

**REGULAR MEETING
MAY 3, 2010**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, May 3, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann.

Absent: Councilor McAlister

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager; RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager; Mike Turner, Director of Public Works; Peter Gillespie, Town Planner; Lisa Hancock, Finance Director; and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Kotkin led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

PROCLAMATIONS

ELKS NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK – WETHERSFIELD-ROCKY HILL ELKS LODGE #2308

Chairperson Hemmann presented the Exalted Ruler Rick Martin with a proclamation for Elks National Youth Week.

ARBOR DAY

Chairperson Hemmann read into the record the proclamation for Arbor Day. She said that Arbor Day was celebrated on Saturday, April 24th with a tree planting ceremony at the Solomon Wells House.

SALUTE TO SENIORS

Chairperson Hemmann presented Silas Deane Middle School students proclamations for their winning essays on their important seniors.

Loretta Skowronek, Chairperson of the Intergenerational Committee, thanked the Mayor and Town Council for honoring the students. She said that it is the 18th annual Salute to Seniors Week. Every Middle School student wrote an essay about a senior citizen that is important to them. A group of senior citizens choose the five finalists that are here tonight.

The following students read their essays:

Haley Bresnahan special person Noranne Wamester
Maddy Fulton special person Grandmother Shirley Jane Fulton
Jessica Thibeault special person Grandfather Claude Thibeault
Gina Cornelio special person Grandfather William Strada

Julia Harris special person Grandfather Brian McCartney

Loretta Skowronek said that there will be many events held the third week of May. Grandparents will be having breakfast with students as one of the events. She thanked the Town Council again for the presentation.

Chairperson Hemmann said that she always looks forward to listening to the essay winners.

Councilor Roberts said that as a grandparent she knows what a special treat it is to have grandchildren. It brings a new perspective to life. This year's group of finalists wrote very interesting and poignant essays.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, presented the following report:

RECENT APPROVALS

- On April 6 the PZC approved plans submitted by Sandy Byrnes to open a yoga studio River Rock Yoga and Wellness Studio for the former Mainly Tea space on Main Street.
- The former Spicy Green Bean deli on Main Street is under new ownership and has reopened as the Cove Deli.
- The former Brookside Bagels By the Cove on Main Street will soon reopen under new ownership as Aroma Bistro.
- The former Red Onion on Main Street will reopen shortly as the Main Street Grill.

DEVELOPER/PROPERTY OWNER/REALTOR CONTACT

- Preliminary plans have been submitted to the PZC by a developer interested in developing property on the Berlin Turnpike for a 150 unit apartment complex to be named Collier Place. An application to modify the multifamily zoning regulations has been filed and will be heard again by the PZC on May 4.
- An application has been approved by the new owner of former Ritz Camera building – 526 Silas Deane Highway for a façade improvement loan for this property.
- A façade improvement application has been approved by the owner of the property at 318 Silas Deane Highway and the building that houses Hair Innovators Beauty Salon.
- Met several times this past month with an interested buyer of the former FunZone building and compiled information for them as they perform their due diligence.
- Plans have been filed with the ZBA for an expansion to the building at 334 Silas Deane Highway to accommodate a new business space.

- Staff met with interested parties for the reuse of the former **North East Utilities** space on Cumberland Avenue.

OTHER NEWS AND INITIATIVES

Economic Development and Improvement Commission

- **Wethersfield Shops Local** program. We are now in the midst of recruiting businesses to register for the program. To date we have exceeded our initial goals and have signed up over 40 businesses, the first monthly gift certificate drawing will be held in May and a series of webpages that summarize the program have been set up. The Committee elected Vincent Fabi – Fabi of Rome as the Chair and Edith Boisvert of EB Gallery as Vice Chair.

Tourism/ Preserve America

- Preliminary design concepts have been submitted and are being reviewed for the wayfinding signage program. Final design specifications are on hold pending an upcoming meeting with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.
- In partnership with the Wethersfield Historical Society we have developed an ad for placement in newspaper inserts in the NY/NJ and Connecticut Metro area during the spring and summer of this year. Contracted with Madden Media for ad placement. This opportunity is made possible through a grant from the State Commission on Culture and Tourism in the amount of \$10,402 to assist us with an advertising campaign that will promote Historic Wethersfield
- In partnership with the Wethersfield Historical Society and through a grant from the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism we have retained the **Pita Group** to evaluate our marketing efforts in order to determine opportunities to more cooperatively market programs and events with our other partners such as the Shopkeepers, the Historical Society, the Webb Deane Stevens Museum and others. A workshop was held in April and additional interviews are being scheduled over the next few weeks.

Redevelopment Agency

- Continuing to look at development opportunities throughout the community. Meeting was held with property owner on Berlin Turnpike to discuss potential interest in partnerships.
- The agency is in receipt of a proposal from Bartram and Cochran to explore the redevelopment potential of a cluster of properties surrounding and including **1000 Silas Deane Highway** the former Foodways/Weight Watchers building. The agency will be meeting with the property owners prior to presenting this proposal to the Council.

Councilor Manousos asked for more information about the annual Chamber of Commerce meeting and awards night.

Peter Gillespie said that tickets are needed. It is being held at the Wethersfield Country Club. There is still time to sign up.

Chairperson Hemmann said that the tickets are \$55 per person. The reception begins at 5:30 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO ADD TWO ITEMS TO THE AGENDA ITEM B.3.D. – NEW INVESTMENT ACCOUNT WITH NEW ALLIANCE BANK AND EXECUTIVE**

SESSION AT THE END OF THE MEETING TO DISCUSS A LEASE AGREEMENT”
seconded by Councilor Hurley.

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

FEMA PRESENTATION

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the revised FEMA flood maps. (*attached*)

Councilor Montinieri asked if there was a time frame when the change occurred on the maps when residents would have been able to get financial restitution for their payments for flood insurance.

Mike Turner said that the revised flood maps were received in July 2008 and had to be adopted by September. Residents could have purchased flood insurance at those rates and would have them locked in.

Councilor Montinieri said that he doesn't think residents understood the implication of the time period that they were in.

Mike Turner said that he does not think that FEMA publicized the changes well.

Councilor Montinieri said that he though Mr. Miller discussed a time period after these current changes were made.

Mike Turner said that he was not aware of any time period with these revisions. The maps were just given to the Town, there wasn't an adoption.

Councilor Montinieri said that mortgage lenders were notified by FEMA if a home was put into a flood plain. The homeowner had 60 days to purchase flood insurance or it was provided to them by the mortgage company. This is very expensive insurance. If FEMA now says the maps were challenged and the home is not in a flood plain then FEMA should reimburse homeowners for their flood insurance costs for the past two years. This is a significant hit to homeowners. The Town should look into assisting these homeowners.

Mike Turner said that the revised maps are very accurate and much easier to read. He said that there are about 40 houses that were added to the flood plain in 2008 that are now out of the flood plain.

Councilor Montinieri said that FEMA should reimburse the flood insurance and surveyors' costs.

Deputy Mayor Console said that he too remembers Mr. Miller mentioning a 30 day window with the maps. He asked that someone look into it.

Councilor Roberts thanked Mr. Turner for his PowerPoint presentation, saying the visuals were helpful.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Larry Spellacy, 215 Pine Lane, Chairperson of the Memorial Day Parade Committee, said that the Memorial Day Parade will be on Saturday, May 29th at 9:00 a.m. starting at the Department of Motor Vehicles and winding its way through Old Wethersfield and ending at the Village Cemetery with a ceremony. He said that George Wallace and Dominick Console will be Parade Marshalls. Jim Clynych will be the speaker. The Roll of Honor will be read at the cemetery. A Silas Deane Middle School student will read an essay, there will be a Salute to the Dead, the playing of taps, a Benediction by Deacon Seth English and the release of five white doves. He thanked the Town Council for funding the parade.

Councilor Roberts thanked Mr. Spellacy for all his work on the Committee. She said that the parade is always a lot of fun but the ceremony is a very important aspect of the day.

Woody Warren, 9 Nutmeg Circle, said that he was impressed by the Salute to Seniors presentation. He said that the Town Council should listen to the residents, focus on particular situations, and stop bickering between officials. Officials need to be a cohesive group. He said that he use to receive written responses to his written questions but he doesn't anymore. He would like the Town to start responding again.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Manousos said that the Budget and Finance Committee has been meeting with Departments and discussing the budget. The meetings have been very productive.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Tourism Commission met and is working jointly with websites as mentioned in the Economic Development report. The Farmers Market will be opening in another month. The Insurance Committee met and interviewed candidates. There were 12 for the health insurance and 6 for property and casualty. The Committee will continue to work over the next few weeks.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Hurley said that he attended the Youth and Senior Recognition Night. It was a great night and spoke to the tremendous number of volunteers in Town.

Chairperson Hemmann said that the Shade Tree Commission met on April 12th and planted trees at the Broad Street Green using funds from a grant. She attended the Pension Committee meeting tonight.

Councilor Manousos said that he met with the Wethersfield Concerned Parents Group at the library and discussed their concerns with the budget. He said that the EDIC met and feels there is a sense of an anti-business climate with the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Town Council needs to address it and may be able to as terms are expiring on that commission in June.

Councilor Hurley said that he met with Old Wethersfield residents on April 21st to discuss retail development, signage and communication, and events. It was very well attended. People were concerned with the business unfriendly environment in Old Wethersfield. He said that he is taking the lead to set up a meeting at the end of May to discuss what the Town Council can do to make the Town more business friendly.

Councilor Kotkin said that one of the Budget and Finance Committee meetings was with the Board of Education. The Acting Superintendent of Schools presented a different budget that was \$500,000 less than the one that was presented at the Budget Hearing. If residents want to see this budget, they should contact the Superintendent of Schools or Town Manager.

Chairperson Hemmann said that she attended the Arbor Day celebration on April 24th at the Solomon Wells House. She also attended the Central Connecticut Health District recognition night. Its theme was "Celebrate People in Action" She said that the Town couldn't get along without all the volunteers. This is a strong community of volunteers. The Town Council appreciates all that the volunteers do for the Town.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the next Budget and Finance Committee meeting will be on May 6th and the budget adoption will be on May 10th.

There was a discussion on what time the meeting should be held. It was decided that the meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. on May 6th.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Hurley moved **"TO APPOINT MARK A CONSOLE, 695 WELLS ROAD, AS AN ALTERNATE ON THE INLAND WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES COMMISSION FOR A TERM ENDING JUNE 30, 2010 TO FILL A VACANCY"** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Deputy Mayor Console abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT, IF AWARDED, A GRANT FOR THE WETHERSFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY FROM THE HARTFORD FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC GIVING”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the Library Director is requesting authorization to apply for and accept a \$30,000 grant for technology from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

Laurel Goodgion, Library Director, said that this will be a nice combination with the money that is already allocated for the RFID system.

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

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT, IF AWARDED, A UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICE FOR DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANTS FOR FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said the United States Department of Homeland Security announced the 2010 competitive assistance to Firefighter’s Grant Program. The application is for bunker gear and a new thermal imaging camera. Much of the firefighter’s bunker gear is coming to the end of its life cycle and the thermal imaging cameras are also very old. There is a ten percent cost share or match which will be covered by the items in the budget.

Councilor Roberts asked how many sets this would cover.

Jeff Bridges said that each set of 10 costs \$25,000.

Councilor Drake asked if the Town is typically successful with obtaining these grants.

Chuck Flynn, Fire Chief, said that the Town is competing with 77,000 other companies nationwide. Five years ago the Town was successful in winning a large grant. It is less successful on winning the smaller grants. If the Town is awarded this grant, it will probably not receive the money until the end of the year.

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

BIDS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AWARD THE TOWN’S PROPERTY/LIABILITY AND WORKER’S COMPENSATION COVERAGE TO CIRMA”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that Greg Bedula of TD Bank North, the Town’s Agent of Record for Property/Casualty Insurances, presented a proposal for property/liability and workers compensation insurances from the Town’s current provider, CIRMA. This proposal is a 3 year price lock, which can be cancelled by the Town after one year, with a 5 percent reduction in the cost of the coverage. The Insurance Committee met and voted to recommend CIRMA.

Councilor Manousos asked that Mr. Bedula give the Town Council an idea on why the Town didn’t go with the Travelers.

Greg Bedula said that every 3 years the Town goes out to bid for its commercial insurances. CIRMA gave the Town a rate lock with a 3 year commitment by the Town. The Town can break away from CIRMA at any time but it will negate the rate lock. Traditionally, municipalities have difficulty getting insurance so CIRMA was created as a quasi-governmental agency for stability. The Travelers is working to put together a product with all coverages. It may be something to look at in the future. He thinks the Town should wait and see if the Travelers has the long-term commitment.

Councilor Kotkin said that the 5 percent reduction is great but asked if the Town went out to bid would it do any better. He said that based on recent history, the Town doesn’t look very attractive to insurers.

Greg Bedula said that he agrees. The worker’s compensation on the Board of Education side and property loss on both the Town and Board of Education sides have not been great. This is a borderline account for CIRMA in terms of profitability.

Councilor Kotkin said that for that reason, it makes sense for the Town to go with CIRMA. He said that the Town isn’t in the position to go to CIRMA and ask for further reductions.

In response to Councilor Drake’s questions, Greg Bedula said that the chart in the handouts shows the CIRMA 5 percent reduction in premium but includes the Town’s exposure so the numbers are actually better than 5 percent reduction.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN TREASURER, TOWN MANAGER, AND FINANCE DIRECTOR TO ESTABLISH ACCOUNTS PURSUANT TO THE LIMITATIONS SET FORTH IN THE CT STATE STATUTES 7-400 THROUGH 7-403 WITH NEW ALLIANCE BANK”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the Town Treasurer, by Charter, has the authority to invest funds in banks based on certain criteria. The Town Council has to approve which banks can be used. The Finance staff is asking for the approval to establish accounts at the New Alliance Bank.

Councilor Drake asked where else the Town could open an account.

Jeff Bridges said that the Town went out to bid on this and this was the best bid.

Councilor Drake said that 1.5 percent did not sound great.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director, said that several bids were received ranging from .1 percent to .6 percent. This bid is limited to the investment of \$1,000,000 to receive the 1.5 percent interest rate.

Councilor Montinieri asked if banks only insured up to \$250,000.

Lisa Hancock said that there is a temporary allowance through the Federal government recovery act for coverage up to \$250,000. Pursuant to State Statute the Town has other protections, too.

Councilor Montinieri asked how the Town collateralizes the other \$750,000.

Lisa Hancock said that most of the other money is in FDIC funds. The documents show where the other deposits have been made. New Alliance Bank has to have 10 percent of its funds collateralized. It has \$86,000,000 in deposits with \$8,600,000 collateralized. She said that she also looks at the banks rating, stability, and liquidity.

Councilor Drake asked where this money is now.

Lisa Hancock said that it is diversified with State trust funds, in other banks, and in other liquid investments.

Councilor Manousos asked if the Town was limited to the number of bank accounts it opened. He asked if the \$1,000,000 could be split into 4 accounts.

Lisa Hancock said that the Town's financial policies say that the Town must be diversified. More than one account could be opened there. She said that she believes that to receive the 1.5 percent interest the certificate of deposit must be for \$1,000,000. She will go back and check the rate. State Statute limits were a municipality can invest funds. The Town's investment policy further restricts it.

Councilor Kotkin said that he doesn't remember approving investment before.

Lisa Hancock said that the Town needs to have the Town Council add a new financial institution to its portfolio. This motion gives the Town approval to work with this bank.

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

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AWARD THE BID FOR POOL CHEMICALS TO H. KREVIT AND COMPANY AND SAVOL OF EAST HARTFORD FOR A COMBINED TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED \$30,516”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the current year’s Park and Recreation budget includes \$30,516 for pool chemicals. To achieve the best possible price the Department is utilizing the Capital Region Council of Government’s regional bid. They are requesting that the two lowest bidders be award the bid. They are H. Krevit and Company and Savol of East Hartford.

Councilor Manousos asked if the supplies are purchased in bulk or bought as they are needed.

Jeff Bridges said that they are bought as needed through this CRCOG bid.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

MINUTES

Councilor Roberts moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 5, 2010”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilors Montinieri and Kotkin abstained. The motion passed 6-0-2.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 12, 2010”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2010 AS AMENDED ”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Councilor Kotkin asked for changes on page 3, 4 and 8 of the minutes.

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

Councilor Roberts moved **“TO TABLE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 15, 2010”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 19, 2010 AS AMENDED”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Chairperson Hemmann said that a revised first page was given to Town Councilors.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, said that the revision includes the addition of some Board of Education members that were left off the original set of minutes.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:10 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS A LEASE AGREEMENT AND TO INVITE TOWN ATTORNEY DUNCAN FORSYTHE TO ATTEND”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin. All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0. Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Duncan Forsythe, Town Attorney were present. No motions were made and no votes were taken during executive session.

At 9:41 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION”** seconded by Councilor Roberts. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:42 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO ADJOURN THE MEETING”** seconded by Councilor Roberts. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

*Approved by vote of Council
May 17, 2010*