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BUDGET MEETING APRIL 11, 2005

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, April 11, 2005 at 5:45 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Town Hall with Chairperson Russell A. Morin presiding.

Present: Councilors Adil, Cascio, Czernicki, Forrest, Fortunato, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Karangekis, and Chairperson Morin.

Absent: Councilor Hemmann.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk; Lisa Hancock, Finance Director; and Rae Ann Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager.

OVERVIEW

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that there were a lot of double digit increases this year, especially utilities and benefits. She said that the Town's debt will be increasing somewhat and then will decrease in four to five years. Ms. Therrien said that the salary increases have been negotiated and she is currently working with the unions to negotiate four furlough days for Town employees (except police patrols and dispatch) which would amount to \$100,000 and two layoffs in Social Services. She said that she feels very strongly about a number of capital issues that need to be addressed. She said that the Town will be selling bonds in June and the fund balance will be reviewed. Ms. Therrien said that the contingency fund is based on the same amount as the current year, but shows an increase due to the Nature Center project and a loan. She informed the Council that 1/10th of a mill is equal to \$197,236. Ms. Therrien reviewed the budget changes which include combining training, dues and subscriptions into one line item and the Police Department has been combined into one; therefore she will provide a breakdown of this Department so that a comparison can be made with last year.

REVENUES (SECTION B)

Finance Director Lisa Hancock explained that the Town experienced a growth of approximately 3% in regular revenues (other than tax revenues) or \$313,000 since last year. She stated that 85.2% of the Town's revenue is through property taxes and alternatives are being looked into in an attempt to alleviate the tax burden. Ms. Hancock explained that licensing and permits are projected to increase due to an increase in fees at the Transfer Station and for a second garbage barrel and fines and penalties have decreased. She said that she is being conservative on the amount for interest on investments although interest rates are slowly increasing. She said that she is investigating safe, alternative investments for the Town to maximize returns. Ms. Hancock stated that State Grants in Lieu of Taxes are slightly down and the Town Manager said that the Governor's figures have been budgeted. Ms. Hancock said that there is an increase in the Other State Grants account for the COPS School Resource Officer Grant and that the major impact in the Charges for Services has to do with the change in the accounting of Police private duty work and the most significant reduction relates to Town Clerk conveyance taxes which may increase depending on State Legislation. Ms. Hancock reported that \$67,000 has been removed from the Goodwin Park Revenue line item and that Educational grants are expected to increase. Ms. Hancock explained that expenditure credits in the expense accounts will now be shown as revenue sources which is more appropriate. She also explained that the Fund Balance is the amount of estimated surplus at year-end that is to be carried forward into the next fiscal year and rating agencies look closely at the Fund Balance. She stated that the 2005-06 Proposed Total Revenues and Transfers of \$69,788,376 represents a 2.35 mill increase at this time.

Councilor Adil commented on Newington's General Fund balance levels averaging 16% of revenues due to all of the

commercial property in that Town and asked what Wethersfield's positives are. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that Wethersfield will be considering the Economic Development Plan as a positive for the Town. Ms. Hancock said that other positive impacts with rating agencies are Wethersfield's pay-as-you-go investments in the Capital of the Town, the Capital Improvement and CNEF programs, and the Town's work toward future goals.

Councilor Fortunato asked how much revenue is involved in the Conveyance Tax and was told that it would be another \$70,000 - \$100,000. Councilor Fortunato said that there is a lobby to keep the funds in there and that this will need to be watched. Ms. Hancock stated that there is a strong push in the legislature to retain the current conveyance tax. The Town Manager said that she does not recommend including the additional amount in the budget since realtors are pushing hard to lower the conveyance tax. Ms. Hancock said that she is going with a conservative approach in the budget.

Councilor Forrest asked for an explanation of the General Fund. Ms. Hancock informed him that the General Fund is the overall fund for the general operations of the Town. She said that the Fund Balance has different portions and is basically what the Town has in reserve for future use and emergencies. Councilor Forrest asked what the \$500,000 for Fund Balance represents. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that this is part of the undesignated Fund Balance designated as a revenue to offset the tax rate.

Councilor Czernicki asked from where the \$10,000 transfer in the Parks and Recreation Young Adults program is coming. Ms. Hancock said that funds have built up in this escrow account to the point that some should come back to the Town. Councilor Czernicki asked what the balance of the Adult program account will be after this transfer. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she will check on this; however, Parks and Recreation Director Kathy Bagley feels very comfortable with the transfer. Councilor Czernicki asked about the increase in the Help for the Elderly account. Ms. Hancock said that this amount is provided by the Town Assessor who will be at the meeting later to answer questions.

Councilor Adil asked if any of the EDIC funding for business districts could go into the Town's General Account. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it has to go into the Business District and can never offset the General Fund. She said that this funding is used for items above and beyond the normal budget such as special advertising, planters, etc.

Councilor Forrest asked if there is a surplus after reconciling for the 2004-2005 fiscal year, if this amount would be used to offset the \$500,000 Fund Balance. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it can; however, she does not anticipate a surplus this year.

Assistant to the Town Manager Rae Ann Palmer distributed a revised revenue schedule and schedule of fees which compares Wethersfield to the State and other Towns. She said that Department Heads were asked to come up with suggested increases in fees based on competitive market fees. She said that a number of the fees in the Building and Engineering Departments were increased in an attempt to recoup administrative costs for the processing of permits. Ms. Palmer reviewed the Wethersfield proposed fees and compared them to those of both Newington and Rocky Hill. Ms. Palmer said that some Departments need to be careful not to increase fees so high as to decrease usage.

Councilor Cascio left the meeting at this time (6:30 p.m.).

Ms. Palmer explained that it is hoped that the increase in False Alarm fees will save in the cost of officer time to respond to false alarms. She said that the Alarm Registration Fee is a new fee which will provide the Police Department with an active list of those with alarms and the fee will cover the cost of processing the registration. Ms. Hancock asked if the alarms monitored by the Police Department are residents' personal alarms and was told that these are business alarms.

Councilor Fortunato asked what the rate of false alarms is. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it is terrible and Ms. Palmer said that it is a significant amount and that she can provide this information to the Council. Councilor Fortunato asked how the fees are collected. Deputy Mayor Karangekis said that a citation is issued. Councilor Fortunato asked what can be done to educate the business owners of the fee increase for false alarms. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Chamber of Commerce can be used and a mailing can be done. Councilor Fortunato

asked what types of vendors are involved in the Vendor Permit under the Police Department. She was told that this would include ice cream vendors, balloon vendors at parades, and other carts. Councilor Fortunato stated that the Library Board has not discussed an increase in fees and asked Ms. Palmer if she anticipates any proposed fees. Ms. Palmer said that the Library Director feels that the Library fees, which were increased not long ago, are very competitive with libraries in surrounding towns and that there needs to be a balance between raising fees and decreasing usage. Councilor Fortunato asked if a retrieval service for lost books was discussed and Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it was discussed on the expenditure side.

Councilor Czernicki asked if there was discussion on the user charge for cruisers per hour or the private duty fees. Ms. Palmer said that the private duty fees change every year to reflect the contracted salary changes. Councilor Czernicki asked why there is no change in the cruiser fee per hour. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she will look at this, especially due to the increase in gas prices. Councilor Czernicki suggested that the fee for audio tapes be considered for an increase, as well as record checks. She was told that many Towns do record checks for free and others in the area are below Wethersfield's \$5 charge.

Councilor Forrest asked if the false alarms include both police and fire and was told that it does. He asked if the Council can suggest increases to certain fees and have the affect of the changes calculated. Chairperson Morin said that the Council needs to provide to the Town Manager a consensus of support for the proposed fee changes as well as additional suggestions, as the changes will need to be approved by the Council in the form of an ordinance.

Councilor Fortunato said that she feels it is important to investigate whether any of the fee changes will impact economic development in any way.

Ms. Palmer said that any of the increases relating to the Building, Engineering, or Planning and Zoning Department were proposed by the Department Head and Town Planner who did not seem to have any major concerns.

Councilor Czernicki stated that she is not in favor of increasing the Dial-A-Ride annual fee since the dollar figure anticipated by the last increase has not been reached and it is wrong to increase the fee again for those who use the service. She asked if there is any additional Federal funding for the Dial-A-Ride program. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she is not sure of this as the Federal government is actually looking to pass the Dial-A-Ride program down to the State.

Chairperson Morin suggested that Councilors review the Schedule of Fees and prepare to discuss them at the next meeting.

Councilor Fortunato asked if Dial-A-Ride fees from surrounding towns are available. Ms. Palmer said that most towns do not charge for the service. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that if towns have their own busses and are funded by the Greater Hartford Transit District, they are not allowed to charge a fee. Ms. Palmer said that Newington charges a fee of \$8.25 per trip. Councilor Fortunato agreed with Councilor Czernicki that the increase should not create a hardship for anyone.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that the Town Attorney is looking at all Town ordinances to change many of them so that fees come to the Town rather than the State. She said that this will be accomplished by requiring that appeals go through the Town's Citation Board rather than the State's Courts.

Councilor Fortunato asked if recovered funds from drug sales come back to the Town. The Town Manager said that drug money has to, by law, go into a separate account. Ms. Palmer said that these funds can only be used to purchase equipment for law enforcement, especially drug enforcement. Councilor Fortunato asked how much money the Town actually receives in recovered funds. Ms. Palmer said that 70% of qualified seizures, depending on allowance by the State, are allowed. The Town Manager said that she can look up the amount.

Ms. Palmer reported that the Town has been losing approximately \$4,000 by not charging for bounced checks until the second return and returned bank documents so it is proposed that a \$25 fee be charged for all such documents. She said that the tax office is requested to provide many, many duplicate tax notices and it is being proposed to charge \$15 for duplicate notices. She said that other towns are considering a similar proposal.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

DATA SERVICES - 062 (C-24 to C-26)

Data Services Coordinator Paul Dudley provided an overview of the Data Services proposed budget. He said that Support Services provides contracts for software and hardware support, Specialized Agency Supplies provides for special computer paper, ribbon, and other proprietary supplies, and General Office Supplies provides for general mandatory supplies. Mr. Dudley said that Computer Software has generally been bundled in with Hardware; however, in the past couple of years an attempt has been made to break out money for software. He said that a credit used to be charged back to individual departments and now the only credits are for the Board of Education and the Central Connecticut Health District.

Ms. Hancock commented that these credits are reflected in the revenue. She said that the detailed report shows the breakdown of costs.

Councilor Czernicki asked if there is anything in the report that is remarkably different from years past. Ms. Hancock said that there really isn't much, although there is a change in the client access account.

Councilor Fortunato asked about the substantial increase in Computer Software. Mr. Dudley said that this is because the description of the account has been changed to include both hardware and software now.

Councilor Czernicki asked for an explanation of the difference in the requested and manager amounts for Salaries and Wages. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that this is due to the furlough which will be consistent across the board. Councilor Czernicki asked for an explanation of the \$175 difference in the Conferences and Training account. Mr. Dudley said that there were training, networking, and security items in the account which were cut out.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien commented that the Information & Technology Committee will be providing a report of recommendations to the Council in the near future. Mr. Dudley commented that he put his budget together as a status quo budget.

ASSESSOR - 064 (C-29 to C-30)

Town Assessor Jan Neumuth said that the overtime is required for one employee who also works for the Board of Assessment Appeals and for a seasonal employee available should the need arise. She said that much of the External Copying and Binding costs are due to mandates and that the Legal Advertisement Account covers Board of Assessment meeting announcements as well as the Notice that Personal Property Declarations are due by November 1. Ms. Neumuth stated that Dues and Subscriptions are now part of Conferences and Training and represents membership in the Hartford Area Assessors Association and the Connecticut Assessors Association as well as the cost of NADA books and numerous assessor training sessions, some of which are required to keep up with Assessor certification. Ms. Neumuth explained that the Consultant Fees are for the personal property audit which not only finds money, but puts people on notice that the Town is auditing. She said that the Support Services amount refers to the Vision system for maintenance and for web-hosting and the General Office Supplies amount is mostly for printer supplies. Ms. Neumuth said that the Computer Software amount is for the purchase of a tablet in lieu of hiring a part-time employee. She said that the entire Town could be loaded on the hand-held tablet, although this is not advised in case it crashes. She said that the tablet is recommended by Vision and is helpful because a certain area in Town can be downloaded and the information taken out with her on the road to refer to and additional information brought back to the office. Ms. Neumuth said that estimated monies have been set aside for the State Statute required revaluation in 2008.

Councilor Forrest asked for an explanation of the difference between the Requested and Manager amount under Computer Software and was told that this is for a digital camera which was requested and denied.

Ms. Neumuth distributed an informational report of the 2005 Sales Among Wethersfield Residents. She provided a handout of the Property Tax & Rent Relief for the Elderly and Totally Disabled and explained that the Help for the Elderly Account estimate is based on what has been historically on each grand list and that the numbers remain fairly

consistent. Ms. Neumuth said that the State amount is reimbursed the following year and the local elderly credit is not.

CENTRAL OFFICES SERVICES - 067 (C-31 to C-32)

Finance Director Lisa Hancock explained that she is starting to get a good feel for the combined budget for the Copy charges which are running at approximately \$19,000. She stated that Postage will fall short this year; therefore she has raised it for next year. The Town Manager suggested the implementation of more transactions through the website in order to save on postage. Fire Marshal Gary Santoro reported that the Telephone & Communications account encompasses the total communications of the Town with the exception of data communications. He said that the Manager's proposed budget amount leaves him already \$4,597 short; however he has learned that some of that will be coming from the Fire Department budget as it includes their DSL lines for Company #1 and Company #2. Mr. Santoro said that the Manager's cut of \$2,677 in the SBC network charges means that services will need to be disconnected at some locations. The Town Manager said that this would obviously not occur until the end of the fiscal year, at which time there will be surpluses in other line items that can be transferred over to cover this. Mr. Santoro reported that there is a major crisis currently at the Physical Services Department and at the Community Center because with all of the computers added to both, the network has been dragged down and the system has been slowed drastically and could crash at any time; therefore he is proposing \$42,000 to replace/repair the network architecture.

Councilor Fortunato asked if an assessment of the technology at the Physical Services location was done at the time of the renovation. Mr. Turner said that an assessment was done of the physical space, but not of the technology. He said that it was known that technology was limited and with new phone lines and computers added, compounded by the additional Board of Education staff, the system is now overloaded. Councilor Fortunato asked what has changed at the Community Center to create the critical situation there. Mr. Santoro said that data for the Community Center now resides on the internet linked with the Town Hall; therefore they are doing more work on the system between them and the appropriate Departments at the Town Hall.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the proposal is consistent with the recommendations of the Technology Committee. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Technology Committee is looking beyond patching to bringing the system to a level that is comparable with other towns. Councilor Montinieri asked if Mr. Santoro's proposal will contradict anything that the Technology Committee may recommend in the future. The Town Manager said that she is not aware that it will, but she will make sure that they take a look at this. Ms. Hancock said that the Technology Committee has been working with Mr. Santoro and they have requested copies of the information on the proposal for their review and may propose a better way to accomplish the task. Mr. Santoro said that he is not looking to replace the network, but only the boxes.

Councilor Adil asked Mr. Santoro to break down the allocation between the Physical Services facility and the Community Center. Mr. Santoro said that it is difficult to break this down because it is considered one circuit. He said that the network charges will remain the same, and a one time charge will apply to change the boxes with the new technology allowing the split of voice and data. Councilor Adil asked what impact Channel 14's move to the Community Center will have on the technology. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that there is money in another account to cover all of the electrical upgrades. Mr. Santoro said that he did not consider Channel 14 in his proposal as they have always been their own entity, as well as the Senior Net.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked why these technology issues were not addressed when the combination of the Physical Services Department and the Community Center were discussed. Mr. Santoro said that there was an initial proposal to include Physical Services and the Stillman building; however there was not enough funding to do this. He said that the long-range plan for Physical Services was to add more computers, but once again there was not enough funding for upgrading the technology. Deputy Mayor Karangekis said that someone should have been aware of and identified these shortcomings. Mr. Santoro said that it has been very difficult to get money into this account and he is requesting the funding now because it is absolutely, positively needed.

Chairperson Morin questioned the need for foremen to have their own phones and computers. He said that he envisions the foremen coming in to work and getting paperwork done before going out on the road with their crews. He asked if the foremen are generating that much work that they need their own computer stations. Town Manager

Bonnie Therrien said that in the past, the foremen would do all of their paperwork handwritten and submit it to the Physical Services secretary who would enter it all into the computer and the new system has made a big difference. Mr. Turner stated that the addition of the Board of Education staff at the Physical Services location has doubled the computer usage.

TOWN WIDE RADIO SYSTEM - 068 (C-33 to C-34)

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that there is a lot of concern about monies set aside in the CNEF account for the replacement of the radio system and Motorola will be coming in to discuss this with the Council during the budget session for Public Works on April 27.

Mr. Turner explained that Dues & Subscriptions is now combined with Conferences & Training which includes one membership, system administrator training, and reference material. He said that the Consultant Fees are for the Power Management contract to manage the site leases of both towers. He said that the reduction of \$5,000 would be for on-call consultant services which the Town Manager cut. He recommends that this be reinstated in order to provide representation for the Town during the upcoming frequency change. Mr. Turner explained that the majority of Support Services is the Motorola extended warranty and software license and also includes a small amount for New England Communications to do miscellaneous radio programming and repairs for the Town. He said that the electricity covers the electrical bill for Callahan and Firehouse #3 and that Repair and Maintenance mostly covers the Callahan rent and \$1,000 for various site improvements. Mr. Turner explained that the Specialized Agency Supplies amount is for general repairs not covered under warranty. He said that the additional \$5,000 requested was for a battery charger for the portable radios and this was cut by the Town Manager. He said that the request for \$2,000 in the Computer Software account was for a lap top computer and this was also cut by the Town Manager. He said that this was also requested in last year's budget.

Councilor Forrest asked why there is such a reduction in the Repair and Maintenance line compared to last year. Mr. Turner told him that the electricity has been moved out of this line item. Councilor Forrest asked for an explanation of the \$200 for General Office Supplies. Mr. Turner said that this is for files, copies, etc. for the Radio Committee.

Mr. Turner informed the Council that there is income of \$119,000 to be generated for this budget from the rental of space on the cell towers which offsets the expenditures.

Chairperson Morin pointed out that the increase in the budget over last year's is mainly for support services. Mr. Turner said that these are fixed costs from Motorola for the warranty which will become more expensive as time passes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - 181 (C-39 to C-41)

Town Planner Peter Gillespie explained that the Salary line is for clerical staff to support the EDIC by attending meetings and preparing minutes. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the grants position has been taken out of here and put into her budget. Mr. Gillespie explained that the External Copy & Binding line is for a number of programs including the Way Finding sign system, business visitation and Tourism Commission support. He said that he has been given advice from the Tourism Planning Consultant that in order to develop the community properly, marketing needs to be done outside the area and the cost for this is included in the Legal Advertisement line. Mr. Gillespie said that the Conferences & Training includes Dues and Subscriptions to a number of associations and funding for various seminars. He said that a significant amount of this line item (\$5,500) is the Town's annual contribution to the Metro Hartford Alliance Community which is calculated on a per capita basis. Mr. Gillespie said that the EDIC is looking to meet with a marketing consultant to develop Wethersfield promotional pieces. He explained that \$5,000 of the Support Services is for a firm who distributes Wethersfield brochures to locations throughout the State where tourists would be seeking information and the \$2,000 Public Service Contribution amount includes an annual donation to the Cornfest and the cost for signage throughout Town for new businesses.

Councilor Adil asked why there is such a decrease in the Public Service Contribution from last year to this year. Mr. Gillespie said that the loan program had been in this line item last year and this year the amount appears in the Capital Improvement budget instead. Mr. Gillespie said that the contribution to the Metro Hartford Alliance was also moved

from this line to Travel, Training, and Dues. Councilor Adil asked Mr. Gillespie if he feels that the amount for marketing will be enough. Mr. Gillespie said that he doesn't feel that this will be enough; however he tried to keep the budget as lean as possible. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the EDIC feels that mailings are not very effective and that the development of the website is more cost effective. Mr. Gillespie said that some funding has been earmarked for a Tourism Commission brochure and the EDIC has applied for a \$3,000 grant through the State Tourism entity. Tourism Commission member Charles Forsdick said that the Commission requested \$3,000 to match the State grant and the Town Manager approved \$500.

Councilor Fortunato asked Mr. Gillespie if he anticipates the membership fee to the Metro Hartford Alliance to increase. Mr. Gillespie said that he has been quoted an amount that the budgeted amount will cover. Councilor Fortunato asked if this is a voluntary contribution. The Town Manager said that it is voluntary; however she anticipates that the Town will have to pull out of the regional SEDS program and Brownfields grant if we don't join. Councilor Fortunato asked if there are any benefits to belonging to the Alliance. Mr. Gillespie said that last year they provided training on the Business Visitation program. Councilor Fortunato stated that she thought that the signage for new businesses was done by the Chamber of Commerce and Mr. Gillespie said that the Chamber has their own program for members only. Councilor Fortunato suggested that the EDIC and the Chamber of Commerce collaborate on this and Mr. Gillespie said that it was discussed; however the Chamber has to support their membership.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the Silas Deane Highway Advisory Committee falls into this area at all. Mr. Gillespie said that the EDIC supports the Committee; however their real needs fall into the Capital Improvement budget line items.

EDIC Chairperson Betty Rosania stated that she, too, questions the benefits of the dues paid to the Metro Hartford Alliance. She said that she is very concerned about the Capital Improvement budget as it relates to the \$40,000 requested, and rejected by the Town Manager, for the façade program and the \$50,000 requested for land acquisition and open space which has been put off until next year. Ms. Rosania said that the lights on Main Street need to be addressed and the revitalization program for the Silas Deane Highway needs more funding. She asked the Town Manager why the \$25,000 for revitalization was put off until next year. The Town Manager said that money needs to be spent for the façade program through STEAP; therefore the Town's funding could wait a year. She said that there is funding lacking for the Berlin Turnpike and Old Wethersfield. Ms. Rosania said that she believes in a pay-as-you-go system and that no one deserves a free ride for services.

PLANNING - 182 (C-42 to C-44)

Mr. Gillespie explained that the largest portion of this budget is for Salaries & Wages. He said that the Copy and Binding is for the printing of new zoning regulations and the Legal Advertisement of decisions made by the Planning & Zoning Commission are required by State Statute. He said that the Travel, Training, and Dues amount covers dues for membership in various associations, reference materials, training, and various publications. Mr. Gillespie explained that the Support Services is for the contract for the GOTMS software program.

Councilor Forrest asked if the Legal Advertisements must be published in the Hartford Courant or could they appear in a publication that would cost less. Mr. Gillespie explained that they have to be published in a publication with a daily circulation.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien asked Mr. Gillespie if he feels that any of the Planning fees could be increased. Mr. Gillespie said that he presented this to the Planning & Zoning Commission at their last meeting and they had no objections to raising the fees. He said that there are new administrative fees that can be charged; however the Council has to pass this by way of an ordinance which he will prepare. Mr. Gillespie noted that the Planning & Zoning Commission has not increased their fees for nearly fifteen years.

Tourism Commission member Charles Forsdick stated that the Town needs to spend money on economic development as an investment in the Town's future. Mr. Forsdick distributed and reviewed the Tourism Commission's Annual Report. He said that the Commission requests the Council's support of the Town Manager's proposed budget along with an increase in funding for a number of Tourism Commission items.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien asked Mr. Forsdick if there have been any studies that show that what Tourism benefits can be expected for a specific dollar amount invested in tourism. Mr. Forsdick said that he does not have this information, but can obtain it from those who did a study on the Hartford Convention Center.

Councilor Czernicki asked Mr. Forsdick to also include the time frame in which the return would be received and if the tourism dollars are received from individuals actually staying in that locale.

Councilor Fortunato said that she sees great opportunity at the Riverfront Recapture meetings and that some of the corporate leaders in attendance could be Wethersfield residents whom the Tourism Commission should use as a sounding board.

Mr. Forsdick stated that the Tourism Commission is enjoying a very good working relationship with the EDIC and they are cooperatively attempting to make the best use of the funding provided.

TOWN COUNCIL - 010 (C-6 to C-8)

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that most of the Council's budget is contributions to other agencies. She said that Copy & Binding - External has increased because the Annual Report and the Budget have been moved to the Council's budget and that the Dues & Subscriptions is for CRCOG (Capital Region Council of Governments) and COST (Council of Small Towns). Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the dispatching component of the CMED contribution has been moved to the Police Department budget.

Councilor Forrest asked if COST is a new agency. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that last year the Town got out of CCM and got into COST instead. Councilor Forrest asked if it is necessary to belong to COST since the Town already belongs to CRCOG. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the two are different in that COST does a lot more lobbying. Councilor Forrest asked why then the Town is paying so much to belong to CRCOG. The Town Manager said that CRCOG provides transportation funding.

Councilor Fortunato asked the Town Manager to provide figures on the number of references to Intercommunity Mental Health, as well as a comparison of services and fee schedules between Intercommunity Mental Health and North Central Regional Mental Health.

Councilor Forrest asked where requests from the Council would appear. The Town Manager said that anything Council requests for themselves would appear in this 010 section of the budget.

TOWN MANAGER - 020 (C-9 to C-11)

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the Salaries & Wages now includes the part-time Assistant to the Town Manager for Grants and the Conferences & Training covers attendance to grant seminars. She said that the Civil Preparedness Director is part of this budget as well.

Chairperson Morin stated that certain conferences and training are necessary to help the Town.

Councilor Fortunato said that it would be helpful for the Council to be provided with information regarding how many people Departments Heads send to various conferences and training sessions.

HUMAN RESOURCES - 024 (C-12 to C-14)

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that this budget takes care of the Town's general personnel needs and that the Professional Development line is Town-wide for Departments who are short on funding. She said that Tuition Reimbursement is mandated by the union contracts and is seldom used. She said that the Recruitment line is for testing and this amount has decreased due to a lack of turnover and that Labor Relations have decreased due to a lower level of grievances. Lastly she stated that the employee luncheon which is in the line item for Support Services has been cut back from twice per year to only once per year. Chairperson Morin asked how much the luncheon costs. The Town Manager said that the luncheon can cost between \$1,000 and \$1,500.

Councilor Fortunato said that if the Town is furloughing people, they should at least recognize them this year.

Councilor Czernicki suggested that employees could be furloughed for six days and recognized twice per year.

Ms. Hancock explained that the drug testing, lab services, and employee assistance program under the line item of Support Services has been cut by \$2,000.

Councilor Czernicki asked if drug testing is done on all employees at the time of hire and was told by the Town Manager that this is part of the new employee physical. Councilor Czernicki asked what departments have random drug testing and was told that the Physical Services Department does this. Councilor Czernicki asked if random drug testing is done on part-time, summer, seasonal hourly employees and was told that it is not, but that a pre-physical is done.

TOWN ATTORNEY - 030 (C-15)

The Town Manager said that she is recommending that the Council does not approve an Assistant Town Attorney, but retain only a main Town Attorney.

Councilor Adil questioned what happens if the Town gets into a lawsuit with the MDC. Chairperson Morin said that this was one of the reasons that an Assistant Town Attorney was retained and if there is no longer an Assistant Town Attorney position, monies should be set aside for issues that arise above and beyond that which the Town Attorney can handle.

Councilor Forrest stated that he thought a lot of work was being done by the Assistant Town Attorney for a reasonable flat rate and this saved money because the Town Attorney didn't have to be used. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it depends on the person and their expertise and that it is important to go for a flat rate as this provides for a fixed cost.

Chairperson Morin said that he is uncomfortable with not being prepared to provide proper representation for the Town with regard to the MDC and other possible issues that may arise.

PROBATE COURT - 095 (C-35)

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that this is split according to the Grand Lists of the Towns of Newington and Wethersfield. She said that this account will probably need approximately \$2,000 more.

TOWN CLERK - 040 (C-16 to C-17)

Town Clerk Dolores Sassano explained that the Salaries & Wages are for herself, a full-time Assistant Clerk and two part-time Assistant Clerks. She said that the full-time Assistant Clerk position is now a union position which had been initiated some time ago. Ms. Sassano explained that the Copy & Binding - External is for the printing of recorded land records and that \$5,000 was requested (and denied) to reprint the General Code Books and instead alternative measures will be considered. She said that Dues, Subscriptions, Conferences and Training include membership in the Connecticut Town Clerk's Association and various training seminars. Ms. Sassano said that the Consultant Fees amount covers the cost of a legal abstractor who reviews the input of land records and that Support Services is for different maintenance contracts for software systems used in the office. She said that the Office Machinery Service amount covers the copier used for land records and that she took out the \$2,200 for Computer Software as she will be applying for a grant for funding to pay for a portion of this.

Councilor Fortunato commented that all departments seem to have a good amount budgeted for copying and asked if it is known how many copiers are in the Town. The Town Manager said that she is looking to combine all of the Town's copiers for a better financial deal. Councilor Fortunato asked if any thought has gone into developing a copying center or having Departments share copiers. The Town Manager said that the public uses the copier in the Town Clerk's Office and revenue is generated from this; however Ms. Hancock is looking at a way to combine the rest of the copiers. Councilor Fortunato asked if the Town has a contract with a local printer to do the external printing. Town

Manager Bonnie Therrien said that usually quotes are obtained, but that it could be considered to go to bid in July for the entire fiscal year. Town Clerk Sassano said that her external printing is specialized and needs to go through specific printing companies. Ms. Hancock said that in most instances the Town is purchasing through the State contract and taking advantage of those savings.

Councilor Czernicki asked the Town Clerk why her 2004-2005 estimated Salaries & Wages are running higher than the adopted amount. Ms. Sassano said that since her office was down a position during the election, the extra hours worked by the part-time employees during this time make up for this amount. Councilor Czernicki asked why the 2005-2006 requested amount is so much higher. Ms. Sassano said that because the newly hired full-time Assistant Town Clerk position is now in the union, she will receive a step raise, that she has put in for an increase in her own salary to bring her up to the amount comparable with area Town Clerks, and also that each department's Salaries & Wages line includes a 3% increase for part-time staff.

Councilor Adil asked why the 2004-2005 estimated Legal Advertisement amount is so much higher than the adopted amount. Ms. Sassano told him that this is due to the Charter revision advertisement.

REGISTRARS OF VOTERS - 050 (C-18 to C-19)

Ms. Hancock said that the \$2,200 for Computer Software includes \$1,600 for a personal computer with Office software on it and \$600 for a laser printer.

Councilor Forrest verified that the total budgeted amount is for one election in November 2005.

TREASURER - 060 (C-20)

Ms. Hancock said that this budget contains the stipend for the Town Treasurer and Assistant.

FINANCE - 061 (C-21 to C-23)

Ms. Hancock explained that she originally requested an Assistant position in the Accounting Department and realized that it will be difficult to obtain the appropriate caliber of employee in this budget climate; however there is still a need for an employee to take on a number of functions in her office. She said that currently Tony Martino from the Engineering Department has been putting in 5-10 hours per week of his own time for her to assist with capital projects. Ms. Hancock said that she has also contributed a significant amount of her own time each weekend, as well as Rae Ann Palmer. She said that the three employees average 30-35 hours of extra time each week and her other concern has to do with the implementation of the Munis system between the Board of Education and the Town as she will likely be heading up the process due to her knowledge of the system.

Chairperson Morin asked how much the new assistant position would be with benefits and salary. Ms. Hancock said that it would be approximately \$65,000. Ms. Hancock stated that the Support Services amount of \$33,500 could be eliminated if the current Town applications could be loaded onto the ASP system for a July 1 operation date. She suggested that if this happens, some of the \$33,500 could be used toward the salary of a new position in her office. Ms. Hancock said that the Office Machinery amount is for a folder/sealer machine for forms with respect to the Munis system and that the Credits line has been moved to the General Fund Revenue for the pension administration work.

Councilor Czernicki asked if Ms. Hancock sees the requested "Financial Analyst" position as a permanent one and Ms. Hancock said that she does. Councilor Czernicki asked Ms. Hancock if she could manage with a part-time position instead. Ms. Hancock said that anything will help, but she is concerned about time and work management with the new Munis administration being added to her workload.

Councilor Fortunato asked where the Board of Education stands with providing funds for the Munis system. Ms. Hancock said that the Board of Education has not budgeted funds for the Munis support contract. She said that a decision needs to be made as to whether and how the cost will be split after the implementation of the system. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she and the Superintendent will be discussing this. Councilor Fortunato asked if Board of Education Director of Business Services David Whall will be assisting in the implementation of the Munis

system. Ms. Hancock said that she and Mr. Whall will both be involved and a consultant will be brought in to assist with the development of the Chart of Accounts. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien commented that Ms. Hancock is an expert at the Munis System and Mr. Whall has not worked with it at all. Councilor Fortunato asked what resources Ms. Hancock used to determine the \$65,000 salary for the proposed new position. The Town Manager said that it is based on the salaries of other Financial Analyst positions in Town.

Councilor Forrest asked if the \$65,000 difference between the Requested and Manager amounts for Salaries and Wages is for an assistant or an analyst. Ms. Hancock said that it is for an assistant. Councilor Forrest asked if the \$22,000 difference in the Employee Insurance Coverage is only for this position and Ms. Hancock said that it is. Councilor Forrest asked if the \$33,500 Munis savings is a done deal or if a decision still needs to be made. Ms. Hancock said that the decision still needs to be made by the Council and in order for this to happen by July 1, the decision really needs to be made as soon as possible.

TAX COLLECTION - 063 (C-27 to C-28)

Ms. Hancock announced that Tax Collector Nancy DiGirolamo is not in attendance because she is sick. Ms. Hancock said that Ms. DiGirolamo has requested additional funds for part-time staffing hours and her Training Account reflects funds needed for her to retain her certification as well as certification training for one of her staff.

Councilor Adil asked why the Data Processing Services - Revenue Collection line has dropped from \$13,946 in 2003-2004 to \$4,500 for 2005-2006. Ms. Hancock explained that this is due to a new system for sending out tax bills which costs much less. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that Wethersfield is very aggressive and maintains a 99% rate of tax collection.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:40 p.m., Councilor Adil moved **"TO ADJOURN TO THE BUDGET WORKSHOP SESSION ON APRIL 13, 2005 AT 5:45 P.M. IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE TOWN HALL"** seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Dolores Sassano
Town Clerk