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**REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 5, 2008**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Wednesday, November 5, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Silas Deane Middle School.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Console, Forrest (arrived 9:05 pm), Hemmann, Kotkin, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Montinieri, and Chairperson Adil.

Absent: Councilor Roberts

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 Kotkin.

PRESENTATION OF CHAIR

Chairperson Adil presented a chair to Donna Hemmann for her six years of Town Council commitment. He said that Donna Hemmann has served the Town for a long time.

Councilor Hemmann said that it has been an honor to serve the Town. She said that she has served on the Board of Education for eight years and the Town Council for six years. She said she looks forward to this work and hopes to continue to serve the Town. She thanked the Mayor for the honor.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MONTHLY REPORT

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, presented the following report:

RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS/NEW BUSINESSES

31 Town Line Road – Hines Sudden Service—a certificate of occupancy has been issued for this office building at the corner of the Silas Deane Highway and Town Line Rd.

Former Patty Cakes Bakery – Brookside Bagels By The Cove – Main Street

Red Onion Restaurant – Main Street

1380 Berlin Turnpike – Jordan Lane Shopping Center

Interior renovations are complete for a Little Caesar's Pizza restaurant in this space. A ribbon cutting is scheduled for November 6.

WPI Realty and Mortgage Group – 943 Silas Deane Highway

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APPROVED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS/UNDER CONSTRUCTION
UNDER PERMIT REVIEW

295 Ridge Road – Church Homes – Assisted Living

A CO has been issued for the renovation of this building to accommodate 13 condominium units. A preliminary plan has been submitted for the second phase of this project which would change the approved plans and include an assisted living facility. At the August 5 PZC meeting a zoning regulation amendment application was approved that would permit assisted living in this zone. A public hearing was held on October 7.

411 Hartford Avenue – Buck Arts Academy

Plans have been submitted to HDC for demolition and renovation to the barns on this property to accommodate an arts academy. The PZC reviewed the plans at their October meeting.

1025 Silas Deane Highway – OR and L Construction – Wethersfield Shopping Center

Reviewing site plans for a 19,000 sq. free standing, medical office building for the north end of this shopping center. The application will be reviewed by the PZC at their November 5 meeting.

DEVELOPER/PROPERTY OWNER/REALTOR CONTACT

- We have been approached by a new interested party working on plans for the Comstock Ferre property,
- Working with property owner to generate interest in site for a restaurant construction on Silas Deane Highway.
- Met with owner of Fun Zone to discuss developer interest in the property.
- Met with several individuals interested in the Masonic Hall on Main Street.
- Discussed possible redevelopment plans for property on the Berlin Turnpike.
- Met with a group interested in leasing the former Manny's Auto Parts space on the Silas Deane Highway.
- Met with an individual looking to purchase a building for a dental practice.

SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

- Met with CRCOG representative to discuss possible options and locations for new bus shelters at key locations on the Silas Deane Highway and in other locations in Town.
- Staff are preparing an additional STEAP application for the remaining funding necessary to complete the streetscape improvements in front of Town Hall.
- One façade closing was held in October for 912 Silas Deane Highway in the amount of \$50,000.

OTHER NEWS AND INITIATIVES

Economic Development and Improvement Commission

- Wethersfield Life has graciously agreed to provide some monthly space for an update on economic development and EDIC initiatives. EDIC member Doug Sacks will be providing a summary of monthly activities to improve communications with residents and businesses.
- An updated available property list has been distributed.
- The Salute To Business event will be held on Wednesday December 3 at the Country Club.
- The EDIC welcomes new member Betty Standish.

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Tourism

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- Paul Mayer from the Central Tourism District was in Town filming on October 10 for a promotional video of the Town.
- The Agency is working on its first quarterly report for the Council.

Redevelopment Agency

- The Agency held its second community forum on October 15 at 7pm at the Silas Deane Middle School. Guest speakers include a local commercial real estate broker and representatives from the State's Office of Responsible Growth.
- A draft mixed use zoning regulation is presently being reviewed by a subcommittee consisting of representatives from Design Review, PZC and the Redevelopment Agency. A public hearing is scheduled for November 18.

Preserve America

- We are continuing to work with the State on the awarding of \$115,000 towards the gateway project at Marsh Street. We are working on plans in anticipation of putting the project out to bid in the near future.

Councilor Cascio asked for an explanation of the 411 Hartford Avenue Arts Academy project with respect to the demolition of the barns and their location on the property.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she believes the barns are in the middle of the property but she will check to make sure that they are not the ones on Jordan Lane.

Councilor Cascio said that he would not like to see the project move forward and then find out that the barns are of historic value.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HEARINGS

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Board of Assessment Appeals Ordinance adds members to that Board. By State law, with an entire revaluation, communities can add members to the Board of Assessment Appeals. Normally that is a period when there are more appeals. The Assessor recommends that additional members be appointed. There will be training on December 1st for the Board members so it is important to appoint them at the next meeting. Any member that is appointed can be used during the appeal process for up to a year after the revaluation. It is up to the current Board of Assessments Appeals when and how they will use the additional members. The second hearing is for one time additional funding from the State for the Senior Center and Elderly Case Management.

No one else wished to comment on the hearings. Chairperson Adil declared the hearings closed.

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, said that the street needs to have another stop sign. The Police Department decides where to put the stop signs. Why does Hillcrest Avenue have more stop signs? He discussed the traffic patterns on Morrison Avenue and surrounding streets.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Town Council will receive the report that Mr. Colantonio is talking about in the Management Report. She said that she asked the Police Department to do some speed and number checks on Morrison Avenue during commuting time. The Police Department does decide on the location of stop signs but does consult with Engineering. There are guidelines that are utilized to determine where and when stops signs are located. The volumes and number of cars on Morrison Avenue as seen in the report do not warrant a stop sign under Federal guidelines.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, said that he would like to talk about the freeze on the Town side of the Budget. He said that the Board of Education should have a freeze because that is the largest portion of the budget. Not only should there be a freeze but also a reduction in expenditures whether it is programs or personnel. These are tough times. The cost to run the Town has gone up. He said that with the election, there have been political signs on the snow shelf around Town. He said that the signs don't belong there and should have been removed. The rules should not have been bent for the large signs that are up for an upcoming Ttown event.

COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Councilor Cascio said the Library Board held a meeting last week. They went over a timeline in which the Library was looking for an opening date. The target date is February 2, 2009. The Library is coming along. It will fulfill the needs of the Town when it is completed. There are some significant changes to the space. The Library is functioning and is moving in a positive direction although it is being overshadowed by the renovation process. The use of the Library was up 47 percent in September.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Insurance Committee met last week. The healthcare costs from July to September forward are under budget. He said that the Committee also discussed having an audit of the health care claims. It would probably cost thousands of dollars. It would make sure that the claims are processed properly and that what is being paid for reimbursement of claims is covered under the policy.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the Library/Town Hall Building Committee met. The move over to Town Hall is completed. There is a punch list to be done for the finished project. The Committee will work to have finished any loose ends like paint work or leaking pipes. The Committee is also working with the Library to finish that facet of the project including examining how the meeting room furniture will be addressed. The Committee discussed the gap between what it needs to finish the meeting room and the budgeted allocation. There is also

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a wish list that the Library is looking at to see how it will close this gap. The Friends of the Library and Library Board have worked hard over the last several years fundraising to address some of these issues. There still are some needs there and in the future the Town Council will probably be looking at some budget requests from them. The move itself came in under budget. People who see the building in its almost finished form are pleased. There may be some that are wondering where the glitz is, but the project cost is mostly behind the walls with the HVAC, pipes, and asbestos removal. There is no glamour there but the work was necessary for the facility and its future. Most of the staff is very pleased with the lighting and window space and visibility. The Committee is looking to have the Council Chambers complete in an eight or nine week timeframe.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the contractors were finishing the mezzanine in the Library so that the shelving can be installed. The shelving has already been delivered. After the Library work is completed, they will start on Council Chambers.

Councilor Hemmann said that the last month has been very stressful financially for many people with all of the problems on Wall Street. She said that at the Fireside Chat the Board of Education and Town Council met and discussed the proposed referendum on the High School and Hanmer School. There are immediate challenges that face the Town. The Town Manager has told the Council that there cannot be a February referendum. More time is needed to look at issues. She said that looking at the local referendum failures in the area from yesterday's election, the Town Council needs to take into consideration all that is happening economically in Town and whether or not the referendum should move forward this year. She said that she cannot see it in her conscience bringing this forward to the voters. If the economy improves she is willing to look at a prioritized plan so that the Town can afford that type of project.

Councilor Walsh said that this election was the first time in the United States that an African American has ascended to President. It was just 45 years ago in Birmingham, Alabama a sheriff let loose police dogs on African Americans who were peacefully protesting racism. Also on that day, there was a series of explosions killing people. That same year in Washington DC, Martin Luther King delivered his most famous speech. He said that he is proud to be an American today.

Councilor Kotkin asked what the turnout was for the election yesterday.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, said that the turnout in Wethersfield was about 83 percent.

Chairperson Adil said that in response to Councilor Hemmann's comments, the Town Council will be discussing the proposed referendum later in the meeting. He said that he would like the political parties and special interest groups to remove all the signs from Town property as quickly as possible. He echoed the comments of Councilor Walsh, yesterday was a historic day.

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Earlier this evening, there was a Rules and Procedures meeting. The issue with the minutes was discussed. New Freedom of Information rules require that all committee meeting minutes be posted on-line within seven days. At the next meeting, the Committee will discuss voting by phone and make a recommendation. Upcoming events include: the Webb Deane Stevens Museum annual Thanksgiving exhibit from November 1-30, the Chamber of Commerce is presenting a business breakfast on November 6th, the Connecticut Commission on Aging and AARP of Connecticut are presenting a discussion on Assessing Election Results on November 6th, the Green Summit II Energy Fair will be held this Saturday, November 8th, and the EDIC Salute to Business will be on December 3rd.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Walsh moved **“TO APPROVE THE ORDINANCE ADDING ARTICLE VIII, CHAPTER 10, COMMITTEES, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND OTHER AGENCIES”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the State Statute allows for the addition of members to the Board of Assessment Appeal during a revaluation period so that its meeting schedule can be held according to State Statute. She said that if this is approved, she would hope that the new members would be appointed at the next meeting.

Chairperson Adil asked if, by adding three members, does the majority rule still apply?

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the majority rule would apply.

Chairperson Adil asked that the parties be informed of these appointments.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Town Council may want to amend the motion to say that it is three additional members.

Councilor Walsh moved **“TO AMEND THE MOTION TO STATE THREE ADDITIONAL MEMBERS”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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

Councilor Kotkin said that when there is an appeal, how does it work?

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that an appeal can be heard by one member of the Board or two members or all members. The full Board would vote on the appeal. The revaluation firm, Vision Appraisal will be at the next meeting to tell the Town Council how the revaluation work is progressing. A taxpayer would appeal the revaluation first to Vision Appraisal and then to the Board of Assessment Appeals. There are a number of steps when there is a full revaluation.

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

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SENIOR CENTER AND ELDERLY CASE MANAGEMENT GRANT”** seconded by Councilor Hemmann.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that this is a one time grant from the State of Connecticut for \$10,680 that will be used towards the Senior Center and Elderly Case Management.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO AMEND THE TOWN’S TAX COLLECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES TO INCLUDE THE USE OF FORMAL EXECUTION TO SEIZE BANK ACCOUNT FUNDS TO SATISFY DELINQUENT MOTOR VEHICLE TAXES”** seconded by Councilor Console.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Town Council has been very active in finding ways to collect back taxes. The Tax Collector is here tonight. She has done a great job at finding ways to do a better job of collecting back taxes. By State Statute, the Town can seize funds in a bank account for delinquent motor vehicle taxes. This would only be done for people who are not responding to her requests or repeat motor vehicle delinquent taxpayers. It has to be a long term case before this would be done. This was referred to the Budget and Finance Committee. At a meeting of that Committee, a State Constable came to the meeting and talked about how this process works. The Constable delivers a formal execution to seize the funds to the bank. The bank then notifies the person that they have 20 days to appeal the removal of the funds from the account. The Budget and Finance Committee voted to approve this and bring it back to the full Council for review.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Committee met with a State Marshal, one of our Constables, and one of the items in the packet was an exemption of claims form for financial institutions. It shows the exemptions that would exempt certain funds within the bank accounts, like social security benefits, worker’s compensation benefits, and unemployment benefits, certain wages, health and disability insurance payments. There are a lot of safeguards in place in the State Statute’s to protect people from having lifeline funds collected by the Town. The Town is aiming this at the folks that just do not pay car taxes. There are some folks who have five or six vehicles that they just do not pay car taxes on. If the person can afford to pay the taxes and is taking advantage of the services of Wethersfield, then the person should pay taxes. The tax rate was reduced by an appreciable amount by moving up the collection rate which resulted in property tax savings. In order to do this, the Town Council needs to give the Tax Collector the ability to collect back taxes from people who just plain do not pay them.

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Councilor Hemmann asked if this would be put into a policy or procedure so that it is used in a standard format so that it is executed consistently over time. Will there be definitions and guidelines?

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she would be glad to do that.

Councilor Console said that the Committee put a lot of time into this and it has been gone about the right way. This is good for the Town.

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

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO DEFER THE REFERENDUM TO A DATE TO BE DETERMINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL”** seconded by Councilor Walsh.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Building Committee has been working diligently, as has the Board of Education, on putting together a referendum for the renovation of the High School and Hanmer School. They are at a point to make a recommendation for the renovations with a dollar amount. Originally, the Town was looking at a February 2009 referendum date but there is no way to do it and follow the State timelines. There has also been a lot of concern that the State could change the reimbursement rate. There is the thought that it is important the Town have some type of vote, before June 30th, so the Town could get the reimbursement rate that is in place now. That would mean the Town would have to vote by May and the Town staff would have a month to get the forms into the State. There are a number of questions that the Town Council has to answer. Also in the packets, based on a \$20,000,000 renovation to Hanmer School and \$60,000,000 renovation to the High School, the financial advisors from Webster Bank put together a debt plan. Representatives are here tonight to adjust the numbers based on what the Town Council decides. Town Manager Therrien handed out the recommendations of the Building Committee from its meeting Monday night.

Christine Fortunato, Chairperson of the School Building Committee – Wethersfield High School and Hanmer School, said that the Committee endorsed two plans. The Hanmer School proposal has not changed since the Fireside Chat. On the High School the recommendation is proposal 4A. It is based on comments from Town Council members and Board of Education members. 4A reflects all of the needs for the High School, correcting the Office of Civil Rights violations, taking care of science areas to meet State mandates, provides for a new gymnasium, and allows for the current auditorium to move into the current gym and the music room to move into the auditorium. The Board feels this is the best plan in terms of meeting the educational goals. In terms of cost in various scenarios, that is certainly for the discussion and decision making of the Town Council. Through the Superintendent and the architects, the Committee continues to find ways to reduce costs and to increase the reimbursement rate. One option is to request a building waiver from the State.

Stacy Hodges, Chairperson of the Board of Education, said that in regard to one issue that Councilor Hemmann spoke of, the Board of Education is very mindful of the economic climate and through the Superintendent of Schools will request more time to work on the numbers and look for more funding. There are some items to address like the Office of Civil Rights, State Accreditation, and Capital Area School Reform issues. She said that the Board of Education is working its hardest to be mindful of all of these things.

Chairperson Adil asked if the Chairperson of the Board of Education had any comments on the Hanmer School project since the motion was to defer both projects.

Stacy Hodges, Chairperson of the Board of Education said that the feedback from the Board of Education is that the High School is the priority as it needs accreditation and needs to meet the reform program.

Fred Bushey, Supervisor Maintenance and Operations, said in response to the comments about going to the State for a waiver, the amount of square footage of the building in relation to the active enrollment of the building is offset a little. There are too few students to the actual square footage of the building. The case needs to be sent to the Bureau of School Facilities in the Legislature. This will encompass the new science wing and gymnasium. These are the areas that school staff and the architects will continue to look at. As long as the staff can address the needs for the space by the curriculum, the lower enrollment versus the higher square footage of the building should not be an issue.

Councilor Cascio thanked Mr. Bushey for his report and with the work of the Committee on the thoroughness of the reports. He said the motion is to defer the referendum until the Town Council receives more information. He asked if the Board of Education has voted on the two projects.

Stacy Hodges, Chairperson of the Board of Education, said that the Board has not voted on the plans but has seen them. They are the recommendations of the Building Committee.

Councilor Cascio asked if the educational specifications have been put together yet by the Board of Education.

Fred Bushey, Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations, said that they are being done now.

Councilor Cascio said that technically the project is not complete without the educational specifications.

Chairperson Stacey Hodges said that the Board's request is for more time to be able to get that information and that the Board is not ready and prepared to go forward.

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Christine Fortunato said that the Committee is very mindful that there are two architects who have been performing yeoman's job for the time that they have been on the job. They have addressed the needs and looked at various schematics. The Committee is presenting these options to go before the Board of Education and Town Council and with some tweaking these are the plans to work with going forward if the Town Council decides to do that. For all intent and purposes, the architects' jobs have come to an end.

Councilor Cascio said that when the Town Council looks at the plans that the Committee has brought forth and if the Town had the best of all worlds and money, he would say let's do it. One of the things that came out of the Fireside Chat is accreditation and accessibility at the high School. If the Town does not have this referendum for renovations, is the Board aware then of what it needs to do to get the accessibility and accreditation to move in the right directions. The Town may have to go in the direction of not having a large referendum, but one with priorities that needs to be done to accommodate the goals of the educational system.

Chairperson Hodges said that what needs to be done, she thinks cannot be done through the budget. This budget is the very best at addressing the issues of these buildings. Money is not available in the budget to accommodate the requirements.

Fred Bushey, Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations, said that what needs to be done needs to be done. There is a piece of this in the 2008-09 budget, so a few items could get done. For the upcoming year there are a few more things that could be done towards ADA. He said that he does not see going to Capital Improvement for the larger items. If a referendum is not going to take place, then the Board of Education would have to look to the Capital Improvement Board and the State for any possible grants.

Chairperson Adil said that Michael Kohlhagen, Superintendent of Schools, and Julie Montinieri, Vice Chairperson of the Board of Education, have just arrived.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Capital Improvement requests went out this week to the Departments. With such an unknown timeline for a referendum, she highly recommends that the Board of Education put them in there, even if they are big ticket items.

Fred Bushey, Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations, said that it has not been discussed yet but it can be done. He has received the Capital Improvement packet already.

Chairperson Adil brought the Superintendent up-to-date on the discussion.

Michael Kohlhagen, Superintendent of Schools, said that he would like to reiterate the urgency of these projects in regard to the Civil Rights and Accreditation issues.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that residents are looking at disheartening and concerning economic profiles and are worried. As a group, the concerns about the timing of these projects

was raised. He thanked the Committee for all of its work along with the architects and Board of Education. Since that time, the Town leadership has met with the bank representatives to look at debt loads assuming certain scenarios. He said that he recognized the critical importance of these projects and respect the opinions of the Building Committee and the Board of Education in their desire to see the projects continue to stay on the screen. But speaking for himself, the timing is everything and people need to take a step back and see what is happening with the local and national economies, before the Town says with any confidence, that these projects have any viability. He said that he spoke with the Town Manager last week about the referendums that were held last night and that failed. What that says to him is that clearly timing is everything. The Town Council needs to let the public know that it understands the timing and needs to take that step back, so that the Town Council has the ability for some room. These two projects are not going away. He said that he looked at the economic impact of the projects and also took into account that even though at peak, the total obligation for \$200,000 was in the high \$500 impact for an average household as compared to the current number of high \$200. He sort of adjusted his thinking. The Town Council may find in relative short order that the public may embrace these projects knowing that the costs are only going to get higher and these projects have an impact in regard to accreditation and could potentially create great pain for the community. Lastly, in regard to supporting the whole project is that the Town Council needs more public input. He said that he thinks people are saying not right now as evident in the failed referendums of yesterday but, at the same time, the Town Council needs to stay close to the public to hear when and sooner rather than later. He said that it is his hope that the Town Manager can assist with this going forward into the winter and early spring. If the economic profiles improve and the window opens, the Town should be prepared to move. The Board of Education and Building Committee's work needs to stay on the table and move it forward as soon as possible. He said that it is important for the public to know that the Town Council understands where the public is and also the mounting pressures on these projects that are absolutely imperative to get done. He said that he supports a hold.

Christine Fortunato, Chairperson of the Building Committee, said that the Committee members are equally concerned with the economic situation, too. However, the Committee was charged by this body to propose the best program to take care of the educational needs of the students. There is no doubt that there is some massaging to take place. She said that she is committed to trying to make this work. While February may not be feasible, the Committee has worked with the treasurer for an updated timeline if there is a desire to begin the projects and get the application into the State by June 2009. This would mean the Legislature would take action in January 2010, and the Town could begin the project sometime after that. The longer the Town Council holds off, the longer it takes for the project to be completed. There is also a cost factor. She said that the Committee recognizes that this is not a good time. While today is not a good day, planning and making decisions for tomorrow is not that far away. The latest to have a referendum is May. She believes that the schedule and timeline are there for the Town Council's consideration. This allows for a few more weeks for the Board of Education to finish its work and for the Town Council to monitor the financial situation unless the Town Council's desire is to say that it would like to wait another year. She wants the public to know that the Town does

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have deadlines set by the State and school projects procedures have changed.

Councilor Kotkin asked a question about one of the handouts. He said that on the limited scope alterations there is nothing that provides more reimbursement from the State. Is this not available on the limited scope alterations but on the renovated as new?

Fred Bushey, Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations, said yes.

Councilor Kotkin said when looking at the limited scope alterations under cost to Town, the reimbursement rate is much lower for limited scope. Is that because the 34.26 applies to a smaller amount of the work so there are pieces that just don't get anything.

Fred Bushey, Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations, said a lot of the work in the limited scope is not reimbursable through State grants and would be at full cost to the Town and taxpayers.

Councilor Kotkin asked how are any sort of energy efficiency subsidies refunded? Are they in addition to these grants? Do they reduce the cost to the Town further?

Fred Bushey, Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations, said that they would be in addition to the other grants.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the very expensive air conditioning component may not be reimbursable through the traditional reimbursement. Where is the Committee in regards to reimbursement of some of the energy related items like high efficiency items for reimbursement beyond what the State would normally make available.

Fred Bushey, Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations, said that it is the goal and charge to look at all the possibilities that are out there.

Dave Drake, Vice Chairperson of the Building Committee, said that anything that is high efficiency is reimbursable. The Committee is researching more substantial grants now to see what will be available.

Councilor Kotkin said that this Committee has spent more hours on this than any other committee this year. He thanked the members for all of the very long hours they have put into these projects.

Councilor Console asked if there is a database that the Committee has that is between the limited scope renovations and build as new renovations for reimbursement by line item to the Town from the State. Is that too big a request?

Councilor Drake said that the architect probably has it. He does not have it. He said that the Committee tried to present this as a whole. If the Town Council decides it doesn't want to do the

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entire project but certain parts, the Committee can go back and take another look. The Committee could do it by line item but the numbers will not be that sharp because they are tied into other things.

Councilor Console said that by having that information it may make it easier to determine what route to take and what the savings may be.

Councilor Hemmann asked if the suggested motion was to look at May and the timeline that was passed out also looks to May. Why would the motion then say in the future, why not say May?

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that May is the worst case scenario. There has been no discussion as to when it will be. If the Town Council is shooting for June 30th for fear of State funding changing, then it has to be May.

Councilor Hemmann said that in regards to a list of priorities, she sees the following: the compliance issues and looking at OCR and ADA problems, looking at specific needs and Councilor Cascio's request for educational specifications as that drives much of what is being done. Also, regarding the referenda that were defeated in other Towns, the Towns are facing some regulatory requirements we are also and so they are going to be looking into the same issues as we are to see what they need to get done. Wethersfield is looking at these issues and going to the State to talk that through a little bit. She asked the Town Manager to see if the June timeline is still foremost in their minds or if they look to defer their questions based on the economic climate and the needs of the communities. If the bar has been raised and those types of expectations are there and have to be done, it is not unique to this Town and is a requirement of all of the other communities to raise that bar to get to the same point. So from the perspective of lobbying, there may be more power in numbers related to going back to the State to say keep the current reimbursement rate. A lot can change in a year and everyone hopes it will but from an economic perspective people, may not see huge changes in regards to how budgeting is looked at. It will affect the Town over the next three to five years. The Town needs to be prepared for that. She would hate to see the Town go to referendum and have it defeated because the Town went out with something large, knowing the demographics of the Town and what the Town can afford. She would like to hear more from the folks at Webster Bank, too, to help her understand from their perspective, where the Town is at related to debt.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that representatives from Webster Bank are here tonight.

Christine Caroulo Assistant Vice President, Government Finance Group, of Webster Bank, said that she and Chris Martin, Manager of the Department, have worked as the Town's advisors for a few years. The Town Manager gave the Town Council two scenarios. One is based on two different debt structures with the same dollar amount, \$20,000,000 for Hanmer School and \$60,000,000 for the High School. The scenarios assume a 40 percent reimbursement rate from the State. It also assumes a schedule of when the money would be borrowed and when the

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project is being done and bills are coming in. If the project were approved this year the money wouldn't be borrowed until next year when bills need to be paid. The first few pages in the handout are summary pages. A few weeks ago, when Town staff met with her, she looked at the scenario of if the Town approved the project this spring, the borrowing would begin in February 2010 and some temporary notes would be borrowed. This would be done because with school projects, the exact amount of the grants is not always known until the project is completed. For school projects, the State will approve a certain reimbursement rate for reimbursable expenses and then once the project is completed and the Board of Education and School Building Committee have approved the project, after six months, the State will give the rest of the grant money. Temporary notes are issued once a year for three years based on the construction schedule. She assumed that both projects will be bonded all at once. The worst case scenario is that all of the debt is assumed at one time and so it hits the grand list and peaks out and eventually pays down. This was the plan two weeks ago. She also did it to level the structure, structuring debt so that it is similar to a mortgage payment. It essentially defers the principle to later years and that prevents extreme peaks in the mill rate. It means that more interest is paid over the life of the bond issuance, because as much principle is not being paid off in the early years.

Councilor Hemmann asked what it means in regards to what the Town can afford and what other items are being looked at that need to come to a potential referendum in the next five years.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there may be other school projects, road work, open space, and Fire Department space needs issues.

Councilor Hemmann said that in consideration of that, how will that flesh out? If the Town Council is talking about a long term plan, these other issues need to come into the discussion because it will impact the Town. In looking at some of the charts, in 2014, the level principal page shows the average per household cost is roughly \$689. This is only six years away and represents only what is in the pipeline, not what is in planning now. That will drive the debt higher. The Town needs to keep in mind the demographics of the community with this project and also the long term projects. Where does this top out? The projects are not going to stop.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there will be debt coming off during that time period. She said that the Town could sit down with Webster and talk about what the Town thinks could happen.

Chairperson Adil said that the Town has talked to Webster representatives about where the Town was in regard to a manageable rate and the comparison to other Towns.

Christine Caroulo said that the debt ratios are per capita and are fairly low to average. There are many communities that have debt up around 9 or 10 percent. Wethersfield debt service as a percentage of budget is around 5 percent with the peak year at 7 ½ percent. Looking at it using those ratios, it is manageable as a community. Also, the surrounding Towns are in the same boat depending on where they are in the maintenance of their facilities. On page 3, she did separate by project a debt schedule. The Town is planning on bonding at least \$4,000,000 in February to

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finish off the Library/Town Hall and road/sidewalks projects. Once that is in place and the bonds are sold and the rate is locked in, the Town Council will be able to see how that is going to affect the budget and the mill rate and everything can build on from there.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there is a deadline for the Town to issue these bonds related to Town Hall.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Town borrowed from itself and has to pay it back. She doesn't know if there is a statutory deadline to issue bonds after a referendum. She said that she was looking at timing and how the cash reserves will be.

Councilor Kotkin asked for a description of the municipal market for debt issuance currently.

Christine Caroulo of Webster Bank said that in mid-September the municipal bond market froze up. Webster was unable to find bidders. After the second stimulus package passed, some note sales were negotiated. As time goes on the market is really going to loosen up with more and more bidders entering the scene. Webster can now go back into the market and get four or five competitive bids. The Town of Montville had originally planned to issue 15 year bonds but decide to issue notes at 1.35 percent, which is very low. The highest bid was 1.5 percent higher than the lowest bid. This is not a spread that is normally seen in the market. On the bond market, 20 year bonds issued today were 5 or 5 ½ percent. Before the market crashed the Town of Griswold issued bonds at 4 percent. Things are loosening up a little bit.

Councilor Cascio said that he appreciated all of the information. It is important to see what other communities are doing, but his concern is for what Wethersfield is doing. He is concerned about the experiences with past debt. He appreciates a timeline of when debt will be removed. There is a renovation of the high school that hasn't been paid off yet. He is concerned that Wethersfield's grand list is one that doesn't grow and surrounding communities have grand lists that seem to grow. Personally, he would like to be cautious when comparing the Town to other communities. The concern is the perception that Wethersfield, with the economy today, is to stay within the financial budget. This is a big decision to make.

Councilor Console said that Councilor Hemmann's idea is very good. He would like to see an entire wish list of everything that the Town may need in the next five to ten years to see what the Town needs and what the Town can afford. It is prudent for the Town Council to be forward thinking.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the debt ratios given take into account a grand list growth of .1 percent. The debt ratio percentages having taken into account the look at National benchmarks that include the grand list growth in it. He agrees with taking a long term look at ,t be anticipated at this point. That needs to be balanced. He said that he can't think of a project of more importance than these two in the foreseeable future. These are the largest projects that the Town has ever seen or proposed in one sitting. All of the debt ratio proposals and the flat principal analysis take into account that this is going to be the largest tax the Town is going to

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face. The Town Council has to have the economic fortitude to lead the Town through these projects given all the facts. The Town Council needs to show the leadership to the community and what the Town is facing and why.

Chairperson Adil directed the Town Manager to come up with that list of projects and also an economic development bond referendum for \$5,000,000 or \$10,000,000. The projects will have to be prioritized. The roads are very important.

Councilor Forrest arrived.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she will get the list ready for the Core Services meeting November 19th so that the Town Council can set a prioritization list. She said that she would like everyone to be aware that in reviewing the architects' contracts, they have performed about 95 percent of the work. The Town has to be careful that this doesn't drag on but she will warn the architects they cannot bill beyond their contracted amount. At some point, if this continues and the Board of Education or Building Committee keeps using them, someone is going to start billing the Town more than the contracted amount. Only \$100,000 was allocated for their services and almost all of it has been used.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the contract is very tightly written. They can't go off and start pursuing something without the Town Manager's authorization.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she does not want to find out that they are beginning to look for billable hours if others start calling them.

Chairperson Adil thanked everyone involved with this and said what a spectacular job they have done. \$100,000 was already committed to the project and he doesn't want to see it go to waste. He doesn't want the Building Committee members to think that their work is going to waste by putting the project off. These projects have to get done, it is just a matter of when. These are very difficult times and the Town Council is cognizant of that. It is the Town Council's task now to get out and educate the public and come up with some proposals so that this can get passed.

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

Councilor Walsh moved **“TO ACCEPT AND AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF TWO PARCELS AS PROPOSED FROM LACAVA CONSTRUCTION TO THE ABUTTING PROPERTY OWNERS WITH THE PROVISIONS THAT ALL OF THE PROPERTY IS TO REMAIN AS OPEN SPACE AND REJECT ONE PARCEL TO THE TOWN”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that in 2007 this was referred to the Planning and Zoning Commission. LaCava Construction thought that in the 1970's this property was deeded to the Town. The Planning and Zoning Commission rejected accepting the parcels by the Town and the issue was sent to the Public Works Committee. It was discussed with Mr. LaCava. The Town

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went out and talked to the abutting property owners and two of the neighbors were interested. One parcel will be split between the two property owners and another parcel will be split between two other owners. There was one parcel that no one claimed. It could be given to the Town or stay with LaCava Construction. Your motion leaves the parcel with LaCava Construction. The Planning and Zoning 8-24 review was done on the new proposal.

Councilor Forrest asked what expense there would be for the Town for the Town of Wethersfield proposed parcel.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that if it was left open space it would have to be mowed occasionally and the sidewalk would need to be shoveled.

Councilor Forrest said there are sections of Pyquag Village with parcels of land and the Town does not want to set a precedent by purchasing one of them. There are also maintenance issues.

Chairperson Adil said that the rejection of the parcel by the Town is so that all possible alternatives can be looked at.

Councilor Forrest said that maybe in the next few years there will be a property value shift and those owners may want to purchase the parcels.

Councilor Hemmann asked if the Town does not accept that parcel then it stays with LaCava Construction.

Chairperson Adil said yes, that is what the motion is for.

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

Councilor Walsh moved **“TO STORE THE LADY JUSTICE STATUE AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY UNTIL A MORE APPROPRIATE LOCATION CAN BE DETERMINED”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Montinieri.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Lad Justice statue in the Town Council Chambers originally came from the Probate Court. It was removed for the renovations and there is no place to store it.

Councilor Hemmann said that she had a call from Barbara Ruhe who suggested donating to the Department of Justice. She has a contact at the State level.

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

Councilor Forrest moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO ASSIGN POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENT SUPPORT, AS NEEDED, FOR THE GREEN SUMMIT II, AT THE TOWN’S EXPENSE”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

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Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that this Saturday is the Green Summit. It will require two staff members from the Fire Marshal's office and one Police Officer. The total fees would be \$475. This is a Town sponsored event so that the request is for the Town to pay all the costs.

Chairperson Adil said that the football game has been moved to Friday night under the lights because the Green Summit is at the High School Saturday.

Councilor Hemmann said that she was concerned with the statement in the packet that \$2,000 was budgeted for waivers and the cost is over that.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there have been a lot of waivers this year.

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

Councilor Walsh moved **"TO TRANSFER \$790 FROM THE CAPITAL RESERVE ACCOUNT 4100-54440 TO THE ADA SIDEWALK RAMP PROJECT ACCOUNT 3000-54435-50006 TO INSTALL RAMPS AT THE INTERSECTION OF WOLCOTT HILL ROAD AND CLEARFIELD ROAD"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said this is for the ramp located near Leo's Pizza and Bliss Market. There have been some slips and falls at that location. There is some money in the budget but it is short.

Councilor Hemmann said that the Town does not finish projects like the Standish Park project where there are trip hazards on the existing walkway. That isn't getting done because it is heading into winter. These are safety issues. The Town Council needs to address unfinished projects and complete them and get them off the list. It will serve the Town better. The Town should be setting an example of sidewalk maintenance.

Chairperson Adil said that Infrastructure and Public Works Committees will keep an eye on that.

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

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO SIGN A STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE GUARD AND RESERVE"** seconded by Councilor Walsh.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Mayor requested that this item be put on the agenda. It is something that the United States Conference of Mayors requested that the Towns support.

Chairperson Adil said that he received this from the Mayor of Anchorage. He thinks that this is something that the Town Council should support as many Guard and Reserve members are in

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Wethersfield.

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

BIDS

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR AUTOMOTIVE AND TRUCK PARTS TO GENUINE PARTS CO (722 WETHERSFIELD AVENUE, HARTFORD, CT), ACME AUTO (760 LORDSHIP BLVD, STRATFORD, CT) AND WEST SPRINGFIELD AUTO PARTS (945 MAIN STREET, WEST SPRINGFIELD, MA) WITH A COMBINED BID AWARD NOT TO EXCEED \$35,000”** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that \$35,000 is budgeted for automobile and truck parts. A number of different items were bid out. The Town will go with the lowest bidder but if the lowest bidder does not have the parts, then the next lowest bidder will be used.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF WETHERSFIELD

RESOLVED, that the Town of Wethersfield may enter into with and deliver to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security any and all documents which it deems to be necessary or appropriate; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Bonnie L. Therrien, as Town Manager of the Town of Wethersfield, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Town Council and to do and perform all acts and things which they deem to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents, including, but not limited to, executing and delivering al agreements and documents contemplated by such documents.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF: The undersigned has executed this certificate this 28 day of November, 2008.

MINUTES

Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 20, 2008”** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:52 p.m., Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS REAL ESTATE NEGOTIATIONS AND UNION NEGOTIATIONS”** seconded

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by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0. Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, was present during the Executive Session. No motions were made and no votes were taken during Executive Session. At 10:15 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION TO REJOIN PUBLIC SESSION”** seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

A motion was made by Councilor Kotkin, seconded by Councilor Walsh **“TO ACCEPT THE 818-MIDDLE MANAGEMENT UNION CONTRACT,”** as outlined by the Town Manager. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 10:15 p.m., Councilor Walsh moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Walsh. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk