

## **REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 17, 2007**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, December 17, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Silas Deane Middle School.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Console, Forrest, Hemmann, Kotkin, Roberts, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Montinieri and Chairperson Adil.

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

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

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **"TO TAKE OFF THE TABLE ITEM B.2.A.- REPEAL OF CHAPTER 77, FEES AND CHARGES, GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS FEES"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

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

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO ADD TO THE AGENDA ITEM B.3.D. - AMBULANCE ROOF BID"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

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

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### HEARING

RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - DIGITAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - IT APPLICATION SHARING AND DEVELOPMENT

RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVING -  
WITHDRAWN

RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - PUBLIC WORKS EQUIPMENT SHARING

RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - REGIONAL TRAFFIC TEAM/ACCIDENT  
INVESTIGATION UNIT

RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA SHARING

RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING  
CENTER

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said it was her pleasure to bring to the Town Council a number of Service Sharing Grants which the Town is applying for through the Capital Region Council of Governments. One of her major initiatives is to work with other Towns to not duplicate services and save dollars. The Capital Region Council of Governments, along with other agencies has been very successful in getting \$8,000,000 in State funding in order to start Service Sharing with other communities. Wethersfield is asking to participate in eight proposals. She highlighted the Resolutions -

- Standard Administrative Procedures would work with other Towns to try to reduce the insurance costs and combine services to upgrade job descriptions and personnel policies and share positions.
- Digital Health Department would do a lot of automation for Health Districts in a number of the Towns in the Capital Region.
- IT Application Sharing and Development and Document Management and Archiving would start to develop IT software among the Towns so that Tax Offices and, Assessors offices would all have the same type of software and share software development, implementation, and training.
- Public Works Equipment Sharing would allow the four Towns to go out and purchase eight different types of equipment and the Town would not have to rent them. Currently the Town has to rent large pieces of equipment when needed because the Town can't afford to purchase these items on their own.
- Regional Traffic Team/Accident Investigation Unit would be a regional facility in the Hartford region that would expedite all traffic and accident investigations. It will also allow for more officers to be trained in accident investigation.
- Regional Law Enforcement Data Sharing would allow the Towns in the Hartford area to share data in law enforcement.
- Regional Law Enforcement Training Center would allow for public safety training for the four Towns and others that may want to join. It would include pistol training so that the Town would not have to go to the State for all of their training.

She said Wethersfield is one of the largest communities getting involved in a large number of these grants.

No one wished to speak for or against the Resolutions. Chairperson Adil declared the hearings closed.

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

Jim Woodworth, 5 River Road, speaking as President of the Great Meadow Conservation Trust, said that he commended Town crews on their clean up after the last two storms. He also invited Councilors to attend a special winter walk on January 5th along Goff Brook down to the Meadows from the Nature Center. He asked that the Town Council allocate \$1200 in the next budget for an annual membership to the North Central Conservation District to provide independent reviews of Inland Wetland applications. He asked that the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission inform the Conservation Commission when an application has a potential significant impact on the environment. The Conservation Commission will be able to better fulfill its advisory role in protecting the environment. The Army Corps of Engineers are reviewing an approval of the Phoenix Medical LLC application for expanding their parking lot by filling a flood storage area. There may have been other solutions for parking had discussions been held last spring. The Town could have proposed spending \$2,000,000 for a parking garage and pedestrian friendly bike trails along Goff Brook when it was proposing a bond referendum package.

Richard Lasher, Honorary Mayor of Griswoldville, said he wished the Town Council all the season's best and hopes the Town has plenty of salt and sand. He said that he was appointed Mayor of Griswoldville in 1995 and has been a fence viewer for 31 years, both unpaid jobs. He presented the Mayor and Town Council with the keys to Griswoldville.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, said that he would like to discuss the Horse and Carriage Rides in Old Wethersfield. He said that he spoke against this grant. He said the Town Council decided to take \$25,000 when there are people who need this money. He said it is not just the Town that is spending money this way. Does government make sense? How many more dollars are being thrown around? He discussed financial markets going down while taxes continue to go up.

Robert Smart, 62 Church Street, said that Town crews did a great job keeping the streets clean during the last two storms. Also, the planning for greater commercial and industrial utilization along corridors needs a plan that the public can generally buy into that is focused without arrogance. He said he hopes the Town Council will work toward that. He said that comments in the media by the Mayor are unclear whether the Mayor is in favor of promoting this or trying to block it. His comments are very divisive and have not been oriented to building a consensus.

John Miller, 45 Highland Street, said that he wanted to speak on the 1260 Silas Deane Highway Medical Building. He is surprised that this has become an issue for the Town. How can anyone complain about taxes and propose a parking garage and bike path project. It defies logic. The tenants here need more space. This is one of the best tax payers in the Town. This project was approved by the local Inland Wetland and Watercourses Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission. He said that he wanted to thank the Town Manager and Town Council for their support of this project. The project did obtain the approvals. The issues were discussed at these meetings as well as alternatives. He would like to urge those who support this project to speak out. He asked if the Town would post the Army Corp of Engineers website on the Town website so people can show their support.

### COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Councilor Walsh said that he attended the Redevelopment Agency Meeting on December 5th. He said they discussed the failed referendum and the possibility of a survey of public input.

Councilor Forrest said that there are some great environmental opportunities that have come up. There is a new green magazine that is coming out for Connecticut businesses and residents to read up on positive opportunities for homes and businesses. He also attended a Capital Region Council of Governments get together to discuss moving forward with money for greenways. The Conservation Commission met and discussed the Heritage Trail. It is a very positive step forward for the Town. He said he is working with the Town Manager and the Mayor on a conservation and environmental summit or planning session for next year. Lastly, Wethersfield Life has a "fill up the bag" in the latest edition. It is part of the recycling program. There are many new items that can be put in recycling bins.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Budget Committee met and looked at how the Town Manager and Finance Director will present updates on the financial results for the Town for the quarter. He asked that all Councilors get copies of it. In the fall, there was a question as to whether the Town should have an ATM machine in the Tax Office. It would be a convenience for the taxpayer and may help the Town collect taxes. The Budget Committee reviewed it favorably. The Clean Energy Committee was looking for an additional \$1400. The Committee is not clear on whether it has to allocate any additional money but the Town Manager will give the Committee a timeframe that the Town will buy clean energy. Earlier the Town talked about some sort of tax abatement consistent with State Legislation for vehicles that get more than 40 miles per gallon. It would not be for any grand list before 2008. It is something that the Committee will continue to work on.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said the Keane Foundation Building Committee met and the work has begun. The Committee has identified and prioritized the budget for the project so that they can differentiate between the allocated funds currently available and compare it to the project cost. They have identified three projects currently not in the plan that have been pulled out without impacting the overall scope. They are continuing their fundraising efforts. The Building Committee for the Town Hall/Library met and reported on the progress of the facility. Weather impacted the work somewhat last week. They are a few days behind. The contractor feels he can make that up and stay on track. A recent article about the Library expansion included a September 2008 date for the opening of the complete Library. The project completion for Town Hall and the Library is still scheduled for June 2008. The Committee is hoping for a staggered move of the Library. It will be further outlined as the project progresses. The EDIC hosted a Business Awards Dinner this past week. It was a well attended, nice evening for businesses. He said that he, along with other Councilors, attended a banquet for the Fire Fighters last week. It was a great event.

Councilor Roberts said that she attended the Council of Small Towns initiation to being a new Town Councilors. She said it was very informative and well worth her time. She said that the Fire Fighter's Annual Awards dinner was great. It is amazing that so many people volunteer for the Town as firefighters. The Town is very lucky to have them. She attended her first meeting of the Capital Region Council of Government Public Safety presentation by two gentlemen involved with the emergency response of the Amish school shooting on how to handle emergency services.

Councilor Cascio thanked the Town of Wethersfield, especially the Parks and Recreation staff, with assisting on the Wreaths Across America program. On December 10th, the Wreaths Across America started here in Wethersfield by laying a wreath on the green at the crossroads of Nott Street and Harford Avenue. It was a very touching event that

honored Veterans. Wreaths were placed at Veterans' Cemeteries throughout Connecticut and at Arlington National Cemetery. He attended the Wethersfield Football Banquet. He said it was a good group of children and coaching staff. He was happy to be a part of the event. He said he received some telephone calls concerning committee selections. He would like to publicly educate those individuals. Post-election, the Town Councilors were supposed to submit their preference of Committee assignments and requests to the Mayor. He said he is happy to be placed on several Committees that he will serve on and be a positive voice. There were a couple of Committees that being in the minority party, he really didn't have the ability to communicate with the placement of a Councilor liaison. He wanted to voice his dissatisfaction for not being considered or asked to be placed on the Library Committee. He said that he has served on that committee for two years and has an understanding of how it works. The Shared Services Committee serves both the Board of Education and Town Council. He said he is pleased to serve on that Committee but is a little concerned with the title of the name being Shared Services. The Board of Education got it right with two Board of Education members from each party serving on the committee. On the Town Council side, there is one Republican and three Democratic members. Councilor Hemmann, a former Board of Education Chairperson, would have given depth and history to that Committee. He said that he does take exception to the note in the Wethersfield Post quoting the Mayor as saying, so much for bi-partisanship. It seems to be evaporating with this current group. He said that he takes exception to that. He said that he gives more than his share of time to make and do the right decisions for the Town. If anything has evaporated, it is the communication with the minority party. He does not want to be grouped into an evaporating situation.

Councilor Hemmann commended the Town staff for a job well done in the past storms. She said the staff worked a lot of off hours and wondered if a lot of overtime was spent.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there was a lot of overtime. The first few storms were on Sundays which were double time. Thursday's storm was time and a half with work continuing into Friday. Crews were out again all day and all night Sunday at double time, too. Before the winter began, the Town was below in overtime. She will have an update after this week's payroll is processed, by Friday at the earliest.

Councilor Console said that he was not on the Town Council when it authorized the Horse and Buggy grant.

Councilor Kotkin thanked the Town staff for working so late during the storms but also before that to finish the leaf collection program and ready the trucks for the storm.

Chairperson Adil said that he too wanted to commend the Town staff for their work on the road cleanup. The staff also completed two passes of the Town for leaf collection and got 80 percent through the third pass when the staff had to change the trucks over for snow removal. He said he was happy to see the expansion of the Library. He commends the Library and Town staff for that move. He said he attended the Salute to Business dinner last week. He attended the Fire Fighter's Annual Awards Dinner, too. He said that he did make a comment to the Wethersfield Post about the lack of bi-partisanship he is seeing. He hopes he is wrong about that but judging from tonight's latest comments and the comments from Councilor Hemmann the last time about possible ethics concerns, he said he does have some real issues and concerns. There has been bi-partisanship on both the Board of Education and Town Council in the past. He said that he will continue to speak out against putting the parties' interests in front of the Town's interest. He said he put people on Committees that he trusts best and that he feels he can work with.

## **COUNCIL ACTION**

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF CINDY A. JACOBS FROM THE CLEAN ENERGY COMMITTEE"** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

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

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF MARGARET M. WAGNER FROM THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION"** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

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

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO APPOINT GEORGE B. OICKLE AS A FULL MEMBER OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2009 AND DAVID L. DRAKE AS AN ALTERNATE TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2009"** seconded by Councilor Hemmann.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that this appointment was just given to the Town Councilors this evening. He said that this is an important assignment and he would like to suggest that Councilors have a little time before voting on it.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **"TO TABLE THIS MOTION"** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilors Cascio, Console, Hemmann voted NAY. The motion passed 6-3-0.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she discussed these grants during the Public Hearing but could answer any questions Councilors may have. She said that Paul Hutcheon, Central Connecticut Health District Director, was also at the meeting to answer questions concerning the Digital Health Department grant. The Town Council can pass this in one motion.

Councilor Hemmann asked about item F. - Document Management and Archiving.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that item F. was merged with item E. No action is needed on item F.

Councilor Forrest moved **"TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AND STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES, RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - DIGITAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT, RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - IT APPLICATION SHARING AND DEVELOPMENT/DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVING, RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - INTERTOWN PUBLIC WORKS SERVICE COOPERATION PILOT PROGRAM, RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - REGIONAL TRAFFIC TEAM/ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION UNIT, RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA SHARING, RESOLUTION - CRCOG SERVICE SHARING GRANT - REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTER"** seconded by Councilor Walsh.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she is very excited about these proposals. The Town should know in January how successful the Town has been in receiving these grants.

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

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **REPEAL OF CHAPTER 77, FEES AND CHARGES, GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS FEES**

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **"TO TAKE THIS ITEM OFF THE TABLE"** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

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

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that this item was tabled because she had a concern over some of the fees. Since that time, the Town Attorney and Assistant to the Town Manager have reviewed the State enabling legislation and it does say that if the Town wants to charge such fees the Town needs to have an ordinance. She apologizes. She asked that no work be done on this and withdraw this Ordinance from action. She would like to clean up the fees on megabytes but will do that in a different format in January.

Councilor Hemmann asked if it should be a regular practice of the Town Attorney to check the enabling legislation before it comes to the Town Council.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that her Assistant was in charge of this item. She does not know if she brought this to the Town Attorney.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **"TO WITHDRAW THE ORDINANCE REPEALING CHAPTER 77, ARTICLE II FEES AND CHARGES, GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FEES"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

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

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH CLOUGH HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES FOR PHASE 2 DESIGN WORK FOR THE LITTLE LEAGUE AND SOCCER FIELDS AT MILLWOODS PARK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$57,000"** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she is pleased to present to the Town Council a contract with Clough Harbour and Associates for phase II design work for the Little League and Soccer fields at Millwoods. This is a project that everyone has been waiting for. The Town is working with this firm for phase I and would like to continue work for phase II which encompasses designing the documents and cost estimates to receive the bid documents on their way. She said there are Committee members and the Director of Parks and Recreation at the meeting to answer questions.

Councilor Kotkin said that this Committee is a very cohesive and talented group. They have done a lot of work on this. Although the Town has a \$700,000 grant and \$50,000 previously allocated, the amount that is likely needed for the fields is in excess of the money on hand. The Committee has taken a look at that and is intelligently looking to have all of the design work done for the fields in case there is no funding in the near future. He wholeheartedly hopes the Town Council will endorse this proposal and have it designed and permitted by Town agencies all at one time.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked for a clarification. He asked if the number reflects doing both phases at one time. Where there 11 finalists for this or the first phase?

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there were 11 finalists for the first phase.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that when the Town did the interviews a year ago, it was not with the thought of doing all of the design work at the same time. During the process, the Town applied for and received the State grant money.

Chairperson Adil thanked the Director of Parks and Recreation and commended the Committee on its work.

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

Councilor Roberts moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SELL THE BENCHES FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS EITHER THROUGH ADVERTISED BID OR NEGOTIATION WITH A PROSPECTIVE BUYER"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said these are the public benches used in the Council Chambers. The Town Council needs to authorize the Town Manager to sell them.

Councilor Hemmann asked what will replace the benches.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that a softer type bench will replace these benches. She will get a photograph of the new benches for the Town Councilors to see.

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

Councilor Walsh moved **"TO WAIVE FIFTY PERCENT OF THE POLICE SERVICE FEES FOR THE**

**DIGIACOMO FAMILY FUND RAISER AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER"** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Town received this request for a fundraiser for a student in Town that has a rare form of leukemia. In the past, the Town Council has waived 50 percent of the police fees. The cost would be \$173.

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

## **BIDS**

Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO TRANSFER \$8,900 FROM ACCOUNT 407-5700 TO ACCOUNT 303-5432-13502 FOR AMBULANCE ROOF WORK"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there has been a roof problem on the Volunteer Ambulance Facility. It was temporarily fixed three years ago and is acting up again. In order to fix it, it would cost \$8,900. It needs to be fixed for the February Presidential Primary. Voters during the November election had water dripping on them. There is a cost of \$34,000 to permanently repair the roof but she does not recommend that at this time, because the Town is doing a study as to whether that building and a fire house be switched.

Councilor Console asked how a roof could be properly fixed at this time of year.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that she asked that same question and was told by the roofing consultant that it can be done and is guaranteed work. Tremco is the consultant for all of the Town's roofs.

Councilor Console said that it is silly and a waste of money. Construction work this time of year is a hassle.

Councilor Cascio asked if there was a warranty clause from the repairs three years ago.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Town fixed the repairs last time.

Councilor Cascio said that this is a polling place, can't it be moved to another polling place.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Keeney will not be open for the February Primary and that polling place is being moved to the Community Center. She said that she is not sure she can find another place to move this district for February.

Councilor Cascio said that during the Webb school renovation, there were two polling places at Incarnation Church.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there are also Ambulance Volunteers that need to use the building.

Councilor Walsh asked how long the temporary fix would last.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she received the proposal today and does not see it listed on the proposal.

Councilor Forrest said that to wait will cause more damage to the building. The Town needs to take care of the building. This is an appropriate action.

Councilor Roberts said that a few years ago there was concern about roofs throughout Town. The Town Council at the time decided to go with a roof consultant to add uniformity to what is done and assess repairs as needed. She said that this is a bad time for repairs but also for leaks. She said she would rather spend the \$8,900 and listen to the advice of the consultants.

Councilor Hemmann questioned the need for HVAC repairs. She said that she suspects that is one of the areas where there are leaks.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said yes.

Councilor Console said if this was brought to light after the November election and there were no leaks before this.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that there were leaks before that and were reported to Public Works. The leaks could not be traced to a source until it rained. It poured on Election Day.

Chairperson Adil said that this is an appropriate interim step that points out the importance of looking at the use of that building and taking serious consideration about razing the building and building a Fire Station there. The Town did pay a consultant to do a roof review. Why pay someone and then ignore their advice.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilors Cascio and Console voted NAY. The motion passed 7-2-0.

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

None

## **MINUTES**

Councilor Walsh moved **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2007"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

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

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **"TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 3, 2007"** seconded by Councilor Walsh.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Hemmann ABSTAINED. The motion passed 8-0-1.

Councilor Forrest moved **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 3, 2007"** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Councilor Kotkin said on page 14319 under Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager's comments, the price should be \$700,000, not \$750,000.

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

Chairperson Adil wished everyone a Happy Holiday.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:00 p.m., Councilor Walsh moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Montinieri. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

*Approved by vote of Council January 7, 2008*