

## **ADJOURNED BUDGET MEETING WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2008**

An Adjourned Meeting of the Town Council (adjourned from Monday, April 28, 2008) was held on Wednesday, April 30, 2008 at 5:45 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center with Chairperson Adil presiding.

**Present:** Councilors Cascio, Console, Hemmann, Kotkin (arrived 6:50 p.m.), Roberts, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Montinieri and Chairperson Adil (left at 6:30 p.m. and returned at 7:20 p.m.)

**Absent:** Councilor Forrest

**Also present:** Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager; Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk; Lisa Hancock, Finance Director; Mike Turner, Director of Public Works; Jim McDonald, Assistant Director of Physical Services; Heather Vargas, Administrative Analyst for Physical Services; Peter Gillespie, Town Planner; Gary Santoro, Fire Marshal; and Brian O'Connor, Chief Building Official

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, mentioned a few budget cuts:

- \$2,500 from Parks and Recreation because the pools will close earlier than anticipated because school will start prior to Labor Day.
- \$50,000 for street lights because Northeast Utilities has given the Town a lower amount for the lighting of all street lights in Town. There was a miscalculation on the number of streetlights.

Councilor Console asked how much more of a savings would the Town realize if some street lights were turned off.

RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, said that she would have those numbers for the next meeting.

### **REJECTION OF BID - MILL WOODS LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD**

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Building Committee received two bids. The low bidder does not have any experience in landscaping and the Committee is not comfortable with awarding this bid.

Councilor Roberts moved "**TO REJECT THE BID FOR THE MILL WOODS LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD**" seconded by Councilor Cascio.

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

### **PHYSICAL SERVICES (page 137 of the Budget Book)**

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that under Building Services the electricity and heating both show increases. The water bill also shows an increase. He said that there is an increase in street lights, too. He said that he did poll other Public Works Directors about shutting off some street lights, and there are several that have done that. Most of them owned their street lights when they turned them off. They were not physically removing them from the poles. There is an installation charge for putting them back on the poles.

Bonnie Therrien said that the entire light would be removed so that residents don't call and say that the bulbs are burned out. The Town would have to notify the public.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that he knows some Towns have worked with the light company to have retrofitting done by the provider with the hope that savings would go back to them. He asked how old the fixtures are?

Mike Turner said that they are supposed to re-lamp every five years as part of the lighting charge. He said that he doesn't think they do it. West Hartford is going to LED lights but the fixtures aren't that great. Other Towns are lowering the wattage in the bulbs. There has been savings seen with just changing the wattage and the general public doesn't notice the difference.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that seems like a good way to go, even if it is phased in beginning this year. He said that it is prudent to look at all energy savings. A 10 percent savings on a \$500,000 line item would allow for other items to be put back into the budget. The Town Council has already had negative feedback from the public about cutting lights. He said he doesn't think it is prudent for the Town to do that.

Councilor Roberts asked what the timeline would be for replacing all of the light bulbs.

Bonnie Therrien said that she would speak to the representative and find out.

Mike Turner said that it would be a good idea to have the Town Council set a policy if it wants to shut off lights.

RaeAnn Palmer said that by shutting off a 1/3 of the lights, it would be a \$33,000 savings.

Councilor Roberts said that there will be a big expense if the Town decides it wants to turn the lights back on.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that savings can be found by retrofitting the lights and it can be phased in. If the Town retrofitted 10 percent of the 2700 lights in Town, it would see a savings that would probably exceed turning the lights out.

Mike Turner said that on page 140, there is a line item for overtime that shows additional time spent on dressing up the outside of Town buildings. The item was eliminated. There were no significant changes on page 141. On page 142, the training for all employees was cut back. On page 143, there are no significant changes.

Councilor Cascio asked for a clarification on the over time line item.

Mike Turner said that the overtime was requested but the Town Manager cut the request.

Councilor Cascio asked if other staffers will help to fill the need that is being removed from the budget.

Mike Turner said that this was for overtime for an additional effort sprucing up the outside of specific buildings. It is being eliminated. The Town will just go back to its original maintenance schedule.

Chairperson Adil asked if volunteers could assist with this type of work.

Bonnie Therrien said that the union would probably not allow it.

Jim McDonald said that some of that money was for additional lawn care.

Councilor Cascio said that the money was put in the account because the Town was getting complaints about some maintenance issues.

Mike Turner said that on page 144, there was an addition for the Clean Energy Fund.

Bonnie Therrien said that it is new to this Department's budget. It used to be in the Town Council budget.

Mike Turner said that there is nothing new on pages 145 or 146. On page 147, there is a notation about the inventory of trees. It is a request of Mr. Lepper, Tree Warden, and part of the Strategic Plan. It is a big ticket item to physically inventory all of the Town trees.

Councilor Hemmann asked if could be done in a phased in program.

Bonnie Therrien said that she doesn't know if a company would do that. There are also software costs.

Mike Turner said that on page 148 there are no changes. On page 149, the street sweeping budget shows a 10 percent decrease in the time spent, but there was a 3 percent increase in the bid cost.

Deputy Mayor Montineiri said that the Town switched to a different product for salting that is cleaner and doesn't require as much sweeping.

Mike Turner said that the Town switched from a sand and salt mix to straight salt for most roads. There are some steep areas that still require both the salt and sand mix. The Town will save on both the sweeping and catch basin cleaning with this new product.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that this is not a huge savings.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Town doesn't know yet what the savings will be.

Mike Turner said that the catch basin cleaning is mandated by the MDC to clean them once a year. It will be easier to clean without all of the sand.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the theory with using the new product was that it would save the Town money in the sweeping and catch basin cleaning.

Mike Turner said that it also saves on the manpower because the roads are cleared of snow and ice a little faster and employees can go home sooner.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the only thing he is looking for is to see the comparison once the process is complete.

Jim McDonald said that the Town really needs to go through an entire cycle to see the savings.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that there is also the issue of the product on the Town's skirts.

Jim McDonald said that his staff did not see any dead areas or complaints from residents this year.

Mike Turner said that where there may be an issue is with the fleet. The salt is a very corrosive material.

Councilor Roberts said that the State uses a new product that is a liquid.

Mike Turner said that the Town would have to re-equip every one of the Town trucks in order to use that product.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that there were a few residents who spoke at the Public Hearing who said that they would do without leaf collection if it would help the School budget. He asked what the Town Manager's opinion is on that.

Mike Turner said that for the last budget there was an analysis done on one time pick up versus two time pick up versus bagging the leaves. He said that he doesn't think it is a

service that the Town can do away with entirely. Most of the leaf collection program is manpower. The Town might save in some overtime and seasonal help. Paine's said that it would cost \$32,000 for a one time pick up of leaves. Paine's would bring it up to the compost site and the Town staff would have to spend the time opening the bags and spreading the leaves.

Councilor Cascio said that as an observation, there are a lot of little extras that the Town does, like the Christmas tree pickup and leaf collection. The Town is looking to consolidate. He said that residents pick up their Christmas trees on their cars but when they dispose of it, they don't want to put them on their cars and bring them to a central location. He said that he thinks that if there was a central location for pickup, it cuts out the expense of the truck and operator

collecting them. That is something that needs to be looked at. With the leaf pickup, the total cost of the program is \$216,000. In Massachusetts, when something is not mandated by the Town, they put a supplement in the tax bill that divides the savings, \$216,000 in this case, by all the taxpayers and it becomes an extra bill attached to their taxes for the service. In a budget crunch, like now, it is something that the Town needs to look at. It would be a special assessment. The Town has created its own monster by collecting these leaves. Town residents have become accustomed to all of these services.

Chairperson Adil stepped out of the room.

Councilor Console said that he read an article that Governor Rell wrote reducing the use of State cars and trucks because of the record high fuel costs. The goal now is to reduce the usage by 10 percent with a target reduction for next year of 25 percent. The Town should spearhead this, too.

Bonnie Therrien said that it is the next section in the budget.

Councilor Cascio said that he would like to know what the savings would be for a centralized Christmas Tree pick up.

Jim McDonald said that there would be a fuel savings, too.

Councilor Console asked why the Town couldn't charge the homeowner for the service.

Bonnie Therrien said that it would be an accounting issue.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the Town Council needs to know if this is a service that the public wants, given its cost. The cost is in the budget. The first question to ask is do the residents know the value of the program and do they feel it is worth it.

Mike Turner said that page 152 starts the vehicle maintenance budget. The biggest item is the deletion of the Fleet Supervisor Position.

Bonnie Therrien said that the staff will report directly to Jim McDonald instead of the Fleet Supervisor. The position has been vacant since October.

Mike Turner said that each staff member has been given a specific task and Jim McDonald is doing the overall supervision. On page 153 is benefits.

Councilor Console said that the health benefits went down.

Mike Turner said that is connected to the elimination of the Fleet Supervisor position.

Councilor Console asked if the Town staff has thought of any ways to save on fuel.

Mike Turner said that the Town has issued idling policies. Cars are not to be left running.

Bonnie Therrien said that she has looked at reducing the fleet. The Town would have to pay for mileage, \$.57 per mile for employees that use the Town's cars now.

Councilor Console said that the Town is using some handed down inefficient vehicles. If the Town went to smaller cars, there could be a motor pool where employees signed them out as needed. There should be a savings and the cars would last a longer time.

Mike Turner said that he did an analysis this past fall looking at the State surplus vehicles. The old police cruisers, the Crown Victorias, get about 18 miles to the gallon. An analysis using a comparable State vehicle, the Cavalier, did not show the savings that Councilor Console is talking about. There is a gas mileage savings but by the time you factor in the purchase of the vehicles and maintaining a second inventory of parts and training the staff on servicing the vehicles there isn't a great savings. The police cruisers are used until they are disposed of and every last one of the vehicles has

been depreciated. He said that he would be happy to forward the analysis on to Councilor Console.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Town could get rid of cars and pay mileage. The other issue would be insurance. The vehicles owner's insurance would be primary and the Town would be secondary. Staff will not be happy with that. Also it may have to be negotiated with the union.

Councilor Roberts said that she can't see how there wouldn't be a savings buying a smart car and trading in a cruiser and saving on fuel.

Councilor Console said that Physical Services staff returns to the Town garage for lunch.

Mike Turner said that during the summer, they eat at their job site.

Councilor Console said that that the Town needs to look at places to save money.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that all Departments are being asked to look at the electricity and fuel costs. Equipment savings, pooling resources and fuel efficiencies all need to be looked at. If the Town doesn't pay attention to it, there will be waste. With all of these vehicles in this budget, Physical Services is an area that begs for a thorough review.

Councilor Walsh asked if this was a zero based budget.

Mike Turner said that on pages 156-158, it discusses the specialty equipment like outfitting the new cruisers. There is a line item for parts for the entire fleet. There is an inventory of parts.

Councilor Roberts asked if outsourcing this was looked into in the past.

Bonnie Therrien said that it is more expensive and no one would make the commitment to overtime hours.

Mike Turner said that no one wanted to take the Town's fleet. It would have to be at a certain level before someone would want to commit to maintaining it.

Jim McDonald said that the Police Department had an undercover vehicle that caught on fire. They said to junk the vehicle. One of the Town's mechanics saw something on television about Pontiacs having a problem with catching on fire and called them up. The Town staff member contacted the dealer and after a hard time, the dealer gave the Town \$3,200 for the vehicle. He said that this money should be put back into the account, since the Police budget for outfitting the cruisers ran over.

Councilor Roberts said that the Town Council should send him a letter of thanks.

Councilor Hemmann asked if there was a program to acknowledge employees who make suggestions that turn out to be cost savings. These people can be recognized in the workplace.

Bonnie Therrien said that there is an employee recognition program.

Councilor Hemmann said it could be a banner on the webpage recognizing different employees for different things. There are small ways to recognize people that don't cost a dime. This could be a great tool for all Departments.

Mike Turner said that page 162 is Refuse Disposal.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked if Paine's has a replacement cycle for barrels in the contract.

Bonnie Therrien said that the trucks have spare barrels. They take a look at the barrels as they go along.

Councilor Roberts said that she saw another style of recycling bin and asked why the Town only has one.

Mike Turner said that the Town uses only one bid. Residents can put things out in a box, too.

Bonnie Therrien said that Hartford does single stream. If Wethersfield moves that way, then the recycling barrels could be swapped out.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said one of things that Mike Turner needs to talk to Paine's about is that the Town has it upside down. 70 percent is trash and 30 percent is recycling. It should be reversed. The Town should have weekly recycling and every other week garbage pick up and focus on the recycling with a nice big bin.

Bonnie Therrien said that Paine's is under contract for weekly garbage pickup until 2011. She said that single stream will make a big difference. CRRA will have its facility retrofitted for it by the end of the summer.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the Town still needs to go back to Paine's. Paine's will get something out of it if the Town has more recycling. He said that this should not wait until 2011; the Town should go after it now. If the Town can show Paine's an equation, that it will be better for them, Paine's will reopen the contract. The other every week garbage collection could come in, if the Town got good at recycling. The Town is at \$1,000,000 for disposal costs. If that was modified by 20 percent, it would equal everything that is being squeezed out of Departments just by moving residents to recycle more. Education is also needed for this.

Bonnie Therrien said that so much yard waste also comes into the garbage. The problem is that the Physical Services area is so packed, that there is no place to put it all if people could dispose of yard waste.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the Recycling Committee is looking at ways to switch it around so that there is more recycling than trash. One problem is how to get items out of the waste stream and into recycling. The Town has to figure out how to make it easier for residents without overtaxing the Town staff. Mansfield has a really good program that she is going to look at.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that Paine's is probably the only contractor that would be willing to sit down with the Town and discuss this. He said that this is a huge area of waste. It requires educating the public.

Councilor Cascio said that he is looking for ways to be creative to find savings. With approximately 10,000 households in the community, it would be a \$21 assessment for leaf collection annually. That is a real bargain.

Bonnie Therrien said that it would be a problem when someone doesn't pay it.

Councilor Console said that it should be for people that want the service.

Bonnie Therrien said that this needs to be looked into more.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the program would be efficient if the whole Town does it.

Councilor Cascio said that the Town would be letting residents know that this is not a core responsibility, it is not for free.

Mike Turner said that page 208 is the CNEF budget.

Jim McDonald said that during the budget, he asked for two dump trucks, a mower, a F- 350 truck and some other smaller items. It was cut down to one dump truck and a mower. He said that the Division can't get away with one dump truck. He said that there are two dump trucks that are not going to be road worthy. The trucks are from 1994. The staff is repairing things that need to be junked. The two dumps that were asked for have stainless steel bodies. They are more expensive trucks but with all of the salt used will last longer. It has controls so the driver is not guessing on what is being put down on the roads, too.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the budget shows two dump trucks on a lease purchase plan.

Heather Vargas, Administrative Analyst, said that the interest rates were very low, around 4 percent.

Jim McDonald said that the trucks with the stainless steel bodies would be about \$137,000 each.

Councilor Console asked if there are any vehicles that can be gotten rid of to buy these trucks.

Jim McDonald said that there is nothing extra in this fleet. Two dump trucks would be gotten rid of. In addition to these two dump trucks, the Division needs the 350 dump truck. It is \$35,000.

Councilor Roberts said that last year, the truck that plowed her street broke and the driver had to use a rope to start it. She said that she was embarrassed for him.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked what the trucks would cost if they were not stainless steel.

Jim McDonald said that they would be \$10,000 less and the Town would get a lot more use out of these. Last time the Town went to get rid of the old trucks, they went to the State auction and the Town received \$7,000 each for them.

Councilor Kotkin said that it sounds like the top priority is the dump truck replacement.

Jim McDonald said that the 350 Dump Truck is the most important item because this model will not be made after this year. The price of the new model will jump the price up to \$92,000. He said that he is pleased with the truck that the Town is using now.

Councilor Kotkin said that there are many items on page 210 that the Department is going to lose.

Mike Turner said that those items were put in to show Council what the Department's needs are and prioritized the items. There is an outstanding list of equipment that the Town needs.

Councilor Kotkin said that one of the reasons that the Town did a better job with leaf collection is that the trucks didn't break down as often.

Mike Turner said that three of the leaf boxes were replaced this year. There was less overtime and injuries this year, too.

## **PLANNING AND ZONING/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Bonnie Therrien said that this year, the Planning and Zoning and Economic Development budgets were combined.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, said that the budget starts on page 64. He said that Charles Forsdick, Chairperson of the Tourism Commission and Tony Martino, Administrative Analyst are here tonight. He said that the Assistant Town Planner attends the Planning and Zoning meetings and is responsible for the Design Review Committee. She is responsible for the permitting process so that he can focus on economic development. The Department supports several boards and commissions: Tourism, Design Review, Redevelopment, EDIC, and Planning and Zoning. There are a number of commission clerks responsible for the minutes. He said that he has given back a digital camera. He will try to purchase it this year if the budget allows it. The laptop computer may also be purchased this year, too. Legal Advertisements continue to increase every year. The Town is at the mercy of The Hartford Courant. Under Travel, Training & Dues, on page 67, the dues for CERC Membership allows the Town to post available properties on a Statewide data base and State membership to the National Economic Development Commission. Some of the training money was given back in this budget. Under Professional Services there are more significant numbers. He said that the Town has been advised that the future lies in the digital and e marketing of communities. Many if not all site selections are done on the internet. The Town has a long way to go. He wants to carve out some money to better position the Town's website as well as the promotion of the Town. He asked for \$9,000 and the Town Manager approved \$3,500. A big priority of the Economic Development and Improvement Commission is marketing and communications. Keiler is a firm that the Town has been working with for the past year. The Town is beginning to reap the benefits from this relationship. There have been some specific results including a series in the Boston Globe and an upcoming Yankee Magazine article. It is expensive, several thousand dollars a month. He asked for \$25,000 and the Town Manager budgeted \$14,000. In terms of all of the items in this budget, the Economic Development

Commission wanted to stress that this item is extremely important to the Commission for the promotion of the Town to developers and from a tourism point of view. The \$14,000 will get the Town three or four months of service from this company. The intent is to get the Town's message out on a consistent and regular basis.

Councilor Kotkin asked where the budget increase was.

Bonnie Therrien said the e marketing is a new line item as is Shop Wethersfield.

Peter Gillespie said that the Economic Development Commission reprioritized and took money from its own budget to make Keiler a reality. The Town needs to purchase data bases and reposition the Town's website presence and that costs money. Shop Wethersfield is a new program in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce. It will help to increase its membership.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the e marketing is to bring business to Town or to bring tourism here.

Peter Gillespie said that it will result in benefits to both but the primary intent is for business and developers to come to Town. There are other programs that are tourism specific.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that many people saw the Boston Globe articles that were Keiler driven and there was a direct impact based on that. These line items might seem dressed up but this mean an increased traffic flow to retailers. The reality is that these are small ticket items for what Keiler is doing for the Town. Keiler is charging the Town less because it is committed. The impact is what is hidden. It is hard to measure but is real.

Bonnie Therrien said that this needs to be a justified budget. If there are not hard numbers that directly relate to tourism, she can't recommend the expenses in the future. She said that next year she has to see some concrete numbers. The budget is just too tight. She has not seen any numbers that show that these expenditures really get the Town anything.

Peter Gillespie said that he will take that information back to the Committees. He said that it is a reasonable request.

Charles Forsdick, Chairperson of the Tourism Commission, said that the Tourism Commission has been discussing this and is working to get some numbers that are fairly accurate. He said that the Commission has no means to do this. He hopes that it can be done without a huge cost.

Peter Gillespie reviewed the Support Services accounts for EDIC and the Public Service Contributions for EDIC on page 68. On page 69 there are Tourism related items. He is asking for \$2,000 to assist in putting together packets to promote the Town as a place to visit. This is specific for people attending conventions in Hartford. It is a promotional kit. There is \$500 to the Greater Hartford Convention Bureau. The Town gets great benefit with that membership. There is also \$1,000 for attendance at a trade show, too. The Committee tries to attend one a year.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Town has had any luck attracting convention goers.

Peter Gillespie said that the Town has had some small groups from conventions come into Town. It has been a challenge. He has found that they are very insular in allowing other organizations access to their members to promote directly to them. The Town is now trying to reach out to people three years in advance of the conventions. When the Airplane Pilot convention was in Hartford, the Town offered many things to them. They wouldn't even acknowledge the Town. The Town was trying to get in too late. Every month at the Tourism Committee meetings, there is an agenda item to discuss what conventions are coming and a packet is sent out to them. Over time that will generate contacts. \$2,500 is given back for the Family Tour. It was not felt to be a high priority. The Town is promoted in visitor magazines and the ads cost money. There is \$5,000 in the budget for that. It costs a lot of money to take out advertising space in tourism related publications. He asked for \$33,000 and the budget was cut to \$8,000. In terms of priorities, American Automobile Association Journey's magazine is probably the Town's best venue to promote the Town and sees some direct results. It costs the Town \$7,000 to run the advertisement in three issues. There are three or four other publications that are worthy. The Tourism Commission feels that this is its highest priority.

Charles Forsdick said that the Commission is very aware of the challenges that the Town is facing trying to maintain services and keep taxes to a minimum. He said that he also appreciates the support that the Town Council has give to the Tourism Commission in the past. He said that while there may not be concrete numbers to show the Commission's efforts, the accomplishments and goals have been acknowledged by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism award that the Town received this year. The coming year will allow the Commission to make greater strides although with the cost of fuel, he is not anticipating that this will be a high traffic year. The Town will have to do everything it can to maintain the same level of traffic that it has had. The budget has been reduced by the Town Manager. The most important investment that the Town can make to attract visitors from the region and State is through the tourism magazines and publications. The Town has been in the Greater Hartford Hotel Guide for the past two years. All of the marketing people that the Commission has spoken to have told the Commission that the effectiveness of advertising in these publication can only be measured or felt if it is done consistently and repeatedly. Putting one ad in for one month does not cut it. It will get no significant results. The Commission is asking that it be allowed to continue the advertising in the current magazines. The Greater Hartford Visitors' Guide goes out to every single convention goer as well as mailed out to organizations in the State. Journey's is the AAA publication. The Town is able to track how many hits it gets from that organization. Just to continue to advertise in the existing publications it will cost \$16,000. The Town Manager's allocation is \$8,000. Given the economic times, the Commission has limited its request to this particular account. At its meeting last night, the Commission found out that the Historic Society, under the auspices of the Tourism Commission, and the Town has been awarded a cooperative marketing grant for a Strategic Marketing Plan. That grant initially required a \$5,000 match. That match is now down to \$2,500. The Commission also learned last night that the Commission has saved a little bit more than \$2,000 this year. The Commission voted to turn those funds back over to the General Fund for the Town Council to use and hopefully fund the match for this grant. The Commission is requesting that the Town Council restore the advertising budget.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the \$33,000 was for ad design.

Charles Forsdick said that the \$33,000 is for advertisement placement. He doesn't know how the headings are determined. That is the line item that he was speaking about.

Peter Gillespie said that last year there was one line item for EDIC and Tourism for advertisements. This year, the budgets have been separated out.

Councilor Kotkin said that it would be helpful to him to have a summary or explanation of what some of these accounts are for, because there are so many little pieces in the budget.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the labeling in the budget book needs to be cleaned up to make it less confusing. She said that she will work on it.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the tourism focus was primarily on Old Wethersfield or does it go beyond Old Wethersfield.

Charles Forsdick said that it includes all of Wethersfield. He said that the Commission was careful when it created the brochure and logo that it says Historic Wethersfield and not Old Wethersfield. The Commission is really charged with representing the entire Town in matters of tourism. Most of the historic properties and reasons for tourism happen to be in Old Wethersfield, but there are some sites outside of Old Wethersfield.

That was pointed out well in the Boston Globe article. It represents all of the attractions in Wethersfield.

Peter Gillespie said that there are a couple of matching grant requests that are new. Put in this year's budget, he thinks that the match can be found for the marketing plan. The video can be done from a different direction. There is money for the website, different from the Town's website. There is a maintenance fee on that, as well as money for someone to put in events and bring things up to date. There is a link to the Town website.

Bonnie Therrien said that Peter Gillespie went to a seminar and speakers from other Towns were having crews come in and film in Town. He received a ton of information on what they spent and what was needed. She asked if the Town Council wanted this to be persued. It takes so much work that if the Town Council is not interested in it, he will not look into it further. It can be discussed as a separate topic after budget.

Charles Forsdick said that Carol Hall was at the Tourism Commission and wrote an excellent report on this. Her son is in this business.

Peter Gillespie said that his Department has a firm that supplies and maintains the visitor racks throughout the State in certain lobbies of businesses. The Town pays \$7,500 for the fee for them to do that. It gets a lot of feed back. The brochures are so eye catching and appealing that they are often taken off the racks first. The trolley/horse and carriage rides funding was cut. He is hoping that other funding will be found to continue providing the rides. He has received phenomenal response from the rides. They will be run again on Mother's Day weekend and for the Memorial Day Parade. He is trying to establish a schedule for the rest of the summer as money is available.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the \$10,000 for the billboards was for a matching grant.

Peter Gillespie said that originally the grant was for \$20,000 but now only \$10,000 is needed. It will provide for 5 billboards for a couple of months this summer in the I-95 corridors. There is a continual need for high quality photographs for the brochures. It is important to see new imagery and continue to update the photographs.

Councilor Roberts said that volunteers should be looked at to provide these photographs.

Peter Gillespie said that there is a potential need for staging for some photographs and that costs money. In the future, there will be a photograph contest that will hopefully result in some new photography. There are some legal issues with that.

Charles Forsdick said that he has Lois Clark's entire collection. She has been great but unfortunately she has just recently purchased a digital camera and so most of her photographs are on film.

## **FIRE MARSHAL**

Gary Santoro, Fire Marshal, said that the only two changes to the budget are the increase in the dues for the National Fire Protection Association by \$25 and the Capital Region dues went up \$10. He said that with the exception of contractual items his budget is always the same.

Councilor Roberts asked what the Fire Marshal Certification was for.

Gary Santoro said that every three years he, Jeff Morrisette, and Mike Patcowski have to complete 90 hours in order to keep up their certification.

Councilor Kotkin said that last year there was an outreach program that the Town began.

Gary Santoro said that it was an introductory program. He said that he thinks that it was a successful program.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Fire Marshal will go over the telephone budget on page 50, too.

Gary Santoro said that the telephone budget is pretty much constant. There is money in it to pay for putting the telephones back in Town Hall when the renovations are complete. There is \$18,000 for the mobile data communications, and \$15,000 is for the Police Department.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the other \$3,000 is for the Fire Department. Wethersfield is one of the four test Towns for this program. One unit is in the Chief's vehicle, the Ladder Truck and one in the Command vehicle.

Chairperson Adil asked what the difference is between the Library and Town Hall systems.

Gary Santoro said that the system in the Library is old terminology, a basic key system. The Town Hall has a PBX or private branch exchange. There are numerous trunks that come in and from the trunks are various extensions that go out. There is direct inward dial. The PBX system services all of the Town buildings, excluding the Board of Education.

It allows for the four digit dial between offices and the same voice mail system. There is two of everything with the system so that the system will never go down. The Police are on the system.

Councilor Hemmann asked if there was a reason that the Library didn't choose this technology.

Gary Santoro said that the Library is too small. There are numerous extensions. There are seven trunks that come in and then intercom numbers are used. Every telephone has its own intercom number. A PBX system would be too large for the Library's needs.

Councilor Hemmann asked if the Library could have joined the Town system.

Gary Santoro said that they could have, but it was his understanding that the Library Director wanted the Library to have its own system.

Councilor Hemmann asked if this creates inefficiencies.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Library Director and the Library Board felt that she was not getting the service she needed out of the Town's phone system. There were disagreements when the Library was on the Town system because the Town would not give the Library the priority of the lines.

Councilor Hemmann said for maintenance and purchasing in phones and technology, the Town does itself a disservice by splitting things up into little pieces. There are no efficiencies created this way.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Town just switched cellular service and if there was a savings.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Town did just switch to AT&T from Sprint Nextel.

Gary Santoro said that there would have been a savings but ten Police officers that did not have Town telephones were given the AT&T phones. The service that the Town is receiving is much better and it is the same service as the Board of Education. The Town has 60 cell telephones and all Police Officers have telephones for business use only.

Councilor Kotkin said that \$20,000 for 60 cell phones equals about \$300 each.

Gary Santoro said that is for an annual plan with pooled minutes that roll over. He said that he estimated high because he didn't know how the budget would come out with all of the Police Officers able to make phone calls. He is hoping it will be more like \$18,000.

Councilor Kotkin said that the number just seems high.

Gary Santoro said that this is a State contract. Employees of the Town can piggy back on the plan but actually consumers get a better price. The plan has 12,000 minutes it shares between the 60 telephones a month. Some employees use the phone less. Also, calls made from AT&T phones to AT&T phones do not count in the minutes.

## **ENGINEERING**

Bonnie Therrien said that the engineering budget begins on page 124. Mike Turner will present the engineering budget and the Capital Improvements budget.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that the proposed budget is basically the same budget as the current year. He said that on page 126, there is money budgeted for a conference that he attends. He pays 1/3 of the fees, the CASHO Board of Directors pays 1/3 and the Town pays the remaining 1/3. This keeps the cost reasonable. The dues are all for memberships that the Town needs to maintain. On page 128, the money for the computer purchase is zero because he can purchase it this year. There are software license renewals that need to be paid. He said that he requested a furniture increase for the purchase of new file cabinets when the Department moves back to the new office space. On page 129 there are two items, line striping and sidewalk maintenance. He is projecting a small increase in

line striping. It is based on a CRCOG bid and will stripe all Town parking lots. The sidewalk budget is reduced to bring the Town into budget. This money will allow the Town to go out and mark sidewalks up to that limit.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the sidewalks around Mikey's Place were in this year's budget.

Chairperson Adil said that when the company stripes the parking lot last time it was not cleaned before it was striped.

Mike Turner said that the sweeping is done in the spring and the line striping is done in the fall, prior to school opening.

## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Mike Turner said that Les Cole, Chairperson of the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee (CIAC), could not be at the meeting tonight but sent a memorandum from the Committee. All Capital Budget items that were recommended by the Committee are listed on it. Highlighted in red are the items that have been cut from the budget. Additionally, three items have been reduced. Under Community Economic Development, there is the Silas Deane Highway Façade Grant and the Redevelopment Agency funding.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Redevelopment Agency has said that it does not need the \$50,000 because it has not spent all of this year's allocation.

Mike Turner said that under Drainage, the Cloverdale Pond dredge was originally requested at \$200,000. The Committee recommended \$20,000 for design review only and the Town Manager further reduced it to \$15,000. He said that he will make that work. Under Fire Safety, the Fire Department requested \$30,000 for the installation of the key fob security locks at the Fire Houses.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Fire Chief would swap out the air bags in the CNEF for the money to key half of the Fire Houses.

Mike Turner said that under the Pavement Maintenance - Preserve America - Gateway Match, there was a request for \$150,000.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the Town is receiving \$90,000 and it is a dollar to dollar match. The Town already has \$40,000. To do the gateway properly, the Town probably needs this amount of money. She said that she doesn't know what the \$90,000 will fund. That amount of money will not get the Town the entire gateway project completed.

Mike Turner said that the next item was the new lot at the Mill Woods Little League. Planning and Zoning saw the need for additional parking if the lots are as popular as expected. It is in the Master Plan. The CIAC wanted to do the design and permitting for that now so it would be ready for construction. It would be to expand a lot near the Bocci Court.

Chairperson Adil said that one of the complaints when the Master Plan was developed was that there was too much asphalt.

Councilor Kotkin said that assuming that the Little League field bid comes back and the project is completed is there anything that can be done with the current lot.

Mike Turner said that people park all over the lot. It is a gravel lot so there isn't much that can be done with the configuration of the lot. The Parks and Recreation Community Center item is to renovate the main lobby for an air curtain which is a heater between the set of doors. That is now being done out of the Park and Recreation operating budget. The Mill Woods Little League request of \$100,000 from the Committee was to assist with the bid costs because they were uncertain if they had enough money. That was reduced to \$75,000.

Frederick Bushey, Director of Maintenance for the Schools, said that the Emerson Williams boiler replacement cost estimates have come in around \$400,000. He said that he is working with the Connecticut School Building Council

and the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund to try to get some of this funded. He said that there may be a possibility of getting some added money to go with the \$200,000 that is proposed. Talks are ongoing on a daily basis to find additional funding. He would try to have some more information for the May 8th meeting. This is to fund two boilers.

Councilor Roberts said that at a Shared Services Committee meeting, she thought that \$200,000 was what one boiler for the Town cost.

Mike Turner said that it is why the Capital Improvement Committee cut the cost to \$200,000 per boiler. There are also some abatement issues and controller issues.

Frederick Bushey said that some valves need to be replaced as well. There are higher efficiencies that can be sought to help with conservation.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that it was his understanding that the Board of Education was looking for grant money and green money. That won't become apparent until the execution of the project. He asked what energy efficiencies were being implemented for these boilers.

Frederick Bushey said that it is for two dual fuel boilers so that the Board of Education can lock into a manual interruptible gas rate. These two boilers are from the 1980's. There are sections of these boilers that are obsolete.

Councilor Roberts asked about the energy budget from the Board of Education. She asked if the Board of Education received the numbers from CRCOG, because they are different from the Town's numbers.

Karen Clancy, Business Manager for the Schools, said that the numbers are from CRCOG and CN&G for the interruptible rate. The budget projection is based on those two numbers based on the consumption projections. The consumption usage is based on numbers from two years ago.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that he doesn't see how the numbers can be accurate if they are two years old.

Karen Clancy said that the consumption has not changed.

Councilor Cascio asked for an update on the sidewalk issue on Morrison Avenue.

Mike Turner said that there was a request by the Public Works Committee and the Infrastructure Committee for \$200,000 but the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee did not recommend funding it. It was not recommended at all by the Committee. The Committee did its own look and heard testimony from the residents.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the Committee discussed some contribution with the residents. They were not willing. It probably would have been included had there been some willingness to participate in a proposal that was thought to be very fair. Honestly, the Town is not getting the entire story when that group comes to speak. The project needs to get done, but the Town has to remember all of the other residents that have to pay to fix their own sidewalks. If the Town sets a precedent to repair the sidewalks without participation from the homeowners, these projects will come up all over Town.

Councilor Cascio asked if there was a report on the sidewalks. He doesn't think that there has been a report done on that street in ten years.

Mike Turner said that the Town is still working north from the south end of the Town.

Councilor Cascio said that there is no documentation showing that those sidewalks were in disrepair prior to the street paving. The Town is at risk. It is a walkway for children going to school.

Bonnie Therrien said that once the Town determines the sidewalks are in disrepair the homeowner has to pay for the repair. There is only one staff person who does this inspection job. He is moving through the Town geographically.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that if the Town sends the inspector over and starts charging them to fix the sidewalks,

it will appear that the Town is turning the screws to them. There is still debate and discussion going on with the residents. There was a recognition that the Town's equipment contributed to the deterioration of the sidewalk because there is no curb there. The Town made a proposal that took an enormous piece of it, to commit given the unique situation of the street. The entire project was \$210,000 and each homeowner was going to have to pay around \$1,000 each. Most of these homeowners moved onto that street with the sidewalk problem existing.

Mike Turner said that the next five items on the list were projects that were recommended by the Committee, but were cut by the Town Manager. They are : Multi building window replacement escrow account, Town Hall furnishings, Town Hall shelving system, Physical Services canopy fuel system, and Library shelving. The Library shelving is not needed because it will be purchased through the renovation money. The escrow account for windows would be to take Department requests and put them together in one account, like the Town does for roofing. Money would be put in collectively and the Committee would decide where to use it best. The Volunteer Ambulance siding request was cut from \$30,000 to \$15,000. The Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance Association is going to pay for half the cost. The Committee requested funding the Capital Reserve Fund Balance line at \$75,000.

Councilor Roberts asked why the Town was siding the building.

Mike Turner said that the wood boards are falling off and the Town is going to install vinyl siding.

Councilor Kotkin said that the pavement funding is \$630,000. How much of that is LOCIP and Town Aid to Roads?

Mike Turner said that Town Aid goes into the General Fund for milling and overlay work. The LOCIP money goes towards road reconstruction projects. The current reconstruction project is going to be Goff Road. There is about \$600,000 in the account for that project. The Town will go out to bid for that in the fall. It will include Nott Street to Desmond Drive. The next reconstruction project that will be recommended is Middletown Avenue between the Broad Street Green and Spring Street.

Councilor Cascio said that the other night when the Town Council discussed road repairs, the Councilors received a list for spring pavement.

Bonnie Therrien said that she has discussed the Town Councilor's concerns about other streets. The staff is updating the next two seasons of which streets will be paved.

Mike Turner said that typically the Town doesn't set the next season's schedule until the Town Council sets the budget.

Councilor Cascio asked the Town to look at Nott Street from the Silas Deane Highway to Wolcott Hill Road and Highcrest Road to Highland Street to see when those roads will be done.

Mike Turner said that there are small sections of Nott Street and Jordan Lane that the State owns.

Councilor Cascio said that those roads are highly traveled with busses and parents and are in bad condition.

## **BUILDING/HDC/PROPERTY MAINTENANCE**

Bonnie Therrien said this budget begins on page 132.

Brian O'Conner, Chief Building Official, said that there were two items that were cut: extra hours for the Property Maintenance Inspector and extra hours for the Historic District Coordinator.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the laptop computer was removed from this budget, because all computer requests were put in the Data Services budget.

Brian O'Conner said that the ten hours for the Property Maintenance Inspector are not enough. Other members of the Department end up doing an additional six or seven hours a week of that type of work because of the number of complaints. This is the time of year when complaints are received.

Chairperson Adil asked if any of this time translates back into revenue to the Town.

Brian O'Conner said that the Town collected \$4,000 in fines. It doesn't amount to much.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the Town has a group of people who owe the Town money.

Brian O'Conner said that the Town has finally scared some people enough that properties are finally being fixed. The request was for an additional 4 1/2 hours a week for this position. The Historic District Coordinator may attend a Commission meeting for two hours and then only has an additional 7 hours to work in the office. When the hours are reached, she doesn't come in. Her purpose is for public service. It would be nice to have her in the office more hours.

Councilor Kotkin asked if he could talk about the level of building in Town. If there is low building activity, it seems like people could shift their duties around.

Brian O'Conner said that there was a slow spell in the winter. It picks up in the spring, summer and fall. The number of permits is consistent. Employees do cross over into other jobs when they need to. There is a lot of time spent on the sign ordinance, too. The office is seeing a lot of building activity now with additions, pools, etc.

Councilor Roberts asked what the Historic District Coordinator did.

Brian O'Conner said that she takes care of all of the applications that come in for the Historic District. Anytime someone in that District does any work to their house, they have to make an application to the Commission. Her job is to be the liaison to the Historic District Commission.

Councilor Console asked which position takes the priority for additional hours.

Brian O'Connor said that it would be the Property Maintenance Enforcer.

Tony Martino, Administrative Analyst, said that he went through the revenue accounts today. The Department consistently budgets \$250,000 a year for their revenue because it doesn't know if big items will come in during the year. A month ago, the Town had the Kentucky Fried Chicken project come in. This month, two or three new houses came in. The Department is within \$5,000 of meeting the goal of \$250,000. There are two months left to go. He would venture to guess that the Department should pick up another \$10,000 per month.

Brian O'Connor said that when someone comes in with a permit, they estimate the cost of a project and the Town bases the fees on that. The estimated cost is just a guess. The Department would like come up with a square foot cost per item for the base cost. He said that he would love to have it ready for the summer, but it is just too much. It would be based on project item and square footage. Newington, Rocky Hill, and Berlin all use this system. It will generate more revenue for the Town. As the market changes, it can be updated every few years.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Town is also doing a customer service survey for people who have used those services.

Councilor Hemmann said that Quickbase should be used to put surveys on the webpage.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:55 p.m., Councilor Console moved "**TO ADJOURN TO THE BUDGET WORKSHOP SESSION ON MONDAY, MAY 12, 2008 AT 5:45 P.M. AT THE ELEANOR BUCK WOLF NATURE CENTER**" seconded by Councilor Cascio.

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

Dolores Sassano  
Town Clerk

*Approved by vote of Council July 21, 2008*