

## **BUDGET WORKSHOP**

### **APRIL 25, 2007**

The Wethersfield Town Council held its budget workshop on Wednesday, April 25, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. at the Eleanor Wolf Buck Nature Center.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Drake, Forrest, Kirsche, Kotkin, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Fortunato and Chairperson Adil.  
Absent: Councilor Montinieri

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

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk took attendance.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that:

- She was handing out the investment income reports. Based on Lisa Hancock, Finance Director's analysis, the Town could go up to the \$250,000 mark.
- Nancy Stillwell, Director of Social and Youth Services invited Town Councilors to the upcoming Youth Leadership meetings.
- Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk provided the Town Councilors with a handout highlighting additional duties in the Town Clerk's office if more hours were given to her part-time positions. She also handed out a flier on an upcoming conference she will be attending.
- Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, Jim McDonald, Assistant Director of Physical Services, Heather Vargas, Administrative Analyst for Physical Services, and Tony Martino, Administrative Analyst for Engineering were at the meeting

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

### ENGINEERING

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the only difference in the Engineering budget was that the Department was charged with creating a zero based budget. He took the time that people spent on various tasks and broke the tasks down into 16 categories so that Council can see where the time is spent and on what programs. The cost of running the office was broken down proportionately, too. It was enlightening to see that a good bulk of our time was spent on customer service. As part of Phase II work in Town Hall, the office layout will change. He would like to capitalize on the layout change to address how the Department meets the customers at the counter and to improve productivity of the staff. Currently, one of the five staff members stops working to assist a customer at the counter. He would like to take advantage of the new layout and use one of the two secretarial staff, Diane Matrone or Debbie Picard as the key people to the customers at the counter. Other staff will still be available to answer questions, but will not be the first contact. Part of the increased staff time that Brian requested would be absorbed in the Engineering budget. It is not included in the base budget. There are also some recommendations for how the sidewalk program is administered and run.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that on page 132 Traffic and Sidewalk is a different division in the budget.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that his Department has always managed the pavement marking and sidewalk maintenance but it is now a line item in the Engineering budget.

The pavement marking is bid on a two year cycle through CRCOG. The sidewalk budget has a slight increase. The Town is falling somewhat behind in the administration of the program. This is for sidewalk maintenance, not new sidewalk installation. The sidewalk inspector will mark off sidewalks to be repaired. A notice is sent out to inform residents that they have a defect and they can hire a contractor or use the Town's and get billed. There is some revenue

coming into the program based on the bid price. If a defect is found in front of a Town building, the program absorbs the cost. Not all of the work is being paid back 100 percent.

Tony Martino, Administrative Analyst said that last year, the Town absorbed a lot of the cost of the sidewalk repairs because work was done around the Highcrest Elementary School.

Councilor Kotkin asked where the revenues and expenditures for this program were in the budget.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that on page 131 is the request for next year.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that last year the Town tried a program on Ridge Road. The Town chose to send residents notices to repair the sidewalk without the Town administering the contract. The Town didn't receive any revenue back for the administration of the contract. A portion of the Town is set up that way again next year, too.

Councilor Cascio said that Ridge Road looked beautiful after it was repaved but the construction of the new home has damaged some of the road.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the contractor that did the work for the sewer and water hook up is responsible for the repairs of that portion of the road for five additional years. The patch has to be completed correctly before a certificate of occupancy is issued.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked now that the Town has had a year when the homeowner has been on its own to fix sidewalks, how would Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, compare that to the past practice.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the Town can get a lot more sidewalk repairs done because it reduces the Town's administrative costs. West Hartford has the entire sidewalk program in the Town budget. The homeowner has no costs. It is done as part of the maintenance work of Public Works.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked about the rate of compliance.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that there is 100 percent compliance because if the homeowner doesn't do it, the Town will and bill the homeowner. He doesn't think the Town had to do any of the sidewalks. All residents complied.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that even though the Town heard a lot of feedback about the program everyone was in compliance. Did anyone experience difficulty with the payments?

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that one person came in and the Town worked out a payment plan for that resident.

Councilor Kotkin asked what the difference was between the sidewalk dollars on page 131 and 132.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that page 132 represents when the sidewalk fund was its own division. For next year, it has been merged with the Engineering Budget.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that page 132 is all zeros because the item was included in the Engineering budget for 2007/2008.

Councilor Kotkin said that in 2007, the current year, the Town has budgeted \$75,000 and the Town now expects to spend \$69,000. The Department request for the next fiscal year is \$125,000 but the Town Manager knocked it down to \$50,000. It is well below the requested amount and the current budget amount.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Town can continue the program as it did with Ridge Road. This would really just be money to do the sidewalks that the Town has to maintain.

Councilor Kotkin asked where the sidewalk inspector's expense was seen in the budget.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that his salary is in the Engineering budget.

Councilor Kotkin said that if the Town wanted to inspect more sidewalks would his salary increase.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that this is a salaried position. There are only so many sidewalks that can be inspected based on time constraints. The Sidewalk Inspector also administers the Call Before You Dig Program, licensing of Insurance Contractors, and also deals with customer complaints and as a third hand on the survey crew.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Town pays the LAP policy. He asked if it could be determined how much of that is for slips, trips and falls.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that she could speak with Greg Bedula, the Town's Agent of Record but that it may be difficult to determine.

Councilor Kotkin said what if the Town spent \$30,000 more on sidewalks and went to CIRMA and said that the Town has doubled its work on this liability.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that Greg Bedula has been working on this issue. He has approached CIRMA and asked what impact it would have on the Town's rates.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that this budget is for repairs only.

Councilor Forrest asked where in the budget he could see the revenue from the sidewalk program.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that it was on page E-4. It is only \$7,000.

Councilor Forrest said that the Town bills for the sidewalk repair, so where is that revenue.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that about 40 percent of the residents choose to use their own contractor for sidewalk repairs.

Councilor Forrest said that of the 60 percent who used the Town's contractor, where is the money they paid the Town shown in the budget.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that next year there isn't any revenue expected because the Town isn't going to administer the contract. The \$7,000 is just carryover from this year.

Councilor Forrest said that \$50,000 is budgeted for sidewalks in front of Town buildings. The sidewalk inspector can also continue to inspect as many residential sidewalks as he wants.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the Town is trying to get on a five year cycle. It is probably on a twelve year cycle now because the program is so far behind. The tough part is that the Town has to repair Town sidewalks if it expects homeowners in a neighborhood to repair their sidewalks.

Councilor Forrest asked if the expectation is to be at 20 percent next year.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that would not happen next year. The Town will develop a program and performance measures to accomplish that.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that he can get back to Council with a good number.

Councilor Forrest asked if Mike Turner would provide the Town Council with information on what it would take to get the Town on a 5 year replacement cycle.

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## PHYSICAL SERVICES

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that there are no new staff members or additional overtime funds. Most of the programs are also status quo. There was some discussion at a previous meeting about evictions and the money in that account. He said he would request that the Town Council allocate \$5,000 to the eviction line item. It is a mandated item.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director, said that when a sheriff goes to a house, they take the furniture to the curb and the Town hires a mover to move the furniture to a storage facility for 14 days.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the only way the Town would get money back would be if the evicted person claims the furniture. In most cases, the person is not able to do that.

Councilor Cascio asked if the Physical Services budget included equipment.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that the equipment would be in the CNEF budget.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that there were discussions about the transfer station hours. Two of the employees who work the transfer station have requested a reduction of hours. It would be a \$7,000 savings. The transfer station essentially pays for itself. The Town could reduce the hours of operation and reduce the cost of the station.

Councilor Cascio asked if this is where Paine's budget is reflected.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that Paine's is under the 516 portion of the budget.

Councilor Drake asked what the reduced hours would be.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the Transfer Station would be closed Wednesday and Thursday during the week.

Heather Vargas, Administrative Analyst said that the two days recommended are when usage is low.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that not included in the budget was the request for a new Maintainer I position for the Trades Division; an assistant to the Carpenter, Painter and Electrician. Often they do two-man jobs and a skilled tradesman has to be pulled from a job and assist with another task. This position could also do a lot of the preventive maintenance work that would free up the trades people.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said she was surprised when she came to Wethersfield that the Town only has one tradesman for each trade.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the buildings are a lot more sophisticated now than they use to be. There is more work to be done.

Councilor Kotkin asked what the estimate for savings was for the snow removal budget.

Heather Vargas, Administrative Analyst said that the Town has salt and sand left.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that the sand can be saved for next year and the salt can be returned.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the budget reflects the historical usage of sand, salt and overtime.

Councilor Kotkin said that if the Town is carrying sand into next year, then the budget number may be too high for the proposed budget. He asked if he had an estimate of how much less the Town will need to buy next year?

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that it always averages out. Some years the Town starts with an empty shed and other years, the year starts out with a full shed.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that Council has to remember how often Physical Services comes to the Council to request additional funding to purchase more salt and sand.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that this year the shed is empty because repairs need to be made on it. This is the time to purchase some salt. He said that it was also discussed to move to a straight salt. The shed is empty, so this is the time to decide. Half of the shed could be filled some with salt and some with Clearlane. Sand can be kept outside.

Councilor Kotkin said that even though the Town is carrying a lot of sand into the 2007/2008 budget year, staff doesn't recommend reducing the budget.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that is correct.

Councilor Kotkin said that all the field maintainers are in the Physical Services budget. He said that Town leagues use the fields all weekend. The fields are lined on Friday and by Sunday, players can hardly see the lines. The current labor contract restricts what volunteers can do, is that right?

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that yes, that was true.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that contract negotiations are beginning and that is a topic that she has requested some guidelines on.

Councilor Kotkin said that the lines on fields are an enormous amount of frustration by the people of Town who use the fields.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that there are proposed changes for Cottone Field. He said that it appears that the Board of Education would like Town staff to provide support for the field. He said that it is not reflected in his budget. It would be about \$27,000 in overtime to staff the field while games are being played. Last year, the Town Council gave additional dollars for overtime for cleaning up Town facilities/grounds.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the line 147, Maintain Public Parks, represents the parks and fields, and next is Street Sweeping. She asked the Director of Public Works if anything was proposed at the State level concerning chemicals being used near schools.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that chemicals can't be used on the fields at the schools. It will create more labor for the staff.

Councilor Drake asked where the Town fertilizes near schools.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that the Town used to spray along fence and in fields.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that leaf compost is used as fertilizer on some of the fields.

Councilor Walsh asked about the \$45,000 for trees.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that John Lepper, Tree Warden, has requested this for several years. It is also part of the Strategic Plan. It is just too expensive and is for a tree inventory.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that it is physically taking the GIS survey equipment and going to each Town owned tree and mapping it. Someone would then input the type of tree it is and any known defects. Every tree in Town would include going to Mill Woods Park and tracking all the trees in the woods. It is very labor intensive.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the next item is Snow Removal.

Chairperson Adil asked what impact the purchase of Clearlane would have on the sweeping budget.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the Town is still mandated by law to sweep roads and clean catch basins.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that the sweeping budget would have a 20 percent reduction if the Town went to Clearlane. It would make two passes on every street and come out for an emergency or parade for clean up.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the Town is way under what other Towns pay for sweeping because the Town uses Wethersfield Sweeping from Town and the contractor bids low to get the bid; also, he is able to do it at various times to better utilize his staff.

Councilor Drake asked if the Town ever looked at taking small parcels and grouping them together and subcontracting the mowing out.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that about 10 years ago larger parcels were contracted out and landscapers didn't have the equipment to do the work. He would be interested in seeing the Town look at subcontracting road-side mowing.

Councilor Drake asked to look into it.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that it was done for two years in Berlin. The Town had a lot of trouble finding the contractors when they were suppose to be working and making sure the work was done properly.

Councilor Forrest asked for someone to explain the weather service item and if the cost was for software.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that it pinpoints weather for the Town. It gives the Town important information, start and stop times of storms, how much snow, how fast it is falling, temperatures before and after the storm. The information is critical for the Town. There is a charge.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that it is very specific to the Town, such as giving the temperature of specific roads, so that staff knows when to sand or salt. The \$2,500 is a subscription cost.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said the next issue is page 152 - Maintain Public Streets and Street Signs and Signals.

Councilor Kirsche said that months ago the Town started replacing street signs with new ones that have a bigger font.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that there is a federal mandate to do it. As the Town replaces broken or damaged signs, they are replaced with the larger font. It is a benefit to the senior population.

Councilor Kirsche asked if a large percentage of the signs have been replaced.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said no, just signs that have been damaged. The Town doesn't have a replacement plan for the stop signs either.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if when a sign is damaged by someone, is that person responsible for paying for a new sign. Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that yes.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that when the Police write up an accident report, Town staff will go after the individual's insurance for payment.

Councilor Kotkin left the meeting for the discussion on Street Lights.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that on page 141 is Street Lights. If there is ever enough money in the budget, she would love to purchase new street lights. There is a five year payback to replace lights. The Town currently leases

its street lights.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that if the Town owned the street lights it would be responsible for maintenance and would only need to purchase electricity. There are a dozen or so Towns that maintain their street lights. It would be \$300,000 or \$400,000 to purchase the lights.

Councilor Forrest said that in a meeting with East Hartford this was discussed. East Hartford has realized big savings. Since there is a five year payback, it seems wise to take out a loan. Financially it makes sense to do it.

Councilor Drake said that he agrees with purchasing the lights, too or to have someone lease them back to the Town.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the \$450,000 in the budget is for the lease of the lights and electricity for them.

Councilor Kotkin returned.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that on page 151 is Vehicle Maintenance.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that:

- There are no substantial changes to this budget.
- A new item of \$600 is for carwash tickets. This fell through the cracks from when the vehicle costs came out of Department budgets and into this budget.
- Fuel prices are increased.
- The specialty items are parts for fire, police, and maintenance vehicles.

Councilor Forrest asked if the new vehicles are more efficient than old vehicles.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said he doesn't know how the new vehicles coming on line will be but the current vehicles are fine.

Councilor Walsh asked on page 159 and 160 what the SWAT items were related to.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the costs are all vehicle related. It is for specialty equipment for the vehicles like lights and radios for the new vehicles that are being purchased.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the SWAT vehicle was falling apart. There was an opportunity to purchase a new one before it went to auction but now it needs to be equipped.

Heather Vargas, Administrative Analyst said that on page 14 is Refuse and Recycling. CRRA is going to be paying \$10 a ton for recycling. It is a new revenue for the Town. The tipping fees could come down, but right now it is an unknown.

Councilor Forrest said that the new energy efficient bulbs have mercury in them and can't go in the regular recycling bin. Is there a way that the transfer station can take hazardous material?

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the Town will take the bulbs as long as they are intact. Once they break, they are considered hazardous. Recycling does not require a permit.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that the electrician collects the bulbs and ships them to a company for disposal. The attendant at the transfer station will take the bulb from residents.

Councilor Cascio asked if this is where the \$20,000 savings discussed by RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager would be.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that this is where the potential savings could be for bulk pickup changes. It is not

reflected in the budget. She said that she will bring to the Town Council all of the suggestions and the Town Council can vote on them before the beginning of the fiscal year.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Transfer Station also takes batteries.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said yes, the Transfer Station takes batteries for recycling.

Councilor Kotkin said that there are a lot of different refuse accounts. He asked if someone could explain the differences.

Heather Vargas, Administrative Analyst, said that the Backyard Pickup is a service the Town offers to the elderly and handicap who are not able to push the barrel to the curb. Paine's charges the Town an extra fee. 4.33 units per month represents the number of dumpsters around Town that Paine's picks up, like at the Fire Houses, Town Hall, and Schools. The Free Cleanup for the Spring and Fall is estimated at \$2,500. The Bulky Item pickup represents the tonnage for bulky waste that is going to the landfill. Refuse Collection represents Paine's \$150 for the pickup of a dumpster. Hazardous waste costs represent item like Freon removal. Bulky Item pickup at residential homes is \$33,000. Account 5576 is the daily trash collection from Paine's. Recycle bins is the cost for the bins for the Town. The 828 is what CRRA charges for the burn plant. This is the municipal solid waste cost.

Councilor Kotkin said that in 5579, there is a \$100,000 reduction between the Department request and the Town Manager's request. He asked what the difference was?

Heather Vargas, Administrative Analyst said that the Town is planning for more people to recycle and that would be less trash going to the burn plant.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that it is a reduction in the amount going to the burn plant and also an increase in the money back from CRRA.

Councilor Kotkin said that there is an enormous financial benefit to the Town if the Town can move recycling material from the trash to recycling. Has the Town done an education plan.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager is doing a plan. She has formed a citizens' committee that will include parents who will spread the word to schools.

Councilor Forrest asked if there is a list of items that can be dropped of at the Transfer Station free of charge.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that it is included in the Town Calendar and website.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that on page 146 is the Leaf Program. There were some suggestions about changing this program. The budget doesn't show anything new.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that he got a price from Paine's for leaf pickup by Paines. The residents would have to bag the leaves in biodegradable bags. The cost for Paine's was \$32,000. There would still be costs for the Town to compost the leaves. That price includes only one pickup. The bags cost \$2.00 for 5 bags. This doesn't include Town properties.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Town employees that do the leaf pickup also maintain the fields and do snow removal. There are plenty of other jobs that these employees can be doing.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that the budget of \$216,000 is for the machinery and employee salaries, including 4 Saturdays. If the Town went to one pickup the cost would be \$162,000.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that West Hartford tried outsourcing the collection but went back to the Town employees the next year.

Councilor Drake said that residents pay a premium tax in Town and the Town should provide this service.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the remaining section is on page 215 - Vehicle Requests. Included are a pickup truck, dump truck, and gang mower.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that he does not agree with the Town Manager's cuts. The fleet is hurting. The dump truck fleet would be in pretty good shape if a new truck was purchased every year. The pickup truck fleet was sacrificed last year for the dump truck fleet. In this budget, the Town Manager cut the request from three pickup trucks to one. One has a frame issue that has made it unsafe and is not used. The gang mower is also needed but could be sacrificed for the pickup truck fleet. The mechanics can't keep up with the repairs. The pickups have passed their life expectancy and the Town is now throwing money away on them. The Department definitely needs these trucks.

Councilor Drake asked why the Town needs the 350 models.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that the trucks are used for snow removal of parking lots in Town and need to be heavy duty.

Councilor Cascio asked where in the priorities these pickup trucks would be.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that he would sacrifice the second priority, the 550 pickup truck for the three 350 pickup trucks.

Councilor Cascio asked about the two inoperable trucks.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that one of the trucks is beyond repair and is sitting in the yard. The frame on the other truck is being welded together and the Town will not be able to sell it because of the broken frame. Pickup truck # 28 is a flat body pickup from 1977 that is also being repaired.

Councilor Walsh asked what kind of impact the new leaf machine would have on the leaf program.

Jim McDonald, Assistant Director said that the new leaf machines are remote control and will eliminate the fatigue on the operator. The other machines were purchased through a grant about 13 years ago and are starting to show wear.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the Department will request one new machine every year until all of the old machines are replaced.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Chairperson Adil acknowledged Paul Pace in the audience.

Paul Pace, 26 Victory Lane, said that he, his wife, and three of their neighbors are attending the meeting to show support for sidewalks along all of Two Rod Highway. He said that it is dangerous waiting with his son for the bus on Two Rod Highway without the sidewalks. He said that the Town Manager and Councilor Kotkin have been out to look at the dangers.

Chairperson Adil said that this has to go through the proper process. He asked the Town Manager if this was part of the Infrastructure or Public Works or Public Safety Committees. This will have to go through the appropriate committees. He asked if Councilors Walsh and Kotkin could meet in committee to review this.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if Mike Turner, Director of Public Works has additional information that might be helpful to the Town Council relating to this issue.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that between 1999 and 2001 the Town Traffic and Transportation Committee established criteria for new sidewalk installation. There was Police Department input and public input in setting the criteria. The Town was mapped out and basically assigned points to each geographical area on the map. The

points would tell how far away it was from a school and public facilities and safety and zoning issues. They were all plotted on the Town's GIS system. All of the criteria was added up and points were assigned to each area. The two highest areas were Two Rod Highway from Highland Street to Old Reservoir Road and Mapleside Drive. The Town Council funded the two projects in the bond package. The portion of Two Rod Highway west of Old Reservoir Road ranked lower because it had less points as it was further from a school. There are certainly some issues with that area but there may be other areas of Town that rank higher based on the objective criteria that has been set.

Paul Pace, 26 Victory Lane, said that in the past eight years there have been many commercial and residential projects in Newington that created more traffic on Two Rod Highway.

Councilor Drake said that the Town Council should contact the Board of Education and ask them to have buses pick the children up on Kimberly Lane and Victory Lane. He said that Two Rod Highway is a busy street.

Chairperson Adil said that he understands the parents' concerns and will make sure that this goes through the proper process. He said that truthfully this is a long process and, the sidewalks will not be in the proposed budget.

Councilor Cascio said that this is a safety issue. Since Walgreens and the new housing development on the corner have been built there has been an increase in traffic. The Town Council needs to look at this in the Public Safety Committee. He would like to see if the buses could go into that cul-de-sac. If the Town can get fire trucks into a cul-de-sac, the buses should fit, too. He said that when the referendum was held on the sidewalks, the Town Council authorized the Town's taxpayers to pay for the sidewalks. Historically, sidewalk installation is paid for by the homeowners. Also, there are other areas in Town in the same situation.

Chairperson Adil said that there are some short term solutions that may work.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that the changes taking place are outside the Town's control, for example the new Walgreens. This does affect the Town. He would encourage the Town Manager to address this when she meets with Newington. The new development on Prospect Street in Newington will have the same kind of impact on Prospect Street and Back Lane.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that she would contact Mr. Pace with more information.

Les Cole, Chairperson of the Capital Improvements Advisory Committee, thanked Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, Tony Martino, Administrative Analyst, and Councilor Walsh for their support of the committee. The committee requested \$1,400,000. The Town Manager requested \$1,300,000. The differences are:

- Electric gates for Police, Mill Woods and Physical Services for \$33,000.
- Capital Reserve Fund for \$50,000.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that this fund already exists. It has about \$130,000 in it.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Town Council set a policy that as the Town receives reimbursement from projects, it goes in the Capital Reserve Fund. If a project comes in at \$40,000 and the original budgeted amount was \$50,000, the \$10,000 would go into the Capital Reserve Fund. She said that she would love to put more money in it, but is happy that some money is going into the Fund.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if there was a goal for the amount in the Fund.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works, said that the goal is either \$200,000 or \$250,000.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the Town Manager anticipated projects coming in under budget so that money would be put in the Fund this year.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that there is always some cushion.

Tony Martino, Administrative Analyst said that the only other funding comes from recordings in the Town Clerks Office. For every recording, this Fund receives \$2.00.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that the Capital Reserve Fund is invested like other Town funds. The interest goes back to the General Fund.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Strategic Plan states the goal of the Capital Reserve Fund was to have \$250,000 by the 2006/2007 Budget year.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the goal had been met, but the Town Council authorized the pool repairs from this Fund.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the Police motorized gate was needed for the accreditation process.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the gate at the generator was needed for accreditation. This is a parking lot gate that is motorized for convenience. The Mill Woods gate serves a different purpose. With heavy rains, Mill Woods Pond overflows and Town Staff has to remove fencing and fabric to allow the water and debris to pass. He recommended a sliding gate that can just be opened. This is not security fencing for the parking lots.

Les Cole, said that the primary purpose of the committee is to look at all projects that are brought to it and prioritize them in three ways; safety, mandates and whether the Town can leverage money. The Budget that the Committee put forward to Planning and Zoning was approved with one dissenter. The dissenting vote was not because there was anything wrong with this except that he thought more money was needed. He said that the group of concerned residents off of Two Rod Highway also attended the Capital Improvements Committee meeting. He said that there is money for mandated ADA ramps and if there is leftover dollars it could be used for sidewalks if the Town Council authorized it. He said that \$7,000 would pay for sidewalks from Kimberly Lane to Victory Lane.

Tony Martino, Administrative Analyst said that there is one house on the corner of Victory Lane and Two Rod Highway that doesn't have sidewalks. The Engineering Department estimates that it would cost about \$7,000 to install sidewalks there. It would allow students to walk down Victory Lane and onto Two Rod Highway on sidewalks and eliminate a safety concern. Out of the \$25,000, the Town Council could authorize \$7,000 for these sidewalks. Being a corner lot, an ADA ramp would also be installed.

Chairperson Adil said that the policy on sidewalks is for the Town to pay 50 percent and the homeowners to pay the other 50 percent.

Tony Martino, Administrative Analyst said that the \$7,000 is based on the Town paying 100 percent.

In response to Deputy Mayor Fortunato's question, Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that anytime the Town installs sidewalks it needs a ramp for the last five feet of the sidewalk.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that this is a curb cut only and not a ramp. She asked if the texturing would also be done.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that anytime a new sidewalk is being installed, the texture should be used to comply with the new standards. The current Capital Budget has \$40,000 to add texturing to high use intersections, like the Silas Deane Highway. Next year, the Committee is suggesting continuing the program.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that this is a Federal Requirement, so when the Town is putting in a sidewalk it should be adding the texture.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that there is a difference between making a curb cut and adding the texture. The texture adds to the cost and should be factored into new sidewalks and repairs.

Les Cole, Chairperson of the Capital Improvements Committee, said that the \$25,000 was put in the budget for ADA ramps. For \$7,000 the Town could install sidewalks and the ADA ramp on that portion of Two Rod Highway and kill

two birds with one stone. We are not saying that Two Rod Highway has to have the ADA ramp, but the committee went out and looked at the area. The Town Council has the flexibility to allocate some of these funds to that area.

A discussion ensued.

Councilor Drake asked if the flood study was a priority since many times the study is done but then funding for the project is never allocated.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that this is the last payment to leverage the rest of the State bonding money. She said that the Town should get the State bond money before it goes away.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that there are three construction projects as a result of the flood study.

Councilor Forrest asked what the next seven projects are that did not get funded in this budget.

Les Cole, Chairperson of the Building Committee said that if it didn't get funded this year, then it will be on the list next year if something else doesn't come up. It is a new slate every year. The Committee received \$5,000,000 in requests and the Committee narrowed it down to \$1,400,000.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that these projects are the ones that the Committee felt must be done. The next column shows projects that the Town should do. These projects are not prioritized. There is also a list of can't do projects. He said that he would provide the Town Council with the list.

Les Cole, Chairperson of the Building Committee said that there are always park projects that could be done. The roads are at 85 percent and could easily be brought up to 90 percent with additional funds.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that if there were additional mandated or safety projects, they would be on the list and the budget request would be larger.

Chairperson Adil said that he asked the Committee to try to keep the request at last year's number and appreciated the Committee's work to try to do that.

Councilor Kotkin asked where the money from the sale of the Olsen House went.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the money went into the Land Acquisition account.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the pool repairs have been started.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that it will begin in the summer.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Board of Education has not responded to the amount for additional savings for the pool.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the information is coming.

Councilor Kokin asked about pavement maintenance statistics. He said that \$667,000 is budgeted.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that this is a target amount of work between Town Aid Road and LOCIP money.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that both Town Aid Road and LOCIP money has gone down in the Governor's proposed budget.

Tony Martino, Administrative Analyst said that he only put in the General Fund money because the Town doesn't know what it will receive in State aid.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the budget shows Town Aid at \$148,000 and LOCIP at \$187,000.

Councilor Kotkin asked why road bond funds are higher.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manger said that the bonds will be used up this fall, spring and summer. There will be no money for 2008/2009. She said that the cost to do the roads is astronomical.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that the LOCIP money the Town receives are used for road reconstruction programs.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the Town feels confident that a grant will be available to install an elevator at the Standish House or should the Town budget for one.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that it will be on the agenda for the next meeting. The Consultant feels confident that a grant could pay for the elevator. There may be a need for a 10 percent match with a grant.

Mike Turner, Director of Public Works said that it would be about \$400,000 for all ADA compliance issues

### **FUTURE BUDGET WORKSHOP DATES**

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the next Budget Workshop is scheduled for April 30th.

The May 1st and May 2nd budget workshops are cancelled. The Regular Meeting will be Monday, May 7th. There will be another Budget Workshop on May 9th with an adoption on May 14th or 15th.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION - PERSONNEL MATTERS AND PENDING LITIGATION**

At 8:20 p.m, Councilor Walsh moved "**THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS AND PENDING LITIGATION**" seconded by Councilor Kotkin. All Council members and the Chairman voted aye. The motion passed 9-0-0.

At 8:50 p.m. Councilor Kirsche moved to leave the Executive Session. This was seconded by Councilor Kotkin. All Council members present and the Chairman voted aye. The motion passed 9-0-0.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:51 p.m., Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Walsh. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk