

Wethersfield Town Council and Board of Education Meeting
Fireside Chat
June 13, 2005
Session Notes

Members of the Town Council and Board of Education met on Monday, June 13, 2005, at 5:50 p.m. for a joint meeting/fireside chat.

Updated funding figures anticipated to be received from the State were distributed to participants.

1. Final Report from the Information Technology Committee

The Information Technology Committee presented its final report.

Questions that the Committee researched included the current state of technology in town, critical technology issues, what to do first and the future of Wethersfield's technology. The Committee explained that its position was to develop a technology vision, to position technology strategically and to advance technology.

The Committee shared Wethersfield's technology vision and mission with participants.

Recommendations were shared with participants that included the establishment of a Director of Technology; creation of a robust library/Town Hall WAN; address townwide data communication issues; develop and implement a technology lifecycle plan; fund technology consistently; establish physical network infrastructure standards; purchase standardized equipment; perform annual review of strategic technology plan; and provide web based government access.

Committee members explained that while change is difficult, it is important to move from a reactive organization to a proactive one. The committee recommended a technology coordinator position for the Town and the Board that would manage the town's day-to-day technology issues and ensure that high quality information services to the community are provided.

Participants thanked the Technology Committee for the presentation and their hard work. It was noted that this is a great example of forward thinking and all bodies working together. It was discussed that it is important to move forward with some of the Committee's recommendations.

Participants shared concerns regarding adhering to "standards" versus "guidelines." The Committee explained that standards are preferred and options have been discussed to develop other mechanisms that would come into play when a situation occurred that could not be addressed by a set standard. Standards are important to have in place when new facilities are renovated or being designed. Participants expressed their concerns that without a central individual to monitor set standards, guidelines may be preferred.

Participants agreed that priority nine: (Provide web-based government assess) needs to be moved forward as it is important to make government accessible to the community.

Participants questioned how a technology coordinator position would be developed. The Technology Committee explained that while it is recommending a technology coordinator position as priority one, it did not pursue the budgetary or organizational structure implications. The Committee felt these issues should be decided by district staff.

A consensus was reached to move forward with continued discussions involving Shared Services to decide on how to proceed with the Committee's recommendations. Committee members restated that if the Town intends to be successful in moving forward with technology, they urge the Board and Council to consider implementing priority one.

It was suggested to include representation from the Town, Board and Library in future discussions.

2. **MUNIS Implementation**

It was reported that the implementation of the MUNIS System is moving forward and is anticipated to begin implementation in July.

3. **Facilities Management Data Base**

It was reported that the intern from Central Connecticut State University has successfully built the data base to house the facilities management data. Building inspection sheets are being redesigned and complete inspections will be occurring at each facility. All information will be entered into the database and it is anticipated this process will need another seven to eight months to complete.

It was agreed that having access to this type of information will be beneficial.

Participants were pleased to see a continued vision developed in Shared Services becoming a reality.

It was reported that Wethersfield's bond rating has been upgraded.

4. **Future Goals for Town Council/Board of Education**

Much has been accomplished with respect to previously proposed goals.

Funding/Financial Resources are two areas that still need to be addressed. Work needs to be done to develop more financial resources in the Town. It was suggested that the Town and Board address the issue of underfunded mandates; NCLB and IDEA legislation are all areas that can be considered common topics for discussion. The Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding, which has been organized to determine what is appropriate funding for an adequate education, and the lawsuit that the Attorney General is pursuing with respect to NCLB legislation, are areas the Board and Council may want to pursue.

Participants were pleased to see that progress is being made on several goals and were encouraged to see further movement on the remaining goals.

It was agreed that a meeting should be held shortly after the new school year begins in the fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Approved by vote of Council
7/18/05