

Unapproved  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**DECEMBER 21, 2009**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, December 21, 2009 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, and Chairperson Hemmann.

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

**PROCLAMATION – PITKIN COMMUNITY CENTER EMPLOYEES**

Chairperson Hemmann presented Mary Thibeault, Donna Mattison, and Natalie Morrison with a certificate of recognition for the way they handled a health emergency at the Community Center on November 19, 2009.

Mary Thibeault, Recreation Supervisor, thanked the Town for providing the training on the AED and the Keane Foundation for purchasing it.

**ELLA T. GRASSO LODGE #2528 “ORDER SONS OF ITALY IN AMERICA”  
PRESENTATION OF \$300 TO THE FOOD BANK**

J. P. Langlois, on behalf of the Grasso Lodge #2528, presented a check for \$300 to the food bank.

Nancy Stilwell, Director of Social and Youth Services, thanked the Lodge for its gift and said that the Social and Youth Services Department is very busy this time of year and she is pleased that no one in need has been turned away.

**RICHARD B. LASHER – HONORARY MAYOR OF GRISWOLDVILLE – HOLIDAY  
GREETINGS**

Richard Lasher, Honorary Mayor of Griswoldville, said that he is very proud that the people of Wethersfield have elected a Mayor from Griswoldville. He presented Chairperson Hemmann with a little Griswold whimsy. He presented all Councilors with sticks as a souvenir from the tornado. He thanked the Town Manager for bringing the tornado to Wethersfield on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Councilor McAlister led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, took attendance.

**HEARINGS**

## RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT A GRANT FOR BIKE TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

No one wished to speak for or against the resolution. Chairperson Hemmann declared the hearing closed.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, thanked the Town Councilors who voted for restoring public comment at the end of the meeting. He said that he received the Town calendar and it was very informative. He said that the economy is disappointing. Legislators need to do something to help turn around the economy. The State continues to spend. He handed out a report on State revenue and expenses. He said State debt continues to rise. It will be more difficult for the Town to receive State aid. The Town needs to be responsible and cut costs.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, said that the calendar is a big improvement over years past. He said that there are more than economic aspects to purchasing the Wilkus property. Open space is a great carbon absorber. It is a quality of life issue. It is a step forward in our carbon sink. He encouraged the purchase. He said that he has had more interaction with people on cell phones. He was nearly run over in a parking lot by a woman texting on her phone while driving. The Police received a grant for drunk driving and they will also perform seatbelt and child safety seat stops. He hopes that the Police will also crack down on cell phone use while driving.

### COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Hurley said that he attended the Park and Recreation Advisory Board meeting. The Mill Woods press box will be ready for the first baseball game of the season. A day of good weather is needed to paint the box. He said that there will be a soccer tournament in Wethersfield on June 26<sup>th</sup> sponsored by the George Ritchie Soccer Club.

Councilor Manousos said that he attended the Budget and Finance Committee meeting earlier tonight. It is a new day in municipal financing. He is hopeful for a fiscally responsible budget with a lot of input from the public and Town staff and employees.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Budget and Finance Committee reviewed the Town Attorney proposals and is looking at shortening the list of candidates. It also discussed the \$1,000 tax abatement for hybrid cars. It equals about \$30 to \$35 per vehicle. The Committee endorsed continuing the abatement and it will appear on an upcoming Council agenda with changes.

Councilor McAlister said that he attended a presentation by the Conservation Commission on Wintergreen Woods. It was eye opening and he would like to see if an abbreviated presentation could be scheduled for the Town Council at an upcoming meeting.

Councilor Drake said that he would like to clarify his direction to the Town Manager concerning the Library proposal. He would like the Town Manager to look at whether or not it is legally feasible to have a free library. If it is, then, the Town Manager could go to the Library Board for a discussion.

Councilor Kotkin said that he attended the Insurance Committee meeting. Town employee insurance expenses continue to run a little below expectations which is good news. The Committee is looking at finding more efficient ways to provide health insurance for retirees that would reduce the costs to the Town. He said that as an employee of Northeast Utilities he is eligible to receive a \$300 donation to the organization where he volunteers. He has served as liaison to the Mill Woods Park Advisory Board and would like to present the \$300 to the Director of Park and Recreation.

Councilor Roberts acknowledged the passing of Jack O'Leary, former Town Councilor and Police Officer. He served on the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee and was the 1999 Irish Person of the Year.

Councilor Hemmann said that she attended the Tree Lighting Ceremony on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. It was a nice evening and a well attended event.

Councilor Montinieri said that he attended the EDIC awards meeting. It was well attended and he thanked the EDIC for organizing it.

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the Town Council received an update on the Urban Forestry Grant, Progress Drive, and Morrison Avenue. He said that he will arrange a meeting with neighbors on Morrison Avenue in January. Council also received a report on Newington Cedar Mountain from the Town Planner. He said that the Budget and Finance Committee met tonight before the Council meeting. There will be a workshop meeting with the Board of Education tomorrow night and the Planning and Zoning Commission will attend the Council meeting on January 5<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Hemmann said that she forgot to mention the following upcoming events:

- There will be an Employee Support Group meeting in the Library on December 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- The American Red Cross is sponsoring a blood drive in Wethersfield on December 24<sup>th</sup>.
- The EDIC State of the Town is scheduled for January 21<sup>st</sup>.

COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPOINT GERALD S. BAXTER, GEORGE J. D’ESOPPO, AND KEVIN SULLIVAN AS SUB-REGISTRARS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTE 7-65”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, said that the terms are expiring for the sub-registrars. There are three funeral homes in Town and a representative of each is a sub-registrar in order to help one another out when the Clerk’s office is closed. The funeral home can’t issue its own burial permit and a burial can’t occur without the paperwork. This does not happen often but needs to be in place according to the Connecticut General Statutes.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT A GRANT FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE HERITAGE WAY BIKE TRAIL IMPROVEMENT”** seconded by Councilor Drake.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairperson Hemmann said that she had requested that the Town Manager provide a list of unfinished business items so that items didn’t get lost. It is for informational purposes only. She and the Town Manager will review the list and put items in order and bring them to Council at appropriate times. These items are from the last 18 months.

Councilor Drake said that after looking at the list he thought of the costs. He asked for a list of bonds that are outstanding and when they will be paid off. He would like a sense of the next ten years.

OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT FOR A PEG CHANNEL WITH SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND TELEPHONE COMPANY (AT&T)”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that Mr. Garrey is here from Wethersfield Public Television to answer specific questions. Cox Communications, AT&T, and Wethersfield Public Television have reached an agreement. AT&T Uverse will provide public access shows in an on-demand

format and will provide a grant for the Town to purchase the equipment needed for Councilor Chamber for the transmission of the signal. This has been an issue with the community for some time.

Councilor Roberts asked if this will fix the picture on channel 14.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager said that is a separate issue.

Councilor Hurley asked for a timeframe.

Rick Garrey, President of Wethersfield Public Television, said that the Town is looking at January as a start date for the AT&T Uverse to start airing meetings. He said that the poor quality with Cox Cable has been going on for over a year. He said that the transmission on Cox Cable is getting worse. If interested, Councilors should write letters to Cox Cable. Cox Cable is not willing to spend any money to upgrade equipment. He answered Council questions. It has been degrading over the past month or so. Wethersfield is one of the worst Towns for signal quality. If writing a letter, include the DPUC. The signal is sent over copper coaxial wires to Manchester and then comes back to Wethersfield through hubs. A t-channel is very susceptible to weather and wind and the signal degrades. AT&T is willing to pay up to \$15,000 per channel and includes installation. The quality includes a year of streaming, too and one year of hosting of the streaming. It allows satellite reception to carry the channel as well. After a year the Town would have to decide if it wants to pay for the hosting site to allow meetings to go out live. This is integrating t-line transmission and will dedicate it to the signal. It is audio and video. There will be a separate feed to AT&T from here.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AUTHORIZE A TRANSFER OF \$8,750 FROM THE CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT TO THE CAPITAL WINDOW ACCOUNT FOR THE LABOR FOR WINDOW REPLACEMENT AT THE POLICE FACILITY AT 250 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that 17 windows at the police department have seals that have failed. The windows are under warranty, however, the labor to install them is not included. The Town Attorney has reviewed the warranty and the labor to install the new windows is not included and will be a local expense.

Councilor Drake said that he has never seen labor not included in the warranty. Repair to him should include the labor to fix the seals. EFCO Corporation should be responsible for the labor costs. EFCO Corporation should pay the contractor to repair or replace the window seals. That would be a typical thing to happen. He doesn't understand how the Town Attorney interpreted it

this way. He asked if anyone contact EFCO directly. EFCO should pay the installer. Window seals go.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that he can go back to the Town Attorney for a clarification.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that the Town contacted Stanley Wiesen and Company who was the installer of the windows. They came out and were very helpful in contacting and dealing with the manufacturer. The contract for the warrantee is with the Town.

Councilor Drake said that the warrantee says to repair and replace and should include the labor. It should be very clear that labor is not included, if that is the case. He said that he doesn't know where to go with this now because it needs to get done. He said that he understands that the installer doesn't have to pay for the labor but the window company should pay for the installation because the windows were screwed up. It is not a huge amount of money but the window manufacturer should pay for the seals.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that this should go back and Town staff should look into this more.

Deputy Mayor Console said that this is the same type of issue that the Town faced a year ago with the sprinkler system in the Police building. It was for materials only and the Town pushed the company on it.

Councilor Drake said that this is a little different because the Town shouldn't expect the installer to pay for the manufacturer's problem with the seals.

Deputy Mayor Console said that he agrees but thinks Town staff should push the issue.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the installation was bid out.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that it was bid out as a single unit, the installation and seals. For this installation of the replacement seals, he said that he did not get three bids but went with the original installer. If there is any problem with the installation of the seals, the installer will be responsible for the entire unit.

Chairperson Hemmann said that she doesn't think this should be acted on tonight.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO TABLE THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS FOR THE WINDOW REPLACEMENT WHILE WAITING FOR MORE INFORMATION"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

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

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO SEND AN 8-24 REFERRAL TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – ANTENNAS FOR POCKET AND CLEAR WIRE COMMUNICATIONS ON THE RADIO TOWER AT 250 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the Town received a request to add two antennas to the radio tower at the Police Department. This needs to go to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a review. There needs to be a structural analysis to see what is needed to add these two carriers and any additions the Town may need to add in the future.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the analysis is being done on the behalf of the two vendors, how the Town would assure that its interests are being looked after.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that there is an independent consultant that will verify the analysis. It is being paid for by the two vendors. There is some negotiation with the Town’s possible need for upgrades in the future for some of the Town’s costs. The Town doesn’t want to max out the tower with cellular providers.

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

### BIDS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO REJECT THE BID – AUTOMOTIVE AND TRUCK PARTS”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the Town staff recommends rejecting this bid because the number of items included in the bid has narrowed over the years and the parts needed can be purchased off of the State bid.

Councilor Drake said if the Town always uses the State bid, why is this processes tried.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that Town used to use the blue book for the price of the parts for the bids. Bidders would take that price and apply its discount of 10 percent or 20 percent off of certain parts. The book doesn’t really exist anymore so it would be more prudent to work with the three vendors that the Town uses and limit the amount to each vendor to under \$20,000 so a formal award process is not necessary. The prices have been coming down. The real issues are trying to get parts from the manufacturers directly. He said that he believes the Town is getting competitive bids using this format and he would like to continue it.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there is a reason that the Town Council didn’t see the list of bids that were rejected.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that the bid was over 100 pages long. The Town will get better pricing with the State bid because the State buys in such large quantities. It is confusing to determine who is the low bidder when the vendors give different percentages off of different items.

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

### ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

none

### MINUTES

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL WORKSHOP MINUTES OF DECEMBER 5, 2009”** seconded by Councilor Drake.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 7, 2009”** seconded by Councilor Montinieri.

All Councilors present voted AYE. Chairperson Hemmann abstained. The motion passed 8-0-1.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, said that public comment at the end of the meeting has been a long time in coming. The Town Council should get input from the community and not try to stifle the citizenry. He suggested that the Town Council shouldn't be too rigid on the five minute speaking rule. He is pleased that he will now have the choice between Cox Cable and AT&T Uverse for cable service and be able to see public access on either provider. He said that he had an issue with windows that he had installed in his home. He went back to the manufacturer and they fixed the windows at no cost to him. The Town should look into its window issue again. He wished the Town Councilors a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, thanked Councilors for allowing the public to speak. He said that about three years ago the Town of Newington was given the opportunity to purchase the land from Hartford Hospital and the Town turned them down. Now Newington regrets it and is causing all sorts of trouble for Toll Brothers. The Town of Wethersfield should stay out of it.

He said that it is a quality of life issue that residents park cars on the snow shelf and park commercial vehicles in driveways overnight. The Town should look into it and enforce the parking rules. He said that the Legislators say that the State budget has no line items that can be cut. It is a joke. He listed several items that he felt could be eliminated. The Town Council needs to reduce government and bring costs down. He wished them all a Happy Holidays.

Chairperson Hemmann wished residents a happy holidays.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:10 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS REAL ESTATE AND PERSONNEL MATTERS –UNION NEGOTIATIONS”** seconded by Councilor Hurley. All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0. Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, was present. No motions were made and no votes were taken during executive session.

At 8:37 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION”** seconded by Councilor McAlister. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:38 p.m., Councilor Montinieri 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