in Town. The Town Council needs to think about making tough decisions during these tough times.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Hurley said that the Youth Advisory Board met and discussed its annual Volunteer Recognition Night that will be held on April 29<sup>th</sup>. He hopes that Councilors will be able to attend. He said that the Social Services Food Pantry is doing well with food items but needs toiletries.

Councilor Manousos said that the Economic Development Improvement Commission (EDIC) met last week. The Shop Local Program was renamed Wethersfield Shops Local. The EDIC is creating a subcommittee to look at economic development ideas to brainstorm for the attraction and retention of business. The Budget and Finance Committee met and discussed the re-funding plan of bonds, the appointment of the Town Attorney, and the Physical Services union contract.

Councilor Drake said that he attended the Library Board meeting on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Library Board is working on its budget and will come in with a zero budget. They are doing a good job. The Capital Improvement Advisory Committee has met and is finalizing its project list. It will

come to the Town Council at an upcoming meeting. It includes road work projects, Morrison Avenue project, part of the Library self-check project, and firehouse repairs. The Infrastructure Committee has held meetings with Morrison Avenue residents. Nine different scenarios were discussed and the Committee is close to getting one scenario completed.

Councilor Roberts said that she attended the Green Summit III meeting. There was a great presentation and the room was full. She thanked former Councilor Forrest and the Citizen's Energy Committee for their hard work.

### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Hurley said that no Town funds are given to the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee. He said that he is co-chairperson of the Wethersfield St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee along with Maria Sullivan. The Committee had one very successful fundraiser and is having another fundraiser on February 25<sup>th</sup> at Lucky Lou's. The Parade will be Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. He hoped Councilors would march.

Councilor Kotkin said that he called Direct Energy yesterday. It took five minutes to switch over his electrical provider. He said that he will receive a savings for the first 12 months. He thanked the Town Clerk for providing information that is public, on the Board of Ethics. He said that he would like to have an updated list of committee and commission liaison position assignments. He said that he is bringing this up because there used to be a liaison to the Technology Committee and it would be important to have that position filled during talks with the Board of Education about combining functions.

Deputy Mayor Console said that he attended a Board of Education meeting last week and was very impressed by the youth who spoke. The students were very well versed. He mentioned the following upcoming events:

- Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Wethersfield Office of Hartford Medical Group will be February 24, 2010 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at its facility at 1025 Silas Deane Highway.
- The next Business After Hours will be held on Thursday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at the CT Trust Counsel, LLC.
- The EDIC will be hosting the next "Shop Local Program Workshop" on February 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m. in the Town Council Chambers.
- The Friend's of the Nature Center will be holding its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Dance on Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 to 11:30 at the Community Center.
- The Public Works Committee will be meeting on Wednesday and the Shared Services Committee will meet on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Drake moved **“TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATIONS OF RICHARD B. LASHER AS A FENCE VIEWER AND CHRISTOPHER GILLETTE FROM THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Deputy Mayor Console asked that the Town Manager send thank you letters to the individuals.

All Councilors present vote AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

### **TOWN ATTORNEY APPOINTMENT**

Councilor Manousos said that the Budget and Finance Committee met and reviewed the seven Town Attorney proposals. The Committee narrowed the selection down to three. In the past this was a political appointment. The Committee tried hard not to make it that this time. After the bids were received the Committee narrowed it down to three based on qualifications and pricing. The three firms were interviewed and then the Committee asked the firms to go back and sharpen their pencils. They all did, some more than others. At the end of the day the Committee came to the conclusion to award the contract to Halloran and Sage.

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO APPOINT HALLORAN AND SAGE AS THE TOWN ATTORNEY FOR THE TERM FROM FEBRUARY 16, 2010 TO DECEMBER 19, 2011”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, said that the term of appointment should end on December 15, 2011, the December of the Town Council election year.

Councilor Manousos said that some of the open cases will remain with Rome McGuigan. The Town Manager will work on determining what files will be moved to Halloran and Sage.

Councilor Roberts asked if the Town received the second proposals in writing.

Councilor Manousos said that the Committee asked the Town Manager to call the three firms and he received the information verbally.

Councilor Montinieri said that he appreciated the process and appreciated the work of Rome McGuigan and especially Jack Bradley. He said that he is disappointed that the firm is not being retained. It has saved the Town significant money over the years. He is concerned that the new fees are not in writing and he urges the Town Manager to get them in writing so there are no misunderstandings. He said with a change in the leadership, he has no problem with party alliances being paid. He thanked Jack Bradley for all the work he has done for the Town and wanted to express his concerns.

Councilor Manousos said that the selection process was transparent. It is a great idea to have the fees in writing for the files. But the idea that this process was anything nearly close to a political decision is disingenuous and a little insulting. The Committee went through the process, it was a clear process. Councilor Kotkin was involved in the process and is a member of the minority.

Councilor Montinieri said that he doesn't have an issue with that if there was any consideration given.

Councilor Manousos said that there was no consideration given. The Town Councilors were elected because residents think they are paying too much in taxes. Everything the Town Council does is to get the lowest price assuming the firm/contractor is qualified. He said that maybe if tougher decisions were made in the past, the Town wouldn't be where it is now.

Councilor Drake said that the process was real clear. No decision was made based on politics.

Councilor Roberts said that the last time the Charter was revised a request for payment was added to the Charter for the Town Attorney. It has been in practice for many selection cycles. She said that she doesn't know why anyone is hung up on politics. The RFP was added to the Charter to take the politics out of the Town Attorney selection process.

Deputy Mayor Console asked the Town Manager if there is a price list in place.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that there is a price list in place and the Town will get an engagement letter.

Deputy Mayor Console said that Jack Bradley will be finishing up on many issues and will continue to work for the Town for awhile.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

### BIDS

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AWARD A CONTRACT TO MONACO FORD FOR THE PURCHASE OF FOUR POLICE VEHICLES AT A PRICE OF \$22,555 EACH”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Town is getting the cruisers for \$300 less than the State bid. Should the Town ask other Ford dealers for bids? He asked if the Town Manager was confident that this price is the best price the Town can receive.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that Town staff is comfortable with the Monaco Ford bid. Monaco Ford repairs Town vehicles. The bid is below the State bid price.

Councilor Manousos said that the contract price, \$90,220 is under the budgeted amount of \$97,952 by about 8-10 percent.

Councilor Hurley asked if the turnover of the police cruisers was similar to the practice of other Towns.

Jim Cetran, Police Chief, said that Towns have different turnover schedules and it depends on where the cars are put in service originally. If the cruisers are put in the patrol division, they come off the line much sooner. Rocky Hill Police Department has a lot more vehicles than Wethersfield so the vehicles last longer. Wethersfield has less cars, they are driven more, and don't last as long. They are retained for five years. The rotation works well for the town. Keeping the number of vehicles down saves all around, like repairs and insurance.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the equipment set up on the cars was included in the original price.

Jim Cetran, Police Chief, said that this was separated out in the Physical Services budget. It is in the budget. The cost is about \$16,000 for the four cars. The money has been budgeted.

Councilor Kotkin said that he heard that Ford is discontinuing the Crown Victoria. He asked what the Town will do for cruisers when that happens.

Jim Cetran, Police Chief, said that he doesn't know what the Town will do. He hopes that Ford will reconsider its decision to discontinue the Crown Victoria in 2011. He said that there are other options for police cruisers but the Town has a lot of parts, too.

Deputy Mayor Console said that he had asked the Police Chief for details about the rotation schedule and did some of his own research. It makes sense.

Councilor Roberts said that by starting the cruisers in the detective division the Town will get at least a year out of the vehicles. It is the same allocation system used in other Towns.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

#### ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that staff is asking that the first resolution not be introduced tonight. More information is needed to proceed.

Councilor Roberts moved **“TO TABLE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RESOLUTION AMENDING TOWN BUDGET TO ACCOUNT FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION’S**

**RECEIPT OF STATE FISCAL STABILIZATION FUNDS"** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that a public hearing will be set for the following resolution.

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING AN APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT FOR A SMALL CITIES DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT OF \$700,000 FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO WETHERSFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY**

WHEREAS, federal monies are available under the Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, 42 U.S.C § 5301, et. seq., as amended, also known as Public Law 93-383, and administered by the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic and Community Development as the Connecticut Small Cities Development Block Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 127c, and Part VI of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Commissioner of the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development is authorized disburse such federal monies to local municipalities; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable and in the public interest that the Town of Wethersfield make an application to the State for \$700,000 in order to undertake and carryout a Small Cities Community Development Program and to execute an Assistance Agreement;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for the state financial assistance in accordance with Part VI of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statutes, that the Town Manager is hereby directed to execute and file an application with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development for a Small Cities Community Development Program grant of \$700,000; to execute an assistance agreement if so awarded; to carry out approved activities and to act as the Town's representative.

MINUTES

Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 26, 2010"** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present voted AYE. Councilor Hurley abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 1, 2010"** seconded by Councilor Drake.

Councilor Manousos asked that "2 percent/10 day discount option" be added to his comments on page 19 during the discussion about the bid.

All Councilors present voted AYE. Councilor McAlister abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

Unapproved

*February 16, 2010 Notes*

*Page 7*

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 7:40 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS REAL ESTATE NEGOTIATIONS”** seconded by Councilor McAlister. All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0. Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, was present. No motions were made and no votes were taken during executive session.

At 8:09 p.m., Councilor Hurley moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION”** seconded by Councilor McAlister. All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Drake moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN THE SECOND AMENDMENT TO PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT AND FIRST AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENT OF SALE FOR THE WILKUS PROPERTY”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Councilors Drake, Kotkin, Hurley, Manousos, Roberts and Montinieri voted AYE. Councilor McAlister and Deputy Mayor Console vote NAY. The motion passed 6-2-0.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:10 p.m., Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO ADJOURN THE MEETING”** seconded by Councilor Hurley. All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk