

[NOTE: These minutes are made available to the public prior to Town Council acceptance.]

JANUARY 5, 2004 REGULAR MEETING

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on January 5, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

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

Absent: Councilor Cascio

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

Chairperson Morin announced that there will be an Executive Session following the Council Meeting to discuss real estate negotiations.

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

Swearing in of Deputy Fire Chief Charles Flynn

Town Clerk Dolores G. Sassano swore in Deputy Fire Chief Charles Flynn. Deputy Chief Mader, on behalf of Fire Chief Clark, congratulated Chuck Flynn on his appointment to Deputy Chief. Deputy Chief Flynn thanked his family and the members of the Wethersfield Fire Department, Wethersfield Police Department, Newington Fire Department, and Rocky Hill Fire Department who have supported him throughout his career.

Presentation - Wethersfield Library

Karen Mortensen, on behalf of the Library Board, reported that everything is up at the library. More people are visiting the library; more books, magazines, CD's, DVD's, audios, and videos are going out. The challenge before the Library Board is that with this increase, the funds and manpower available are the same. Ms. Mortensen said that the library is very active with activities and resources for young to old. The Library Board looks forward to a continued partnership with the Town Council for the good of Wethersfield.

Presentation - Economic Development

Mr. Peter Gillespie, Director of Planning and Economic Development, highlighted changes reported in his Monthly Economic Development Report. These changes include the following:

- Six additional apartment units in existing building at 554 Silas Deane Highway
- Methodist Church expansion, 150 Prospect Street
- Meadowgate Farms addition, 42 Elm Street
- Leo Veilleux conversion of 133 Main Street
- Town House Motel renovation and remodeling, 1730 Berlin Turnpike
- AHEPA, Nathan Hale Apartments addition at 1532 Berlin Turnpike
- Cumberland Farms reconstruction, 1855 Berlin Turnpike
- Senior Condominium Housing, 295 Ridge Road
- Liberty Tax Service, 1283 Silas Deane Highway
- Antique Shop, 462 Silas Deane Highway
- Best Vacuum, 925 Silas Deane Highway
- Compu-Tech, 2138 Berlin Turnpike
- Grand opening of Shop & Smile, Silas Deane Highway

- Cookie Bouquet renovation, 1030 Silas Deane Highway
- Integrity Music renovation, 506 Silas Deane Highway

Mr. Gillespie reported that there will be an article profiling the Town of Wethersfield in the January, 2004 edition of the Connecticut Economic Digest. The Economic Development Incentive Policy is making progress and will be presented to the Council this evening. The Economic Development Improvement Commission (EDIC) will be embarking on the ambitious endeavor of visiting businesses in Town to reinforce their value to the Town and to address any problems within the business community. The Express Loan Program will be presented to the Council in the next few months. This program makes funds available to businesses along the Silas Deane Highway for façade improvements, landscaping, and exterior beautification. A meeting will be scheduled shortly with the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee to establish a strategy for the entire Silas Deane Highway corridor. Mr. Gillespie has met recently with the property owners of Fun Zone, Putnam Park Offices, and will meet next week with the owners of the Goff Brook Shops.

Councilor Adil commented that a recent article in the Hartford Courant indicated that the Central Connecticut Tourism Commission is concentrating its efforts on the Connecticut River. This will have a positive impact on Wethersfield's tourism. Mr. Gillespie said that he attended the last Connecticut Tourism Commission meeting and that Wethersfield will try to tap into the upcoming tourism initiatives.

Councilor Czernicki asked if the Liberty Tax Service is a seasonal business. Mr. Gillespie said that the owners are testing the waters and have a short-term lease at the location at this point.

Councilor Fortunato asked Mr. Gillespie if the format of his report could be changed to highlight new monthly items. She asked if the report could include milestone action steps on projects so that the Council can follow along. Mr. Gillespie said that he is looking at different formats and strategies to identify upcoming pursuits.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the Council could receive a copy of the article in the Connecticut Economic Digest when it is published. Mr. Gillespie said that this could be done and that he is hoping that the Wethersfield website will also provide a link to the article.

Councilor Montinieri moved "**TO REMOVE ITEMS B.2.c and B.2.e FROM THE TABLE**", seconded by Councilor Czernicki. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HEARING

None

GENERAL COMMENTS

Jim Clynch, 903 Ridge Road, shared that the website of the Town of South Windsor provides information on American Flag etiquette. He said that the flags were not flying in Old Wethersfield on January 4. Mr. Clynch commented that there has been no progress toward the purchase of all-weather flags. Mr. Clynch finds it interesting and upsetting that funds are found in the budget for the Tax Incentive Program for Economic Development, yet the Town Manager and Assessor were against a Veterans Abatement. Mr. Clynch applauds State Officials who look out for the Veterans and the Rocky Hill Veterans Home.

Peter Gardow, 60 Griswold Road, commented that the Wethersfield Charter Section 503 does not make reference to an Assistant Town Attorney and at the last budget hearings the necessity of an Assistant Town Attorney was discussed. Mr. Gardow recommends that the Town hire a well-rounded firm that will handle all of the Town Attorney duties and save the retainer fee for an Assistant. Regarding the fees for the Transfer Station, Mr. Gardow said that they were raised in 2002 and he recommends eliminating a day for usage of the Transfer Station. Mr. Gardow raised the suggestion of zero-based budgeting which was addressed in an issue of Connecticut Town & City magazine from the Spring of last year.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, would like to see the Council get going on the issue of the Wethersfield Cove. He is disappointed with the Siting Council's approval of the usage by Sprint of the Kelleher Court cell tower. He would still like to see the removal of the tower from the current site. Mr. Young disagrees with any decision to put artificial turf on the High School football field. He'd rather see the funds spent on educational supplies and technology for the students.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, spoke on behalf of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. He thanked the Council for instituting the Economic Development Report, but would like to see some enhancements made to it. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. would like to see the Town Planner develop a process to court potential businesses for Wethersfield. Mr. Orsini made comments pertaining to the proposed Tax Incentive Program, and the posting on the Wethersfield website of the tax delinquencies and their collection. Mr. Orsini reminded the Council that the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. supports a lawsuit against the MDC with regard to the cleanup of the Wethersfield Cove.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, suggested that the Council give serious thought to hereditary titles and the use of them. He reminded the Council that it is their job to try to do more with less when facing Wethersfield's upcoming budgetary challenges.

No one else wished to speak and the Chairperson declared the General Comments segment closed.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Adil moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF JOSEPH L. HAMMER FROM THE SCHOOL PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE"**, seconded by Councilor Czernicki. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF GLORIA MCLEAN AS ASSISTANT TOWN TREASURER"**, seconded by Councilor Czernicki. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO ACCEPT THE APPOINTMENT OF FRANCES A. PATTI AS ASSISTANT TOWN TREASURER FROM 1-05-04 INDEFINITELY"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO ACCEPT THE APPOINTMENT OF ELIZABETH K. SMITH AS AN ALTERNATE TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD FOR THE TERM OF 12-15-03 TO 6-30-05; SAMUEL A. SPRATLIN TO THE WETHERSFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR THE TERM OF 1-05-04 TO 8-31-09; JEANNE M. CIOTTO TO THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS FOR THE TERM OF 1-05-04 TO 6-30-07; AND PETER E. GARDOW TO THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR THE TERM OF 1-05-04 TO 6-30-06"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO REMOVE ITEM B.1.d FROM THE TABLE"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Karangekis. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Fortunato moved **"TO ADOPT THE REVISED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD AND TO ACTIVATE IT IMMEDIATELY"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis moved **"TO APPOINT THE LAW FIRM OF ROME, MCGUIGAN, SABANOSH AS WETHERSFIELD TOWN ATTORNEY AS PROPOSED AND THE LAW FIRM OF MOLLER, PECK & O'BRIEN LLC AS WETHERSFIELD ASSISTANT TOWN ATTORNEY AS PROPOSED"**, seconded by Councilor Adil.

Councilor Czernicki commented that she believes that the interview process performed to hire these attorneys was a charade, just as Chairperson Morin had commented two years ago, as the outcome seems to indicate that it was already determined who would be appointed. She is dismayed by the process and is disappointed that the two questions that she wanted to ask the candidates were not asked. Councilor Czernicki does not agree with the appointment of an Assistant Town Attorney as the need for such is questionable as was discussed two years ago and during the last budget hearings.

Councilor Hemmann commented that since the Charter does not discuss an Assistant Town Attorney and the proposed Town Attorney firm is very large and comprehensive, she does not feel the need to appoint an Assistant Town Attorney.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilor Czernicki and Councilor Hemmann ABSTAINED. The motion passed 6-0-2.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Resolution Authorizing the Town Manager to Enter into a Lease Agreement with Wethersfield Community Television, Inc.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien gave a background of the Wethersfield Community Television, Inc. being housed at the Olson House on Marsh Street, of the structural issues of the location, and of the actions Council has taken pertaining to the situation. The cost to remedy any structural issues will cost between \$50,000 and \$80,000. Building Inspector, Brian O'Connor, currently inspects the building for safety approximately every three weeks and feels that it is still safe to inhabit provided no new equipment is brought into the building and the number of people in the building at one time be limited.

Councilor Adil moved "**TO FORMALLY REVIEW ALL BUILDINGS TOWNWIDE FOR SAFETY AND DIRECT THE TOWN MANAGER TO REVIEW POSSIBLE FUNDING FOR HISTORIC PROPERTIES BY MARCH 1, 2004**", seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Councilor Forrest agrees with Councilor Adil and would like to see as a result of the review, a long-term solution to the Channel 14 issue.

Councilor Czernicki agrees that a well-developed plan is necessary, but she is concerned about the current safety of the Olson House. She asked if there is some way between now and March 1 to insure that the building remains safe, secure, and usable. She asked if there is a plan in place for an alternate site for Channel 14 while work takes place at the Olson House. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she has spoken with Mr. Garrey about this.

Councilor Adil recommended that after March 1, the issue be referred to the Space Needs Committee for review.

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

Adams Landing Cul-De-Sac

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the Planning and Zoning Commission has approved the 8-24 referral. The cost to remove the cul-de-sac is approximately \$5,000 and she recommends that this be included in the upcoming budget.

Councilor Montinieri moved "**TO APPROVE THE TOWN MANAGER'S BUDGETING FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE ADAMS LANDING CUL-DE-SAC IN THE 2004-2005 TOWN BUDGET**", seconded by Councilor Czernicki. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Change Order - Silas Deane Middle School - Projection Room Wiring

Change Order - Silas Deane Middle School - Sound Panels - Large Gym

Change Order - Silas Deane Middle School - Canopy at Northeast Entrance

Councilor Czernicki moved "TO POSTPONE THE DISCUSSION OF THE SILAS DEANE MIDDLE SCHOOL CHANGE ORDERS TO A TIME WHEN THE PROJECT CHAIRMAN IS AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT, seconded by Deputy Mayor Karangekis. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Tax Delinquencies - Web Site

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that in June, 2002, the Town Council voted to adopt a tax delinquent process that would include listing all tax delinquent accounts on a public list, including the Wethersfield web site. She stated that part of the 2002 Resolution included signing a contract with CCM to collect back taxes. The Town had yet to sign a contract with CCM allowing them to begin collecting the delinquent revenues until she signed with them approximately one month ago. She was told that only the top ten delinquencies were posted on the web site and for a short time only. She recommends posting all current delinquencies thirty days after the second notice of such this year, if Council wishes to do so.

Councilor Adil moved "**TO HAVE THE TOWN MANAGER AND STAFF DEVELOP A DELINQUENT REVENUE PAYER LIST FOR PUBLIC POSTING IN THE NEWSPAPER AND WEB SITE THIRTY DAYS FOLLOWING SECOND NOTICES GOING OUT FOR BILLING**", seconded by Councilor Fortunato. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Adil is concerned that public posting provides further humiliation for those who truly cannot afford to pay their taxes. He is also concerned about possible errors that could result in subsequent litigation.

Councilor Montinieri asked what Wethersfield's current collection rate is. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that Wethersfield is at approximately 98%-98.5% which is excellent. Councilor Montinieri asked if there is a way to determine if the delinquency is due to a hardship or not. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that there is no way to determine this; however residents are encouraged to meet with the Tax Collector to develop a payment plan.

Councilor Czernicki said that she had previously asked for information on how surrounding Towns deal with hardship cases as she is also concerned about this issue. She suggested that the Town Attorney contact West Hartford for information on such.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the top ten were posted in the past. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien clarified that the posting was for the top ten commercial delinquencies only.

Councilor Fortunato asked if a delinquent taxpayer's name would still appear on the list if they had spoken with the Tax Collector and made arrangements for payment. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien would recommend to the Council that the delinquents in this situation be exempt from the posted listing. Councilor Fortunato asked if the relationship with CCM is new or if they have collected for the Town in the past. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that this is a new relationship that will be tried for approximately six months.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked if letters are sent to delinquent tax payers notifying them that they can make arrangements with the Tax Collector. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she is unsure of this and will check on it.

Councilor Adil moved "**TO POST THE TAX DELINQUENCIES ON THE WETHERSFIELD WEB SITE**", seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted NAY. The motion failed 0-8-0.

Transfer of \$75,000 - Snow Plowing

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the snowplowing overtime budget was reduced and the private contractors' budget eliminated from this year's budget and she has been informed by Michael Turner, Director of Public Works, that additional money is required in order to continue snowplowing this winter. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien is recommending that \$75,000 be transferred based on the prediction of five more snow storms this season.

Councilor Montinieri moved **"TO TRANSFER \$37,500 FROM THE CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT TO ACCOUNT #550-PHYSICAL SERVICES AND ACCOUNT \$555-VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AS NEEDED DUE TO SNOW PLOWING SERVICES ONLY"**, seconded by Councilor Fortunato.

Councilor Forrest asked if the \$37,500 will cover the current deficit in the account. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said yes, but plowing for future storms will depend on the frequency of such.

Councilor Montinieri asked if outside contractors charge overtime if they need to come in during the evening or on weekends. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that they charge a flat rate and that the Town is no longer using outside contractors. Chairperson Morin said that the outside contractors did not get called in unless the snow event was significant.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked if the outside contractors covered the overtime that is currently being paid to Town employees. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that they not only covered the overtime, but also areas that were more intricate to plow.

Councilor Fortunato asked the Town Manager if she has considered doing a cost benefit analysis of Town crew only vs. Town and outside contractors. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she will do this and report back to the Council during their budget sessions.

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

AETNA Ambulance Contract Extension

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that the Chairperson of the Volunteer Ambulance phoned her requesting that this be postponed until January 20, 2004 so that they can review the contract further.

Councilor Forrest moved **"TO TABLE THE AETNA AMBULANCE CONTRACT EXTENSION UNTIL THE JANUARY 20, 2004 COUNCIL MEETING"**, seconded by Councilor Adil. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

\$98,000 Rebate - Silas Deane Middle School

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that as a part of the Silas Deane Middle School project, the Board of Education applied for an energy efficiency grant from Northeast Utilities in the amount of \$98,000. The Town's Bond Counsel has suggested that the \$98,000 be used in three different ways: 1) to pay down the total bond amount for the Silas Deane project; 2) to give the Board of Education a supplemental appropriation of \$98,000; 3) to keep the rebate amount for the Town's general fund. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien recommends that the Council approve either option 1 or 2.

Councilor Montinieri moved **"TO ALLOCATE THE \$98,000 REBATE AS A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION"**, seconded by Councilor Fortunato.

Councilor Czernicki moved **"TO AMEND THE MOTION TO ALLOCATE \$50,000 TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION"**, seconded by Councilor Hemmann.

Councilor Forrest said that he is against the amendment as he believes that the entire \$98,000 is needed by the Board of Education.

Councilor Fortunato said that she is also against the amendment as the Council should do anything they can to assist

the Board of Education with their deficit.

Councilor Montinieri does not support the amendment. She said that although the \$98,000 will not completely resolve the Board of Education's problem, it will indeed help.

Chairperson Morin does not support the amendment as the funds are needed by the Board of Education.

Councilor Czernicki asked if this rebate had not been received, would the Council have made an allocation to the Board of Education from the Contingency Account. Chairperson Morin stated that this is not the issue at hand.

Councilors Adil, Forrest, Fortunato, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Karangekis, and Chairperson Morin voted NAY. Councilor Czernicki and Councilor Hemmann voted AYE. The amended motion failed 2-6-0.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilor Czernicki and Councilor Hemmann voted NAY. The original motion passed 6-2-0.

Mr. David Drake, Chairman of the Silas Deane Middle School Project Committee arrived at this time.

Change Order - Silas Deane Middle School - Projection Room Wiring

Change Order - Silas Deane Middle School - Sound Panels - Large Gym

Change Order - Silas Deane Middle School - Canopy at Northeast Entrance

Councilor Adil asked Mr. Drake if he anticipates any further change orders as Councilor Adil would like to see this project closed out. Mr. Drake said that the project is just about completed and that most of the future change orders will be handled by the Building Committee.

Councilor Fortunato told Mr. Drake that the information he is providing this evening to Council was also distributed at the Shared Services meeting.

Councilor Czernicki moved "**TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGE ORDERS FOR THE SILAS DEANE MIDDLE SCHOOL: \$8,601 TO CENTRAL CT ACOUSTICS FOR SOUND PANELS IN THE LARGE GYM, \$6,036.05 TO RCI ELECTRIC FOR PROJECTION ROOM WIRING, AND \$21,000 TO NEWFIELD CONSTRUCTION FOR A CANOPY AT THE NORTHEAST ENTRANCE**", seconded by Councilor Adil.

Councilor Fortunato asked what the reason is for the canopy at the northeast entrance. Mr. Drake said that it is to enhance the appearance of the entrance way and to keep it clean.

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

Formation of Restoration of Football Field Committee

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the architects on the artificial turf project will be returning to Council with their recommendations in late January or early February. It has been thought that an advisory citizens group of approximately 5-7 members should be established to work with the staff and consultants in making recommendations.

Chairperson Morin said that Dr. Dest would be one of the members and that others could submit their applications of interest to serve on the committee to the Town Manager.

Councilor Adil moved "**TO FORM A FIVE MEMBER RESTORATION OF FOOTBALL FIELD COMMITTEE WHOSE MEMBERS WILL BE SELECTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER BASED ON THEIR QUALIFICATIONS**", seconded by Deputy Mayor Karangekis.

Councilor Czernicki suggested that one of the members chosen for the committee be a representative of the

neighborhood surrounding the football field.

Councilor Fortunato announced at the Shared Services meeting earlier this evening that this item would be on the Council agenda this evening. She encouraged members of the committee to encourage those interested in serving to apply to the Town Manager. She was asked if the committee would have representation from both the Council and the Board of Education.

Councilor Adil agreed with Councilor Czernicki's comment.

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

BIDS

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the low bidder, East River Energy, has been used by the Town previously and that they provide very good service. The option is to lock into a price now for three months or for one year. There is \$99,721 budgeted for gasoline services.

Councilor Forrest moved "**TO AWARD THE BID FOR GASOLINE TO EAST RIVER ENERGY OF GUILFORD FOR THE LENGTH OF THREE MONTHS FOR THE AMOUNTS QUOTED ON THE CAPITOL REGIONAL PURCHASING COUNCIL'S BID FORM AND TO REEVALUATE THE PRICING AFTER THE THREE MONTHS**", seconded by Councilor Hemmann.

Councilor Hemmann asked Town Manager Bonnie Therrien if the Town has worked with CRCOG for cooperative purchasing in the past. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that we have worked with them numerous times before.

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

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that \$58,000 has been budgeted for this service and that Wethersfield Sweeping has been used in the past.

Councilor Montinieri moved "**TO AWARD THE BID FOR STREET SWEEPING/CATCH BASIN AND STORM SEWER CLEANING SERVICES TO BIDDER #1 WETHERSFIELD SWEEPING OF WETHERSFIELD AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$58,000**", seconded by Councilor Czernicki.

Councilor Montinieri said that she is happy to see this come forward as a way to improve water quality.

Councilor Forrest asked if the sand swept up is reusable. He was told that it is not. Councilor Forrest asked if there are still boxes filled with sand available at the top of steep hills in Town. He was told that these have been removed.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

None

MINUTES

Councilor Montinieri amended the December 9 minutes on page 16342 paragraph 2 to read "74% of CSO's for a one-year storm".

Councilor Adil moved "**TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF DECEMBER 9, 2003 AS AMENDED**", seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilor Forrest ABSTAINED. The motion passed 7-0-1.

Councilor Fortunato moved "**TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF DECEMBER 10, 2003**", seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilors

Adil, Hemmann, and Montinieri ABSTAINED. The motion passed 5-0-3.

Councilor Adil moved "**TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 15, 2003**", seconded by Councilor Fortunato. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

GENERAL COMMENTS

REPORTS

Councilor Czernicki reported that she attended the meeting of the Wethersfield Community Television, Inc. and they discussed the problems being experienced with Channel 16. They want the Council and the public to know that the problems stem from Cox and not Wethersfield's local station. Councilor Czernicki announced that the Wethersfield Community Television's annual meeting will be on Wednesday, January 21, 2004 in the Police Community Room and an anniversary dinner/dance will be held on Saturday, March 20, 2004.

Councilor Hemmann reported that she attended the Wethersfield Tourism Commission meeting in December and the Commission was very happy with the suggestions and comments offered by Town Planner Peter Gillespie. The Commission is working very hard with the EDIC and the Chamber of Commerce to share resources.

Councilor Fortunato reported that she attended the Shared Services meeting prior to the Council meeting this evening and it was decided that they meet every month. The next meeting will be February 10, 2004 at 6:00 p.m. She said that the format for the annual Fireside Chat was discussed and the desire seems to be for more open discussion and less presentation. Also discussed were solutions for the parking situation at Hanmer and Charles Wright.

Councilor Czernicki asked Councilor Fortunato if there was any discussion on the status of the High School lecture hall. Councilor Fortunato said that this was not an item tonight, but could be looked into for discussion at the next meeting.

Councilor Montinieri reported that she attended the business visitation program presented by the EDIC and a very comprehensive survey has been developed. She thanked Police Chief Cetran for his report on incidents at the High School with regard to the topic of the School Resource Officer. She feels that this report confirms the need for an Officer at the School.

COUNCIL

Councilor Czernicki pointed out that it was decided that the Council would consider the Veterans exemption during the 2004-2005 budget sessions. Councilor Czernicki agrees with Mr. Young's displeasure with the Siting Council's approval of Sprint's usage of the cell tower at Kelleher Court. She believes that the Mayor can appeal this decision and that it should possibly be brought before the Council. Councilor Czernicki commented that attempts were made to woo David Glass to Wethersfield when he left his Colt Building location. Mr. Glass did not respond.

Chairperson Morin announced that the rescheduled Councilor Orientation scheduled for January 10 is cancelled and can possibly be held on a more informal basis at another time.

Councilor Czernicki asked if a date has been set for the Fireside Chat. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it will be a Saturday in February, but she is waiting to hear back from the Superintendent of Schools.

Councilor Adil commented that the situation with the flags flying in Old Wethersfield needs to be resolved or else we need to take the pole down or provide some sort of electrical supply. Councilor Adil said that the issue of Veterans Exemptions will be brought to the table at the Budget and Finance Committee meeting. Councilor Adil has received calls regarding the garbage contract and he would like information from Town Manager Bonnie Therrien about the costs involved.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis said that he is also very concerned about the flag situation on Old Wethersfield. He feels

that this needs to be dealt with appropriately and that there is no excuse for the flags not flying. He said that the flag does not need to be taken down in the evening as long as lighting is provided on it. Also weatherproof flags can be purchased. Deputy Mayor Karangekis is willing to work with Mr. Clynych to find a solution to this problem.

Chairperson Morin said that he was disappointed that the flags were not flying again. He expects an answer to this very quickly and that a solution be found to remedy the situation. Chairperson Morin gave a summary of letters he has recently received from residents pertaining to issues in Town. Chairperson Morin announced that Council Hours will be held the Thursday evening before a Council meeting from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Chairperson Morin said that a fund raiser for a Town skating park will be held on January 8 at 6:30 p.m. On Friday, January 9 a benefit dance for the Special Olympics will be held at the Community Center. A Wethersfield St. Patrick's Day Parade fund raiser will be held on Saturday, January 24. A Freedom from Smoking program will be held at the Town Hall from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesdays from January 14 to February 25.

PUBLIC

Rick Garrey, 25 Harding Street, spoke on behalf of the Board of Directors of Wethersfield Television. He said that Wethersfield Television will relocate anywhere that the Town deems appropriate. Mr. Garrey commented as a private resident that he would like to see the Council move forward with the restoration of the Olson House as it is a beautiful historic building. Mr. Garrey commented that he looks forward to the new garbage collection.

Ed Kardas, 850 Cloverdale Circle, commented about tax delinquency and that a reminder should be provided on the Wethersfield website for residents to pay their taxes and also stating that a penalty will result if they are not paid on time.

Paul Flannery, 382 Ridge Road, commented that he objects to Sprint's use of the Kelleher Court cell tower. He also commented that he supports the renovation of the Olson House and that he looks forward to seeing the new trash pickup program going forward.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented that he'd like to see the approval of Sprint's use of the Kelleher Court cell tower appealed. He commented that \$50,000 to \$80,000 is a lot of money to be spent to renovate the Olson House and that the tax delinquencies should be posted if not paid within a reasonable amount of time. Mr. Young offered information he obtained from attending the Blue Ribbon Committee meeting on State Property Tax Reform at the Hartford Library which focused on smart growth, sprawl, and property tax reform.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, spoke on behalf of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. who is in favor of the new automated trash pickup. Mr. Orsini commented on the transfer of funds from the contingency fund into the snow removal account, the tax delinquency list, and Cottone Field. He urged the Council to look at the big picture when considering turning Cottone Field into a commercial sports complex and keep in mind the quality of life issue and also that Wethersfield is noted for its strong neighborhoods.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented on the Wethersfield Community Television vs. renovation of the Olson House, the flags in Old Wethersfield, and questioned whether the Cottone Field project will go to referendum. The Council needs to consider the implications of their actions.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:24 p.m., Councilor Adil moved "**TO TAKE A FIVE MINUTE RECESS AND THEN ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**" seconded by Councilor Czernicki. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 9:47 p.m., Councilor Adil 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.

At 9:47 p.m., Councilor Forrest moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Czernicki. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk