

AUGUST 21, 2006 REGULAR MEETING

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on August 21, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Silas Deane Middle School.

Present: Councilors Adil (7:30), Drake, Forrest, Kirsche, Kotkin, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Fortunato (7:15) and Chairperson Morin.

Absent: Councilor Cascio.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; Library Director Laurel Goodgion; Parks & Recreation Director Kathy Bagley; Assistant Town Planner Denise Bradley; Town Engineer Mike Turner; Assistant Director of Physical Services Jim McDonald; and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

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

Economic Development Report

Assistant Town Planner Denise Bradley gave a presentation of the August 17, 2006 Economic Development Report which included the following:

- 644 Silas Deane Highway - Fire Finesse - Fireplaces, stoves and service
- 286 Silas Deane Highway - Express Dental Laboratory to open shortly
- 416 Silas Deane Highway - Dunkin Donuts - final inspection tomorrow
- 1030 Silas Deane Highway - Puket Café - Thai restaurant
- 25 Wells Road - TD Banknorth - design review plans submitted
- 1260 Silas Deane Highway - Hartford Medical Group plans approved for an addition
- 1067 Silas Deane Highway - Halloween Store plans submitted for temporary retail space
- 884 Silas Deane Highway - City Fish plans and applications filed with PZC. Public hearing set for September 5
- 91 Nott Street - Stillman Walk zone change application approved. Plans currently being reviewed by the Inland Wetlands Commission
- 1105 Silas Deane Highway - Sake Café Japanese Restaurant plans submitted for renovation

Regarding the Silas Deane Highway revitalization, Ms. Bradley reported that Fuss and O'Neill has submitted a draft of the final report/plan and a presentation was made to the PZC's of Wethersfield and Rocky Hill at their July 18 meeting. Ms. Bradley reported that Town Planner Peter Gillespie and one of the Town's IT staff met with Keiler and Company one of the EDIC's public relations and marketing services, especially regarding the recommended changes to the Town's website. Ms. Bradley reported that the Preserve America Committee has met three times and received six responses to their Request For Proposal for the Old Wethersfield Master Plan. She said that the Committee will meet again on September 6 to review the RFP's.

Councilor Forrest commented that the monthly Economic Development Report is very important and informative, and requested that the various grant programs be added to the report as well.

Library Renovations Presentation

Library Board of Directors Chairman Greg Curtin provided a rundown of the current renovations and the upcoming brief closing of the Wethersfield Library. He said that the Library will be closed after 5:00 on September 16 for the asbestos abatement and the construction/renovation of the first floor mezzanine. He said that the Library will be working with the Town crew to move the Library operations to the ground floor of the Library. He said that books from the first and second floors of the Library will be put into storage and furniture will be stored off-site. He said that

the staff will be moving shelving materials to the ground floor for a temporary Library to be opened from approximately mid-October, 2006 until Spring, 2007 when the renovations will hopefully be completed. Mr. Curtin stated that during this time, the Library staff will continue to do the work that they currently do every day. He said that once the renovation is complete, the Library will have a completely new children's department, meeting rooms, study rooms, a Wethersfield room dedicated to the history of Wethersfield, a bookstore for the Friends of the Library group, and new public restrooms and drinking fountains. Mr. Curtin said that additional financial support for the Library renovation has been found through the Library Board, the Friends of the Library, and a group called the Mom's Club.

Councilor Kotkin stated that during the budget deliberations, it was discussed that the Library would be closed for three months and now Mr. Curtin is talking longer than this. He asked for an explanation of the current time frame. Mr. Curtin said that the time frame is something over which the Library Board does not have much control. He said that the date of September 16 was chosen for closing; however it is unknown as to when the work will actually commence and exactly how long it will take.

Ms. Goodgion said that the Library Board and staff are hoping that while the staff is temporarily located on the lower level, work on the first and second floors can take place before the staff moves back up onto the main level.

Councilor Kotkin stated that also during budget deliberations, a discussion was had regarding Library staff providing hours during the Library closing to other Departments in the Town Hall, and he asked if this discussion has advanced at all. Ms. Goodgion said that she cannot anticipate the business of the Library staff during the temporary Library time frame, therefore the hours of Library staff in other Town Departments remains unknown. She said that she will deploy her staff for extra help in other Departments should time be available to them. Councilor Kotkin commented that during the Library closing, many people will still continue to visit the Library. Ms. Goodgion commented that the Fairfield Library was closed for a year and used a temporary area during the year-long renovations. She said that they found that the temporary facility was still very popular. Ms. Goodgion said that a pamphlet describing the library services during the closing and a diagram of the temporary layout will begin to be distributed to the public tomorrow.

Councilor Kirsche stated that it is a great service of the Town to provide the temporary Library even though the entire Library collection will not be offered. Ms. Goodgion stated that 80% of the collection will be in storage. Councilor Kirsche asked if there will be any accessibility to the stored items, and Ms. Goodgion replied that there will be no access to the stored items.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato pointed out that surrounding communities are prepared to support the Wethersfield Library during the renovations. Ms. Goodgion said that area libraries are being kept informed of the situation and a listing of their website addresses are included in the aforementioned pamphlet for Wethersfield patrons to check hours of service. She said that West Hartford is closing their main library the day after Labor Day for one year. She said that the Library staff in Wethersfield continues to offer all of their library services to the best of their ability during the temporary library situation.

Chairperson Morin thanked Ms. Goodgion and Mr. Curtin for the update and said that he hopes all goes smoothly.

Way Finding Signage Presentation

Chris Traczyk, Vice-Chair of the Tourism Commission, and manager of the Way Finding Signage subcommittee provided a presentation of the program. She said that destination and directional signage is very important for the Town of Wethersfield, particularly as it relates to tourism. She said that proper, attractive signage sends the message that we are proud of and care about our community. Ms. Traczyk stated that current signage in Town is not consistent and the placement isn't always appropriate. She said that a goal of the Tourism Commission is to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for new signage. Ms. Traczyk reviewed the first phase in the development of the signage plan which included key destinations, intersections, and gateways. She said that the next level will be to hire a professional to review the plan and determine a design, materials, and placement to be used, as well as a plan for installation. She said that the signage will take place over a number of years as funding permits. Ms. Traczyk said that the State of Connecticut will be participating as well in this long-term project.

Councilor Forrest commented that the Town really needs this signage and he asked her if she is aware that engineers have worked on signage as it relates to the Silas Deane revitalization. Ms. Traczyk said that the Tourism Commission has not met with that committee regarding signage. Councilor Forrest said that those engineers came up with virtually the same ideas and concerns as the Tourism Commission has; therefore, he is pleased to see that everyone is on the same page. Councilor Forrest said that he is a supporter of the concept as it will be a great improvement to the Town; however, he'd like to see the Tourism Commission work together with the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee to accomplish the signage goals.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked why an engineer is required if there are signs throughout Town already. She asked if the Tourism Commission is looking to change what the Town presently has. Ms. Traczyk said that the Commission is looking for a change in the design in the signs to make all of the signs consistent, as well as to customize some signs for different scenarios. Ms. Traczyk said that many signs throughout Town are in disrepair and need replacing. Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the quoted prices include the cost of materials or if they are for labor only. Ms. Traczyk said that the prices are a ballpark estimate as a particular material has yet to be selected. She said that the consultant would provide advice as to what material to select as well as a more detailed budget. Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that as this project goes forward, she would like to receive information regarding the replacement cycle and maintenance costs. She pointed out that a number of locations of the Department of Corrections provide a sign program where prisoners make signs and suggested that this resource be investigated as well.

Councilor Drake asked Ms. Traczyk how many signs are expected to be needed in Phase II of the project. Ms. Traczyk said that she expects approximately 30-40 signs will be required. Councilor Drake asked how much each sign costs and Ms. Traczyk replied that she does not know since this depends on a number of factors.

Councilor Kotkin thanked Ms. Traczyk for the informational packet she provided to the Council. He said that the signage is a great idea and will help people to get to their destinations. Councilor Kotkin said that he looks forward to this project going forward.

Councilor Walsh thanked Ms. Traczyk for her presentation and stated that the signage is something that needs to be addressed. He suggested that the Tourism Commission share their ideas with the Historic District forums. Ms. Traczyk stated that most of the Historic District organizations were part of the subcommittee.

Chairperson Morin thanked Ms. Traczyk and said that he looks forward to the benefits of this project.

Proclamation - Chris Dumas

Chairperson Morin introduced Chris Dumas who came forward to receive a proclamation of appreciation for his commitment to volunteerism and his distinguished and continuing service to Wethersfield as well as the United States of America as a Lieutenant in the United States Navy.

Lt. Dumas thanked the Council and pointed out a number of Council members with whom he has previously served. He said that his service to the Town has provided him with a unique perspective as he has moved forward in life, including his current service and responsibilities. Lt. Dumas said he serves our country with a great deal of pride and respect, along with others from all walks of life who serve along with him.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HEARING

None.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Donatella Zavarella, 615 Ridge Road, questioned why his sidewalk is marked. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien replied that there have been a number of complaints from residents who walk along the sidewalks of Ridge Road regarding the disrepair of the sidewalks. She said that by Town Ordinance the sidewalks are to be maintained by the residents, not by the Town. She said that letters were recently sent out to residents explaining the sidewalk markings and requesting that homeowners repair their sidewalks. Mr. Zavarello asked who is in charge of inspecting the sidewalks, and Chairperson Morin pointed out to him that this segment of the Council meeting is for public comment and if he requires answers to his inquiries, it would be best for him to call the Town Manager during business hours.

Virginia Judson, representing the Clean Energy Committee, commented on the "20% by 2010" program discussed by the Council in April, 2006. She provided the Council with a pamphlet being distributed throughout the State regarding a program of climate change action currently being worked on by the DEP. She said that it is important to establish a committee that will help the Town to reach the goals set, and she urged the Council to address this soon. Ms. Dobson also requested that the Town Manager look into grants that are currently available for community action.

Susan Deschamplain, 591 Ridge Road, commented that she received a letter regarding her sidewalk that included a list of nine companies who could perform the repair work. She said that this is a great idea and that she is not against repairing the sidewalks; however, she does not feel that the financial burden should fall solely on the homeowners. She said that residents just had to endure a 7.8% tax increase; and now they have to deal with this matter. Ms. Deschamplain asked if the Town is going to contribute a percentage to the cost to repair the sidewalk slabs and if the Town is negotiating a price with the nine contractors listed in the letter she received. She said that there are some slabs that can be repaired rather than completely replaced; however, the letter she received does not indicate that this is an option. Ms. Deschamplain commented on the upcoming installation of new sidewalks throughout Town and how 100% of the cost of the installation will be the burden of the homeowners. She asked the Council to give consideration to the matter and stated that she'd appreciate any assistance the Council can provide regarding the sidewalk repair/replacement at her property.

Chairperson Morin announced that after the Public Comments, the Town Manager will provide a brief overview of the sidewalk repair/replacement process.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, said that he is pleased to see economic development taking place, although unfortunately it appears to be boutiques and small operations, and he wonders how much they will boost the grand list. Mr. Young stated that he just recently paid his tax bill and informed the Council that he is disgusted with how large the tax increases in Wethersfield have been since Chairperson Morin has been the Mayor. He said that the Mayor sets the scene and with the spending that has occurred, Wethersfield residents will be paying for many years for the high increases. Mr. Young commented on the partnership of the Town with the MDC to clean up the Wethersfield Cove and the \$1.68 billion cost cited in the newspaper. He commented that the referendum for this did not appear on the August 8 ballot as previously stated it would be. Mr. Young stated concerns about how the communities will be valued with regard to paying for the MDC project. He said that there are increases in taxes across the board and this has to stop.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented on a West Nile mosquito being found in the southwest part of Wethersfield and how this is a concern to him. He said that his neighbors' pond provides for a mosquito breeding ground. He said that the property is overgrown and has a tree growing through the weir, and although this has been on the agenda for repair for years, it just keeps getting put off. Mr. Ruhe said that there was significant repair done to a weir on private property, and if such a repair can be performed on private property, the same repairs should be taking place on Town property. Mr. Ruhe commented that his neighbor's property is an eyesore and many of his other neighbors have commented to him that something needs to be done about it. Mr. Ruhe said that on two occasions he's had items, which were described by a Wethersfield Police Officer as drug paraphernalia, brought to his door, and he presented one such item to the Town Manager. He said that these types of items concern him greatly given the number of young children who play in and around the pond. Mr. Ruhe suggested that this pond issue be pushed up higher on the priority list.

No one else wished to speak and the Chairperson declared the Public Comment segment closed.

COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Deputy Mayor Fortunato reported that during her last Council hours she was visited by a resident who wished to discuss a blighted property which is already on the blight list, as well as a matter involving trees in the Pyquaug Village area. She reported that she attended the recent Information & Technology Committee meeting at which a discussion of what the activities of the Committee for the next two years would include. Deputy Mayor Fortunato reported that the Youth Services adhoc committee met to discuss possibly sharing services with surrounding communities. The Deputy Mayor reported that she also attended the recent Library Board meeting.

Councilor Drake thanked the Town Manager for the documentation she provided regarding Simsbury's tax relief for seniors. He commented that it is a great model for Wethersfield to follow. Councilor Drake commented on the policy regarding the use of Cottone Field stating that he is concerned that everyone will have access to the field. He said that he can understand the field being used by the Board of Education and the Parks & Recreation Department; however he has reservations with allowing the Town sports league to use the field. Councilor Drake said that he is also concerned with the requirement that all groups need to provide an insurance certificate. He asked if this is required with every facility throughout Town. The Town Manager said that it is. Councilor Drake stated that the field resurfacing was sold to residents as something that would be available to everyone in Town, and as it appears by the use policy, the field is not available to everyone.

Chairperson Morin asked the Town Manager if the rules were the same for previous sports leagues and the Town Manager verified with Parks & Recreation Director Kathy Bagley that the rules have been the same all along.

Councilor Forrest commented that he has an enormous amount of pride in the Town; however, he has noticed an increase in the amount of graffiti throughout Town. He said that he's asked the Mayor to speak with the Town Manager regarding the development of ordinances to try to alleviate this. Councilor Forrest commented that he's walked past the newly created Skate Park a number of times noticing that participants are not wearing the required helmets. He suggested that some type of action be taken to enforce this, so as to alleviate future problems.

Chairperson Morin announced a number of upcoming community events. He commented that the situation with the MDC and the Wethersfield Cove is not a small issue for the Town since Wethersfield receives tremendous overflows of raw sewage and untreated human waste in many of its watercourses, bodies of water, and residents' basements. He said that he will continue to fight on behalf of the Council and the residents of Wethersfield like it's not a small issue. Chairperson Morin said that this item has gone through a Citizens Advisory Committee on which there are two Wethersfield residents sitting. He said that he advocates spending money on the restructuring of a system that is in some places more than 100 years old.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that paving work was recently performed on Ridge Road and at that time many complaints were received regarding problems with the sidewalks along Ridge Road. She said that the current Sidewalk Ordinance, which can only be changed by a vote of the Town Council, states that it is the homeowners' responsibility to fix any sidewalk defects in front of their property. The Town Manager said that the Town's Sidewalk Inspector Lonnie Davis performed a thorough inspection of the walks along Ridge Road and marked off sidewalk slabs presenting issues, and sent out letters to effected homeowners last Friday. She said that although the letter states that property owners have to be in compliance within thirty days, the Town is willing to work with everyone on the time limit provided proof is made of an effort being made to do the repair work by a specific time. She said that if anyone has specific questions, they can call the Town Manager's office at 721-2801 or Mr. Davis at 721-2850.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Kirsche moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF DAVID R. EDWARDS, III FROM THE TOWN HALL/LIBRARY BUILDING COMMITTEE"**, seconded by Councilor Adil. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FOLLOWING:**

Wethersfield Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities

Lisa Ann DiBella D 100 Executive Sq. Apt 425 8-21-06 to 6-30-08

Town Hall/Library Building Committee

Lucas L. McEntire U 30 Pine Lane 8-21-06 to completion

Constables

Francis A. Baio, Jr. D 52 Old Mill Road 8-21-06 to 6-30-08

Brian F. Zito D P.O. Box 290001 8-21-06 to 6-30-08

", seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Trust for Public Land - Final Report - Financial Analysis - Open Space

Chairperson Morin stated that the Council has received the final report of the financial analysis for open space. He said that the report is very helpful for the Council, since open space is a topic that has been discussed often by the Council.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that one of her goals as Town Manager has been to look at obtaining open space, and in a Town such as Wethersfield that is so built up, there is not much land left for the Town to acquire. She said that a session was held with property owners who have potential property to sell to the Town. She said that one problem is that if the Town does not have monies set aside to purchase property when it comes up for sale, there could be a long delay for a referendum; therefore the Town needs to make sure that there are bond funds set aside just for the purpose of purchasing open space. The Town Manager said that based on the analyses in the report, the Trust for Public Land is recommending that the Town pursue a bond authorization in the amount of \$4-\$5 million of lump funds to be used for acquiring open space parcels to be identified in the future. She said that if the Council wishes to move forward with this to place a question on the November ballot, they would need to call a special meeting next week to introduce the question for action and then conduct the final vote at their September 5, 2006 meeting.

Tim Northrop, State Director for the Trust for Public Land, explained that the Trust for Public Land is a national non-profit land conservation organization whose mission is solely to work in partnership with communities to protect land for them. He said that there is a lot of money to be found in terms of grants and matching dollars, and it is his organization's opinion that the Town has to take the first step to demonstrate their commitment to the open space program. Mr. Northrop stated that after an analysis and assessment of the properties targeted, the Trust for Public Land is recommending that the Town consider a \$4-\$5 million bond authorization. He said that the debt will not be incurred at this time, but rather this is for authorization sending the signal to land owners that the Town is ready to engage in negotiations for purchase of open space.

Councilor Drake said that he tentatively agrees with the bonding and asked how the voter/taxpayer is protected in terms of how much and what particular piece of land the Town spends money on. He asked if any other communities have included some type of protection for tax payers. Mr. Northrop said that the voter has a number of checks and balances in the process, and most towns are also represented by a Conservation Commission that has gone through a process of identifying and prioritizing parcels of land that may be of interest to acquire. Mr. Northrop stated that often times, a specific property will come to a Town meeting for a vote of the Council. He said that between the Council and the Conservation Commission, taxpayers are protected in the sense that no one is granted a blank check, but rather consensus is required to move forward.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien pointed out that the actual referendum question does not have to go to the Planning and Zoning Commission as an §8-24 referral for approval; however, the actual purchase of a parcel of land does.

Councilor Drake commented that the referendum could actually take place at any time. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that this is true; however, any time an extra election is held the cost to the Town is approximately \$12,000-\$15,000; therefore, she'd prefer to include the referendum with the November election.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato commented that this will give the Town resources with which to negotiate with land owners before developers do. She said that during her campaigning many people commented to her about preserving open space; therefore, she feels that this is something that people will support.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved **"THAT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL BE HELD NO LATER THAN AUGUST 28, 2006 TO INTRODUCE A BOND ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$4,000,000 FOR THE ACQUISITION OF LAND OR AN INTEREST THEREIN FOR OPEN SPACE, MUNICIPAL, OR RECREATIONAL USES AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$4,000,000 OF BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Councilor Adil commended Mr. Northrop on the Financial Analysis Report he presented. He asked with regard to Chapter VII, §710 of the Wethersfield Charter which states that the bond is no longer if no appropriation from the bond occurs within a three year period, if this includes an actual purchase, or making an offer as well. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien answered that if the Town is at the stage where an offer has been made then it is likely that attorneys have been paid from the bond money which is considered an appropriation. Councilor Adil said that he fully supports the bond appropriation.

Councilor Kotkin commented on the feasibility study's statement that "Since 1995, a total of 50 out of 54 measures have been approved" by voters, and asked if there was any theme to those that did not pass. Mr. Northrop stated that there is not really a common theme, but that in one case the land was adjacent to a number of industrial properties and the DEP expressed concern over contaminants that may be on the parcel; therefore the purchase did not move forward. He said that across the State people are sensitive to having their taxes raised; however, the preservation of open space is an issue that they are willing to pay for. Councilor Kotkin asked how many of the fifty approved purchase were for specific sites rather than a broader authorization. Mr. Northrop answered that the majority of the fifty were driven by a specific property, although over the past three years the move has been toward more of a broader authorization.

Councilor Forrest asked if there is any information to indicate that \$4 million is a better choice than \$5 million. Mr. Northrop answered that he would recommend going with the higher amount since it is an indication of how the marketplace will perceive the Town as a serious actor. Councilor Forrest asked Mr. Northrop to provide an idea of percentage-wise what type of additional funds will be available to supplement the Town funding. Mr. Northrop answered that the Town could attract approximately 40%-70% of outside matching funds, depending on the type of property. Councilor Forrest commented that he'd like to see this move forward.

Councilor Kirsche stated that he supports the appropriation and that he is open to all sides of it. He cited from the Feasibility Study that "Moody's has cited borrowing for open space as a positive factor in determining a town's bond rating because it demonstrates a fiscally responsible approach to conservation and development. Borrowing for open space should not negatively impact Wethersfield's bond rating." Councilor Kirsche said that the appropriation is a fiscally responsible move for the Town to take. He said that the \$19-\$23 per year tax impact is a reasonable amount to preserve open space, especially in a Town that is 90%-95% developed already. Councilor Kirsche said that he supports the motion for the special meeting and looks forward to further discourse.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien commented that although there will be a slight increase in taxes, the impact of homes being built on some of the larger parcels in Town would increase taxes more significantly due to added school enrollment, street maintenance, etc.

Councilor Drake questioned whether the sentence in paragraph (b) of the proposed Ordinance stating "The amount of bonds or notes authorized to be issued shall be reduced by the amount of grants received by the Town for the project" should be included in the Ordinance. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she will check with Bond Counsel on

this. Councilor Drake requested that, before the Special Meeting, the Town Manager look into ways to protect the voters.

Councilor Adil said that he seems to remember that the language of the Charter was changed so as not to include the sentence referred to by Councilor Drake. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that this is correct that this is no longer in the Wethersfield Charter and that she will check with Bond Counsel.

Chairperson Morin commented that the report provided is excellent and that he is happy to support Deputy Mayor Fortunato's motion. He said that he'd be interested in seeing if there's a way that the Town can identify a specific group of properties available.

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

Planning and Zoning Fees

Councilor Adil moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE FOLLOWING FEES, EFFECTIVE UPON ADOPTION, FOR THE PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT: ZONING LETTER/CERTIFICATION OF ZONING COMPLIANCE RESIDENTIAL \$25; MULTI FAMILY/COMMERCIAL \$75; LOT SPLIT/FIRST CUT \$100"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Fortunato.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that fees are examined every year, and the Planning Department has requested the addition of two new fees to help defray the cost of staff time to review and prepare letters that certify zoning compliance and for the administrative review of the first split of a lot. She said that other area towns charge a fee for these services and the estimated annual revenue is \$2,300, and that the Budget and Finance Committee recommends moving forward with this.

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

Alarm Registration Fees

Councilor Adil moved **"TO HAVE THE TOWN MANAGER INTRODUCE AN AMENDED FALSE ALARM ORDINANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING AMOUNTS FOR ALARM SYSTEM REGISTRATION FEES: COMMERCIAL ALARM SYSTEMS-AN INITIAL REGISTRATION FEE OF \$25 WITH AN ANNUAL \$25 RENEWAL FEE; AND RESIDENTIAL ALARM SYSTEMS-AN INITIAL REGISTRATION FEE OF \$25 WITH A \$25 RENEWAL FEE EVERY THREE YEARS"**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that as part of the budget cycle, the Town brought forward alarm registration fees implemented during the Spring, and there were a number of residents who were very concerned that the fees charged were above and beyond actual false alarm fees. She said that the Council referred the issue to the Budget & Finance Committee for review and it was decided that the commercial establishments in Town should have an annual registration fee; however residential properties would only have to renew every three years. The Town Manager said that the fees charged will cover the \$3,200 annual cost of the software maintenance agreement.

Councilor Adil said that the motion represents a bit of a compromise since homeowners who have alarms are actually helping out the Town by alleviating burglaries.

Councilor Kirsche commented that this issue was well discussed and he thanked the Coleman's for sharing their experience and the value provided by a homeowner having an alarm.

Chairperson Morin said that he is glad that this was referred back to the Budget & Finance Committee and after listening to the Coleman's argue their case, he is in support of the amendment to the ordinance.

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

Appointment of Town Auditor

Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved **"TO APPOINT SCULLY & WOLF AS THE TOWN AUDITORS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006/2007 AND TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN A RENEWAL WITH SCULLY AND WOLF FOR AN ADDITIONAL TWO YEARS OF AUDITING SERVICES"**, seconded by Councilor Adil.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that Scully & Wolf have been the Town auditors for the past three years and both she and the Finance Director recommend that this be extended for an additional two years since the hiring of a new auditor takes a lot of work to familiarize them with a community. The Town Manager said that she would hate to be breaking in a new auditing firm when GASB 45 comes along. She said that Scully & Wolf has raised their fees by approximately \$1,100 per year for the past three years and this year is a bit higher because of GASB 45.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that Scully & Wolf specialize in municipalities and their work has been excellent. She said that one of the policies that the Budget & Finance Committee is considering is to hire Town auditors for a term of five years. She said that although she supports the two year term of service, she'd like to give more thought to five years since this can be a long time in terms of service with the community and it could become comfortable for the firm to raise their fees.

Councilor Kotkin asked if GASB 45 was the only factor in the fee increases and verified that the amounts are negotiated numbers. He said that these are pretty decent increases being that most of the background work is done in earlier years of auditing service, and following years would require less work. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that Finance Director Lisa Hancock is negotiating the contract with Scully & Wolf and that a large part of the increase is due to the GASB 45 work, as well as the costs involved in the past few years were not fully covered by the fees paid to them by the Town. Councilor Kotkin recollected that a presentation was given to the Council a few months ago regarding GASB 45 and he asked what that representative is doing regarding GASB 45 as opposed to what the auditors do. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the other firm produces the actuarial report for GASB45 which is not done by the auditors who actually work more with developing the financial plan. Councilor Kotkin stated that he is comfortable with going with auditors for a five-year period.

Councilor Drake asked what the amount paid the auditors for 2005-2006 was. The Town Manager answered that the 2004-2005 amount was \$31,700, 2005-2006 was \$32,800, and the original quote for this year was \$33,900.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if a quote for a five-year contract could be provided. The Town Manager said that she can ask and Scully & Wolf might provide an amount. Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that her personal preference would be for a three-year contract.

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

Cove Park Alcohol Permit - Historical Society's Craft Fair

Councilor Walsh moved **"TO GRANT THE WETHERSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY PERMISSION TO HOLD A WINE TASTING EVENT IN COVE PARK ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2006 FOR THEIR 25TH ANNUAL CRAFT FAIR"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that alcohol is not allowed in Town parks; therefore in order to allow the Wethersfield Historical Society to have alcohol in a Town park, the Council needs to grant an exemption to the Town rules and regulations on alcoholic beverages on Town property. She said that special permission has been granted in the past.

Chairperson Morin stated that he fully supports the motion. He said that he has attended the event for a number of years and the wine tasting event will enhance the event for the community.

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

Budget Transfer - \$675 from Economic Development to Planning Department

Councilor Forrest moved "**TO TRANSFER \$674.42 FROM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT FY 2005-2005 BUDGET TO THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT FY 2005-2006 BUDGET**", seconded by Councilor Walsh.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the Planning Department is \$674.42 over budget for Fiscal Year 2005-2006 due to an increase in hours for the Planning and Zoning Clerk having to cover several meetings that ran very late. She said that there is money in the Economic Development Account because the EDIC Commissioners decided not to complete the business survey.

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

Budget Transfer - Filming of Meetings

Councilor Forrest moved "**TO TRANSFER \$1,875 FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE TOWN COUNCIL DEPARTMENT TO HIRE SOMEONE TO FILM TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS**", seconded by Councilor Walsh.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the Town has not had someone that is trained and consistently available to film the Town Council meetings and the two staff members who have volunteered their time in the past to film are no longer available. She said that the Town Clerk has researched what other Towns are doing for this and she has suggested that hiring someone is the best solution. The Town Manager said that she agrees with the suggestion since it is important that the Town continue to respond to the citizens by broadcasting the meetings live. She said that the \$1,875 amount is based on a \$15 per hour rate.

Councilor Forrest said that the filming of the Council meetings is an important aspect for the Town of Wethersfield and he supports the motion.

Chairperson Morin thanked the Town Clerk for her research, and all who have volunteered to tape the meetings.

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

BIDS

Library Moving and Storage

Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved "**TO WAIVE THE BIDDING PROCESS AND AWARD A BID TO NATIONAL LIBRARY RELOCATIONS FOR THE MOVING AND STORAGE OF PORTIONS OF THE LIBRARY COLLECTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH TOWN SPECIFICATIONS, FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$68,054**", seconded by Councilor Adil.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that during the Library closing, it will be necessary to dismantle shelving, move the entire book collection and store 80% of the adult collection so that renovation work can be completed as expeditiously as possible. She said that all of the books have to be stored in a temperature-controlled environment and in specific order to avoid chaos when re-shelving them. She said that three vendors were recommended by the State Library Building Consultant and other libraries that have used similar services, and that two vendors responded to the Library's Request for Quotation.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato commented that National Library Relocations appears to be a reputable company just by

looking at the moves in which they've been involved. She said that she is concerned that National covers the pallets in blankets during inclement weather whereas Amodio will shrink wrap them. She said that she'd like to be sure that the Library Board is comfortable with National Library Relocations. Library Director Laurel Goodgion said that the Board is very comfortable with them.

Councilor Adil asked if either vendor was able to provide a time-frame of availability that would fit with the Library's closing. Ms. Goodgion stated that Amodio is involved in the upcoming moving of the West Hartford Library in September; therefore, she was relieved that National Library Relocations, which is currently moving the Hartford Library, will be available in September.

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

Medium Dump Trucks

Councilor Adil moved "**TO AWARD A CONTRACT TO INTERSTATE FORD TRUCK SALES FOR THE PURCHASE OF TWO MEDIUM DUMP TRUCKS, AS SPECIFIED IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$216,340 AND TO AUTHORIZE USE OF \$2,071 IN SAVINGS FROM THE LEAF VACUUM PURCHASE AND TO FURTHER AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF \$18,269 FROM CONTINGENCY TO TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS (CAPITAL NONRECURRING)**", seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that as part of this year's equipment replacement program, monies have been set aside for the purchase of two medium dump trucks. She said that the new bids came in over budget by \$20,340 and vendors are saying that the price of steel contributed to the increase in cost. The Town Manager explained that to offset the overage, there is \$2,071 left from the leaf machine purchase and she anticipates a minimum of \$10,000 as trade-in for the two trucks. She said that if Council approves the purchase, they will need to transfer \$18,269 from Contingency and use the \$2,071 from the leaf machine savings, with the final trade-in figure not known until the trucks are delivered sometime in the second quarter of 2007. She said that the Council could authorize the purchase of only one truck; however, due to rising prices and the condition of the fleet, she does not recommend this.

Councilor Kirsche said that he understands the current need and he asked if the Town not using the State of Connecticut contract to purchase the trucks because they are a different make of trucks and parts aren't interchangeable, is an ongoing problem with the bids.

Mr. Turner said that when Assistant to the Town Manager Rae Ann Palmer did her checking, the man from Nutmeg International Trucks, who is the State vendor, told her the State bid was \$4,000 cheaper, but the line by line item comparison using the State bid showed the State bid being higher than those received by the Town.

Mr. McDonald said that he sees no difference between International and Ford with regard to the engines and transmissions. He said problems arise with the difference between the body and parts not being interchangeable between the two.

Councilor Drake commented that he can't understand why there are only a few bids. Mr. McDonald said that auto dealers don't care to spend the time to prepare bids.

Councilor Kotkin asked what the estimated amount used in the budget is for cost. Mr. McDonald said that it was \$98,000. Mr. Turner said that he used last year's State bid prices and increased the price by \$4,000 per truck. Mr. McDonald said that as of December 31, parts can no longer be interchanged due to the low-sulfur fuel.

Councilor Forrest asked if the bids are only put out to the Hartford area. Mr. Turner said that the bid request is sent out to vendors who have bid in the past and also who bid on the State bid list. The Town Manager said that a legal notice must be place all throughout New England. Councilor Forrest asked if the Town should be more proactive in getting bids from vendors that are not far away. Mr. Turner said that; the vendors are getting the trucks from Ford at a fairly fixed price and the only real variable is the commissions. Councilor Forrest asked if the Town is only looking at getting a Ford. Mr. McDonald said that International is basically the same as Ford and they seem to be currently strong

in the municipal market. Councilor Forrest asked if there is a third company in the market and Mr. McDonald said that there isn't. Councilor Forrest asked if the Town would get more bids if they were more proactive in seeking vendors as far as Springfield and Vermont. Mr. McDonald said that it is nice to have a vendor that is close by in case there are problems with the trucks.

Chairperson Morin said that he'd like to have the Town Manager and the Finance Department look at the bidding process and see if there are ways that the Town can be more proactive. He said that he supports purchasing both trucks as this is something that has been discussed for many years and the inadequacy of the current fleet is apparent.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANT

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE AUTHORIZATION AND SUBMISSION OF A GRANT FROM THE CAPITAL AREA SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNCIL TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND YOUTH SERVICES AND THE AWARD OF FUNDS FROM THE GRANT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND YOUTH SERVICES

MINUTES

Councilor Kirsche moved **"TO SUSTAIN THE APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 17, 2006 UNTIL THE SEPTEMBER 5, 2006"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:35 p.m., Councilor Adil moved **"TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION"** seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 10:30 p.m., Councilor Kirsche moved **"TO ENTER BACK INTO THE REGULAR MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO RAISE THE TOWN MANAGER'S SALARY 2.5%, WITH A \$3,000 BONUS AND AN ADDITIONAL \$1,500 INTO HER ICMA RETIREMENT ACCOUNT PER YEAR"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Fortunato. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 10:31 p.m., Councilor Kirsche moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Adil. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by vote of Council September 5, 2006