

## **REGULAR MEETING MAY 19, 2008**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, May 19, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Silas Deane Middle School.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Console, Forrest, Kotkin, Walsh, and Deputy Mayor Montinieri

Absent: Councilors Hemmann, Roberts, and Chairperson Adil

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Councilor Cascio.

### **PRESENTATION OF RED ONIONS - WETHERSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Deputy Mayor Montinieri welcomed Doug Shipman and the staff and Board Members of the Historical Society.

Dorene Ciarcia, President of the Wethersfield Historical Society, presented the red onions as payment for the rental of the Cove Warehouse, Keeney Memorial, and the Old Academy. The Town and Society recently renewed the lease agreement for these important historical structures and is very close in reaching an agreement for the Standish House. The Society operates the Keeney Memorial Culture Center as a welcome center and museum. The Center is open seven days a week. The Old Academy serves as offices and a research library. The Cove Warehouse is operated as a museum. One rope of red onions is the lease payment for the Cove Warehouse. It is a symbol of the Town's strong history and the relationship between the Town and the Historical Society.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri accepted the rope of red onions.

Doreen Ciarcia, President of the Historical Society Board, said that:

- The Historical Society's project for the 375th Anniversary Celebration is underway. The response has been very positive.
- Doug Shipman, Historical Society Director, will be leaving at the end of May to begin his second activation in the United State's Army. The Society is sad to see him go but the Society will remain an active partner with the Town.
- The Board has appointed Melissa Josefiak as Interim Director and will begin the search for a new Director.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri thanked Doug Shipman for his service. He said that Mr. Shipman is leaving for a tour of duty in New York and has acted selflessly in both his service to our country and our Town, but is relinquishing his position with the Town. He said that it was his pleasure to present this proclamation.

Doug Shipman, Director of the Historical Society, thanked the Town Council for the Proclamation and said that it was quite unexpected.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, took attendance.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, said that he was disappointed that so little was cut from the budget this year, especially the Board of Education. He said that the Board of Education has a bloated budget. He said that he is disappointed in the way the Town Council deliberates on the budget. He compared special education costs in Wethersfield with other Towns.

Barbara Ruhe, 79 Main Street, said that the recent ruling in Smart versus the Town of Wethersfield Historical District Commission was not based on a technicality but on a fatal flaw in two applications, the certificate of appropriateness and legal notices. The basis of the courts ruling was a denial of due process. Due process is a fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution. The denial of the certificate of appropriateness was seeking demolition of the barn at Comstocke Ferre. She said that she is a taxpayer and is not happy when government does not do its job properly. She hopes Town employees will be familiar with the State Statutes that govern them and they will do their jobs the way they are supposed to.

Frederick Odell, 41 Oldham Road, said that he was concerned when he received a letter from the Friends' of the Library asking him, as a taxpayer, for donations for the new Library. He said that there is a \$40,000 shortfall for new furniture for the Library. He said that he enjoys the services he receives in Town and doesn't mind paying for them. He said that he voted in favor of bond referendums for renovations. He does not expect \$40,000 to be taken from the Library. He said he went to look at minutes from the Town Hall/Library Building Committee to see what was going on but could only find them through February. He said that he remembers the Town settling with the phase one contractor for \$300,000 which has impacted the Library. He said if the Town can't find \$40,000 for the Library, there is a problem.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS**

Councilor Walsh said that the Redevelopment forum will be on June 11th at 7:00 p.m. at the Silas Deane Middle School to discuss the issues that the community faces and how the Town will go about fixing them. Also on May 20th at 7:00 p.m., the Preserve America Master Plan will be presented at the Keeney Memorial.

Councilor Cascio said that the Chamber of Commerce had its Annual Dinner last week with over 150 guests in attendance. The funds that were raised will go towards scholarships for High School Seniors for college. They will be given out on June 3rd at the Wethersfield High School Awards Assembly. The Chamber's goal was to give out 6 \$500 scholarships this year. The Memorial Day Parade is this Saturday, kicking off at 9:00 a.m. He said that it looks like the weather will be fantastic. It is going to be a great parade and ceremony at the Village Cemetery. The State of the Town Breakfast is a sponsored program with the Town and Chamber of Commerce. It will be held this Wednesday. Elected officials and the Town Manager will talk to those in attendance about the State of the Town. In today's "Hartford Courant", there was an article about a Boy's Volley Ball Team. Becky Kirsche Weaver is a graduate of Wethersfield High School who has brought this team into a tournament and won the division. He congratulated the team and its coach. He said that the Connecticut Funeral Directors give out 8 scholarships to graduating seniors across the State. There were over 300 applicants and a Wethersfield senior was awarded the scholarship for the entire Hartford County.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri thanked Councilor Cascio for his hard work on the Memorial Day Parade Committee.

Councilor Forrest said that the Town Council has heard an individual speak about the Board of Education budget at the last two Town Council meetings. He said that he reviewed some of the various accusations with Board of Education members and almost all of them were found to be erroneous or coached to be inaccurate. He said that he disagrees with the speaker's comments that the costs to educating special education children fluff.

Councilor Walsh said that on Tuesday night he attended the Band and Orchestra concert at the High School. It was an incredible night. The Band Director has done an incredible job with the students. On Thursday, the Band went to Toronto to play in a competition and won seven trophies including best over all band. Also, he said that he has had the privilege of working with Doug Shipman as liaison to the Historical Society. He is an incredible man. He has done so much for the Town and has great vision. It is a great blow to the Town to have him leave.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the:

- Wethersfield Historical Society is holding its Annual Meeting and Dinner on May 21st.
- Memorial Day Parade this Saturday, May 24th.

Dollars for Scholars program is May 28th.

- Wethersfield Historical Society will present actress Robin Lane with a One Woman Dramatization in Her Own Voice of A Visit with Eleanor Roosevelt on June 12th.
- Graduation ceremonies will be held on Friday, June 20th.
- The American Red Cross is holding a blood drive on June 20th
- The Cornfest will be held September 13th. Anyone wishing to volunteer can call Jean Kelly at the Chamber of Commerce.

## **COUNCIL ACTION**

None

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO TRANSFER \$3,610 FROM THE TOWN-WIDE RADIO BUDGET TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT OVERTIME ACCOUNT 1210 50002"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there is a Police Officer that works on the radio system. She budgets the money in the radio budget but has to transfer it to the Police overtime account to compensate for overtime. This is just a procedural transfer.

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

Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE USE OF \$4,300 FROM THE KATHARINE SMITH TRUST FUND TO MULCH TREES, PLANT CONTAINER GARDENS, AND TO PURCHASE SPECIALTY PAVERS FOR THE BROAD STREET GREEN"** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that this fund was established in 1982 to help in the upkeep of the Broad Street Green. The Park and Recreation Director has requested this money for some work on the Green. The trust has \$19,810. The Beautification Committee will also contribute \$3,500 for the pavers.

Councilor Console asked if the pavers would continue on Constitution Way.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that the pavers that are being asked for tonight will be used on both sides, near Elm Street.

Councilor Forrest asked how the pavers on Broad Street Green fit into the plan with the Preserve America Master Plan

Bonnie Therrien said that she doesn't believe they are mentioned in the final report.

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

Councilor Walsh moved **"TO CANCEL THE JULY 7, 2008 AND AUGUST 4, 2008 TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

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

Councilor Forrest moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF \$40,000 FROM THE CONTINGENCY TO**

**"THE TOWN HALL/LIBRARY RENOVATION PROJECT ACCOUNT"** seconded by Councilor Walsh.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that there were two meetings that occurred over the last two weeks to take a look at the nature of the problems that have surfaced in the wall area. The work will include the correction of 8 water valves and the holding connections and the boxing in of the valves. There were several variables that conspired. In the most recent meeting, when the bid results were tabulated, with the contingency fund left in reserve and the needs of the project it was determined that the total needed was \$40,000. It is a small reduction in the original amount requested of \$60,000. Every effort was made to examine any feature of the component. It would have been very difficult to determine the extent of the project in the scope of the project. A portion of the \$113,000 needed was included in the bid but the extent of the valve replacement was far more extensive. Once the wall was opened, it didn't make sense to replace only some of the valves. At the end of the day, the good news is that the amount that the Town has to take from contingency is relatively small. Several pieces of the project have had problems once walls are opened up. It is a dilemma with a building of this age. There is also a timeline delay associated with this problem that has not been entirely determined. It depends on the interfacing with the subcontractors that were hired to do this work, as well as the general contractor's portion of the project. It looks like it will throw the project back 6 to 8 weeks. He said that he asks for the Town Council's support to get this problem done. Also, the vault is part of the \$113,000. The State required a change in the specification to the wall of the vault.

Councilor Console asked why the Chairperson of the Building Committee or Town Engineer was not at the meeting.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she did not know why they were not at the meeting.

Councilor Console asked if there were any other areas in question after this.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the contractors have gone through all of the building now and there isn't anything that hasn't been opened. There was a contingency in place because the Committee knew it would have to face this possibility of problems. It is just much more extensive than thought. Based on everything he has heard, there isn't anything that hasn't been seen that could come up now.

Councilor Console said that he would like to get something in writing from Mr. Turner or Mr. Coombs stating that whatever is left to be done with the project, where that stands, like any other pieces of the building that need to be taken apart.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that there is a schedule that the Committee is working off of that has comprehensive sub-pieces. He said that he would be happy to get that to all Councilors.

Councilor Console said that every time the contractor opens a wall, something breaks and it costs the Town \$40,000.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that Councilor Console shares the feelings of the people on the Committee. There isn't one member who isn't shaking his head. He said that he really thought a few months ago that the Town was on the finish line. It is very frustrating.

Councilor Kotkin said that in the original memo with the \$60,000 request, the Capital Reserve Balance is not sufficient to cover the \$60,000. Is it sufficient to cover the \$40,000 and if it is, is there a reason why the Town Council would want to go one way or the other?

Bonnie Therrien said that there is only \$43,000 left in the Capital Reserve and she would hate to have it with nothing left in it. She would rather leave Capital Reserve and take the money from the Contingency. She said that hopefully, as the Town closes some projects, the balance may be built up in the Capital Reserve Account. There is no money going into it in the next budget year.

Councilor Cascio said that as a clarification for Mr. Odell, this motion is not to transfer fund for furniture. The Town Council is just trying to make up for where it found some additional issues. He had a conversation with the Town Manager about the fire wall in the vault. The Town is being required to go with a fire wall. He asked that the Town look at other communities who have gone through renovations to see what their requirements were. He is concerned

why this larger expense is being imposed on the Town.

Bonnie Therrien said that she has not heard back from Towns yet but hopes that all Towns have to put up the same walls.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that in the original plans there was a fire wall that was consistent with what was in place at the time. It was adequate for many years. The Administrator who refused that, refused it in two separate meetings. This Administrator has absolute authority, this is not a request, but a requirement.

Councilor Cascio said that this information needs to be communicated. The Town needs to figure out if this is a standard.

Bonnie Therrien said that she will get that information and have it in the next Management Report.

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

Councilor Walsh moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO ACCEPT A WINDOW GRANT FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$75,000, IF AWARDED, AND TO USE THE FUNDS FOR WINDOW REPLACEMENT AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER"** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that Representative Morin had received for the Town a \$150,000 window grant for the Town for energy efficiency. It is over a two year period. The first half is being used for the Community Center renovations in the gymnasium and 9/11 Center. Come July 1st, the Town will be able to apply for the second half of the money. It is her recommendation that the Town does as much as it can with the money at the Community Center. She said that she needs direction as to where the State dollars should go.

Councilor Cascio said that he has no problem with the funds going to the Community Center. His only concern is that there was some dialogue about this money going to the Webb School. That is a project that has been out there and he doesn't want to see it being pushed aside. It is needed there for energy efficiency there, also. He said that he didn't want to forget about other projects that were started and are still incomplete.

Councilor Kotkin asked how many windows could be replaced with the money.

Bonnie Therrien said that it would replace a few windows along the front of the building. She is not aware of any other funding sources available for windows. She said that she will look into it. The Town will replace as many windows as it can with this money.

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

Councilor Forrest moved **"TO APPROVE THE ADDITION OF 350 MAIN STREET TO THE BLIGHTED PROPERTY LIST"** seconded by Councilor Console.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Town has been after the owners of this property for quite a while to clean up a number of inoperable motor vehicles and deteriorated construction equipment and trash and debris. The Town has not gotten far with the homeowners and would like to include it on the list so that it can go to the court process.

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

Councilor Console asked if this was farm land that may be zoned to have equipment on it.

Bonnie Therrien said that she would make sure that it is not.

Councilor Forrest moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO ACCEPT, WITH GRATITUDE, THE ADDITIONAL DONATION OF \$50,000 FROM THE RICHARD M. KEANE FOUNDATION FOR THE**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE MEETING ROOM IN THE 9/11 MEMORIAL SPORTS CENTER AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER"** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she is very pleased to bring this to the Town Council. Through the generosity of the Keane Foundation, they have voted to give to the Town another \$50,000 to construct the much needed meeting room in the 9/11 sports center. This brings the total donations to \$550,000. It is just outstanding.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that Judy Keane and Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation are at the meeting.

Councilor Kotkin said that the generosity of the Keane Foundation is just amazing. Every time more money is found another part of the project is completed. Where does the project stand now?

Geoffrey Gaunt, member of the Community Center Building Committee said that with the additional funds that are being donated, the Committee is able to complete the last part. Everything is going very well and it is excited to see the project being completed.

Councilor Forrest said that he was wondering how the Committee was doing obtaining the pieces from the World Trade Center site.

Judy Keane said that she has the contracts from the Port Authority with her. She is going to be mailing them out so that the Town can get the pieces of steel as soon as possible. There is a possibility that they can get them this Friday. It has taken awhile to get here.

Councilor Forrest said that the Town will have one of the most unique facilities and will be a benchmark for other Towns in its public/private partnership with the Keane Foundation.

Judy Keane said that this is possible because of the generous donations of the Town, State, and all the people who support all of these ventures. The Keane Foundation 5K will be in Old Wethersfield on June 1st and the golf tournament will be on June 2nd. She thanked the Town Council for its continued support. There will probably be a grand opening in September but the project will be used all summer.

Councilor Cascio thanked Ms. Keane for her work and said that she should be proud of all that she has done.

Judy Keane said that this was a good thing for everyone.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that Judy Keane and the entire Committee are an amazing group. The commitment is remarkable. In these economic times, there are many folks in Town worrying about the economy but there is an enormous public response to this project. It is an amazing story that goes beyond Ms. Keane's quiet, low-key personality to the group.

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

## **BIDS**

Councilor Forrest moved **"TO APPROVE THE BID FOR POOL CHEMICALS FROM H. KREVIT AND COMPANY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$23,800 AND FROM SAVOL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,350"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there are two different companies to award the bid to because they each sell different types of chemicals that are needed for the pools. This is a regional bid through the Capital Region Council of Governments.

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

## **ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION**

None

## **MINUTES**

Councilor Forrest moved "**TO APPROVE THE BUDGET MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 2008**" seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Councilor Kotkin said that on page 14504 his comments should read 2006/2007 budget and a reduction of \$100,000.

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

Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO APPROVE THE BUDGET MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 28, 2008**" seconded by Councilor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Forrest abstained. The motion passed 5-0-1.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:38 p.m., Councilor Forrest moved "**TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PENDING LITIGATION, REAL ESTATE NEGOTIATIONS AND PERSONNEL MATTERS**" seconded by Councilor Kotkin. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 6-0-0. Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager was present during the Executive Session. No motions were made and no votes were taken.

At 8:54 p.m., Councilor Forrest moved "**TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION**" seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 6-0-0.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:54 p.m., Councilor Forrest moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Walsh. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 6-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

*Approved by vote of Council June 2, 2008*