

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

FEBRUARY 17, 2004 REGULAR MEETING

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on February 17, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

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

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

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

Chairperson Morin announced that there will be an Executive Session following the Regular Meeting to discuss Pending Litigation of the Town of Wethersfield vs. Pyquaug Village.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HEARING

Underage Drinking Ordinance

Ordinance - \$5.00 Fee for Delinquent Motor Vehicle Taxpayers

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, asked what the Delinquent Motor Vehicle Taxpayers Ordinance is all about. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that there has been a new State Statute passed which allows the State to charge Municipalities for each listing of a delinquent motor vehicle with the DMV. The proposed Ordinance enables the Town to charge the Taxpayer for these administrative fees passed along to the Town. Mr. Young asked how the delinquent fee will be collected when the taxpayer isn't even paying the taxes in the first place. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that they cannot register their motor vehicle until they pay the taxes and once they come to do that, the Town will add the \$5 onto the bill.

Jeff Foss, Wethersfield High School Student and member of the Wethersfield Underage Drinking Task Force, stated that he supports the Underage Drinking Ordinance. He said that drinking can lead to dangerous risk-taking behavior and urges the entire community to support the proposed Ordinance. Passing the Ordinance will send the clear message that Wethersfield will not tolerate underage drinking.

Donna Croce, 382 Highland Street, spoke in support of the proposed Underage Drinking Ordinance. She stated that the Ordinance will provide both parents and lawmakers an additional tool in dealing with underage drinking.

Barbara Rosenberg, 173 Ox Yoke Drive, spoke in support of the proposed Underage Drinking Ordinance.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Woodrow Warren, 9 Nutmeg Circle, spoke of the importance of the public's right to address the Council without a time limit. Mr. Warren commented on the High School sports complex and his concern over the lighting of the field for night time activities.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, agreed with Mr. Warren that the public should not be restricted in their ability to address their Government. Mr. Ruhe stated that addressing the Council is not a "courtesy", but rather a "right" of the citizens. Mr. Ruhe said that he thinks it inappropriate for the Council to decide what comments are abusive or not. Mr.

Ruhe believes that it is a disservice to the Town not to allow Public Comment at both the beginning and the end of the Council meetings.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on the proposed costs for the artificial surface at the High School Football Field. Mr. Young feels that funds should be invested in educational supplies instead. Mr. Young also commented on the proposed changes to the Rules and Procedures for Council meetings. He finds the allowance of public comment only once during the meeting for five minutes to be disturbing; as well as the 11:00 p.m. curfew. Mr. Young stated that all of the Council members ran for their position knowing that there could be late hours involved and it is unfair for the Councilors to now ask for a change of Council meeting hours. Mr. Young urged the Council to vote against the proposed changes in the Rules and Procedures.

Paul Meade, 373 Main Street, commented on his opposition to the proposed changes to the Rules and Procedures. He believes that the right to criticize public officials is fundamental to the idea of Town meeting which is the arena for public debate. Public address at Town meetings is a Constitutional "right" and not a "courtesy" which is not constitutionally limited because the comments may hurt someone's feelings. Mr. Meade urged the Council to take a hard look at the proposed language changes.

Edward Kardas, 850 Cloverdale Circle, commented on the proposed changes to the Rules and Procedures. He explained that representatives should vote in the manner in which the majority who elected them voted. This is referred to as participatory form of democracy in a republic. Mr. Kardas also explained that in an elitist form of democracy in a republic, the elected adhere to their own convictions and plan to educate the body of citizens to their beliefs. He asked all Council members to consider which type of form of democracy they desire for Wethersfield.

Ann Riccio, 7 Hayride Drive, thanked the Council members who attended Dr. Proctor's Board of Education budget presentation. She urged all Council members to look at the details of the budget before making any decisions.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, spoke on behalf of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. Mr. Orsini commented on the proposed changes to the Rules and Procedures and stated that the Rules as they stand have worked for many years and continue to work still. Mr. Orsini reminded the Council of their election-time statement that they work for the residents of Wethersfield and that they want to hear from the residents. The Council needs to stick to the Town's Strategic Plan to encourage more citizen participation in the development of Town policy and more public input on all issues. Mr. Orsini urged the Council to leave the Rules and Procedures as is.

Rich Roberts, 60 Highview Avenue, spoke on the proposed changes to the Rules and Procedures. Mr. Roberts said that he and agrees with the assessment that most people do not do their best thinking at midnight. Mr. Roberts; however, believes that the proposed changes designed to help expedite business may be misguided. Many presentations and other miscellaneous business often expand the regular business segment of Council meetings so that often Public Comment is not heard until 8:00 p.m. or later. In light of this, Mr. Roberts feels that it is inaccurate to state that excessive Public Comment is the reason for meetings running late. He does not think it appropriate to choose 11:00 p.m. as a curfew time as this does not necessarily serve everyone's needs. On the proposed powers of the Chairperson to deem what are appropriate and inappropriate comments, Mr. Roberts feels that this allows for interpretation and subjective decisions.

Tom Fitzpatrick, 40 Whippoorwill Way, commented on the proposed changes to the Rules and Procedures. He believes that the limit to five minutes should not be changed as it has worked for years. Mr. Fitzpatrick is concerned about the 11:00 p.m. adjournment curfew as he feels that the only way to accomplish this is to limit debate. Mr. Fitzpatrick does not agree with the right of the Chairperson to terminate speaker privilege of address. The Council members must be able to accept constructive criticism whether spoken eloquently or not; it is a right of the people to speak.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Czernicki moved "**TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF JOHN J. O'BRIEN, JR. FROM THE TOWN HALL/LIBRARY BUILDING COMMITTEE**", seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO APPOINT JONATHAN J. CATHCART AND BRIAN D. DICIOCCIO TO THE ARTIFICIAL SURFACE FOOTBALL FIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE TERM OF 2-17-04, INDEFINITELY"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Councilor Czernicki said that she is concerned that Mr. Cathcart is the spouse of the Field Hockey coach and that the Field Hockey team is one of the teams that will have use of the proposed new field. She questions his ability to be objective and clear in his opinions of the lighting and artificial turf on the field. Councilor Czernicki finds it strange that there was a request and action taken to expand the membership of the Committee. She feels that the two appointments this evening fall in line with the desires of a former Councilor who backs the field renovations.

Councilor Fortunato stated that the appointees are recommendations of the Town Manager and that she trusts her judgment. She asked the Town Manager to provide some background on each of the proposed appointees. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that she had to be very aware of the minority representation rule when choosing these appointees. She gave a brief summary of the qualifications of each of the two proposed appointees.

Chairperson Morin stated that he requested that the Town Manager insure that the Committee be well represented by both political parties in order to make it as nonpartisan as possible.

Councilor Adil stated that if the Council is to follow Councilor Czernicki's opinions regarding objectivity, then Councilor Cascio should not be allowed to participate in the process since his wife is the Cheerleading Coach. Councilor Adil does not believe that the Council needs to be questioning the volunteers' motives, but rather concentrate on getting the project completed.

Councilor Czernicki stated that at the last meeting, after former Deputy Mayor O'Connor spoke, the Council proceeded to address the issue of enlarging the Artificial Surface Football Field Advisory Committee from five to seven members. Councilor Czernicki asked if Mr. DiCiccio submitted his application at the time the first five members were chosen. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that he had expressed interest orally, but had not submitted anything in writing and neither did Mr. Cathcart.

Councilor Hemmann stated that she continues not to support the addition of members to the Committee.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilor Czernicki and Councilor Hemmann voted NAY. The motion passed 7-2-0.

Councilor Montinieri moved **"TO APPROVE THE UNDERAGE DRINKING ORDINANCE REGULATING THE POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL BY MINORS ON BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY"**, seconded by Councilor Czernicki.

Councilor Cascio suggested that there be an assembly held at both Wethersfield High School and Silas Deane Middle School to educate the students of what the Ordinance entails so that they are aware of its contents. Councilor Cascio asked that the Parent Action Groups be made aware of the ordinance as well.

Councilor Montinieri moved **"TO AMEND, UNDER THE ADVICE OF TOWN ATTORNEY BRADLEY, SECTION 6 OF THE ORDINANCE TO READ AS FOLLOWS:**

(B) IN ENFORCING THIS ORDINANCE, THE POLICE SHALL BE REQUIRED TO HAVE PROBABLE CAUSE BEFORE ENTERING PRIVATE PROPERTY",

seconded by Councilor Adil. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion to amend passed 9-0-0.

The motion to approve passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO APPROVE THE ORDINANCE CONCERNING FEES FOR THE REPORTING**

OF DELINQUENT TAX ACCOUNTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES", seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

OTHER BUSINESS

Use of Silas Deane Money - Street Signs on Silas Deane Highway

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee is requesting the use of \$5,000 of the \$50,000 Silas Deane money to buy new street signs for part of the Silas Deane Highway. The Town Manager stated that the EDIC did not approve the use of the funds for this purpose.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO APPROVE THE USE OF \$5,000 OF THE SILAS DEANE MONEY TO BUY NEW STREET SIGNS FOR PART OF THE SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY"**, seconded by Councilor Czernicki.

Councilor Adil said that he attended the Economic Development Improvement Committee (EDIC) meeting which addressed this request and they did not approve the use of the \$5,000 for signage. He said that the signs will be eventually made; however the group is getting ahead of themselves in having them done at this time. Councilor Adil recommends that the Council not support the allocation of \$5,000 for this use at this time.

Councilor Hemmann requested that Mr. Courchaine explain the reason for the request at this time. She feels that the Committee must feel that this is the proper time to make the request or they would not have brought it forward.

Councilor Cascio said that the money is there to spend and that the \$5,000 spent on signs starts the project rolling.

Councilor Forrest applauded Mr. Courchaine's and the Committee's efforts and vigor. He believes that there needs to be a centralized committee to deal with the issues and the development of the Silas Deane Highway and Berlin Turnpike. Councilor Forrest said that many groups have great ideas for the development of both of these roadways; however, he feels that until there is a central focus, there will be no meaningful results and he does not see the \$5,000 allocation as going toward any master plan.

Councilor Czernicki commented that the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee encompasses a broad spectrum of membership. The Committee was allocated \$50,000 during the last budget process and she also would like to know why the Committee is asking for the \$5,000 at this particular time. Councilor Czernicki also asked for a listing and total of expenditures by the Committee to date and whether Wethersfield will be mandated to put up signs with larger lettering. Councilor Czernicki asked why the EDIC feels that they should weigh in on the expenditure of the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee. She feels that there are some territorial issues that have yet to be resolved.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien responded that the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee has not spent any funds to date and that the EDIC did not actually take a vote against the allocation as they could not obtain a second to the motion to approve the \$5,000 request for street signs. Their discussion focused on their desire to use the funds for the loan program to actually get businesses going rather than obtaining signs at this time. Councilor Czernicki stated that the intent of the previous Council's allocation of \$50,000 was to the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee and asked why the EDIC was even voting on this request. The Town Manager said that Mr. Courchaine is a liaison to the EDIC and he asked them to take a look at the concept. Councilor Czernicki asked if Mr. Courchaine was required to bring the concept to the EDIC or could it have come directly to the Council. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee originally came out of the EDIC and the question is whether or not the EDIC is the "parent" of the Committee. She said that the budgeted amount was allocated to the Silas Deane Highway and was not given to one specific group. Councilor Czernicki clarified that the final fiduciary responsibility for the project is the Council's. Town Engineer Mike Turner said that as the signs are replaced they should be done so with signs containing larger lettering. There is not a specific date by which this must be done. Councilor Czernicki supports the request for \$5,000 as the Council allocated money for the Silas Deane Highway and she is not certain that the money has been earmarked for the loan program.

Councilor Adil stated that the funds were actually allocated to both the EDIC and the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee. He is not in favor of spending the money just because it is in the budget. He would again like to see all of the smaller bodies brought together as one legal body to make decisions on projects.

Councilor Montinieri said that the replacement of the signs with the new larger print signs is a first step in the improvement of the Silas Deane Highway. She is concerned that the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee and the EDIC have conflicting priorities as to what should be done first. A unified plan needs to be developed in order to move forward wisely. She would like to see Town Planner Peter Gillespie work hand in hand with the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee and the EDIC to centralize their priorities.

Councilor Cascio said that the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee and the EDIC have been working together and communicating for some time and have set goals and priorities. He said that the \$50,000 was budgeted to the Revitalization Committee after discussion of signage, tree planting and such at the north end of the Highway. Councilor Cascio is concerned that the EDIC will have leverage over the monetary requests of many other committees. Councilor Cascio supports the \$5,000 expenditure as it is a good beginning.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked Mr. Turner how many signs will be purchased with the \$5,000. Mr. Turner said that there are twenty-seven intersections on the Silas Deane Highway between Rocky Hill and Hartford. Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked if it could take years to replace the signs if they don't get replaced until they are damaged or unreadable. Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked if the State has anything to do with the signage as the Silas Deane is a State Highway. Mr. Turner said that most of the street name signs are off of the State right-of-way and therefore require no approval by the State. Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked if the signs are made up and stored until they are needed. Mr. Turner said that all the signs are specially fabricated with the Town seal and will all be ordered at the same time to save money.

Chairperson Morin asked if the signs will be for the Silas Deane Highway or the cross streets. Mr. Turner said that the signs will be for both. Chairperson Morin asked how much each sign costs. Mr. Turner said that the cost is approximately \$100 per sign. Each location will have a square post, caps, and two single-sided signs saying Silas Deane Hwy and two single-sided signs giving the name of the cross street. Chairperson Morin said that he would like to see the whole Highway resigned rather than have the signs replaced piecemeal as-needed. He thinks it most appropriate that the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee work as an arm of the EDIC. He appreciates Mr. Courchaine's spirit in serving on the Committee.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Council can wait until Spring and review the remaining fiscal year's budget before deciding on this proposal.

The following roll call vote was taken:

Councilor Adil	NAY	Councilor Hemmann	AYE
Councilor Cascio	AYE	Councilor Montinieri	NAY
Councilor Czernicki	AYE	Deputy Mayor	NAY
Councilor Forrest	NAY	Karangekis	
Councilor Fortunato	NAY	Chairperson Morin	AYE

The motion failed 4-5-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO MOVE THE SILAS DEANE REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE UNDER THE ARM OF THE EDIC AND REFER THE \$5,000 REQUEST TO THE TOWN MANAGER TO COORDINATE WITH THE TOWN PLANNER"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Karangekis.

Councilor Cascio said that he is concerned that the motion is being brought forward without the two Committees meeting to decide if they would even want this to occur. There has been no courtesy extended to the Committees. Councilor Cascio would rather see the two Committees brought together for a joint meeting once again.

Councilor Forrest moved **"TO TABLE COUNCILOR ADIL'S MOTION IN ORDER FOR THE COUNCIL TO REVIEW HOW TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE COMMITTEES"**, seconded by Councilor Czernicki. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilor Adil voted NAY. The motion passed 8-1-0.

Agents of Record - Insurance

Councilor Fortunato moved **"TO RESCIND THE WETHERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL VOTE OF JANUARY 20, 2004 WHEREBY THE AGENTS OF RECORDS CONTRACT WAS EXTENDED FOR A ONE YEAR PERIOD"**, seconded by Councilor Montinieri.

Councilor Cascio asked for an explanation of why the motion is being rescinded. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the previous Council vote extended the contract for one year and that the Wethersfield Code requires that the contract be renewed for three years.

Councilor Czernicki asked who is responsible for advising the Council of the correct procedure. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she is administratively responsible as the requirements are part of the Wethersfield Code.

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

Councilor Fortunato moved **"TO EXTEND THE AGENTS OF RECORD CONTRACTS FOR THREE YEARS WITH GREG BEDULA OF BANKNORTH/WATSON GROUP AT \$35,000 AND WITH CHRIS MUNROE OF R.C. KNOX FOR \$25,000 PER YEAR"**, seconded by Councilor Montinieri.

Councilor Czernicki reiterated comments made at the January 20, 2004 meeting where Councilor Montinieri stated that the next time the contracts were up, the Town should go out for bid. Councilor Czernicki believes that the contracts should have gone out to bid and questioned why this was not done. She stated that she cannot support the motion because of this.

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

Budget Transfer for Snow

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that because of the recent snowfalls during off-hours, weekends, and holidays, she is requesting an additional \$10,000 transferred to the Physical Services Overtime account.

Councilor Adil left the room at this time.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis moved **"TO TRANSFER \$10,000 FROM THE CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT TO THE PHYSICAL SERVICES OVERTIME ACCOUNT"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Proposed Changes to Rules and Procedures

Chairperson Morin stated that the proposed changes are in no way meant to stifle the public or in any way diminish their comments. Councilor Hemmann, Councilor Adil, Chairperson Morin, and the Town Manager spent much time coming up with the proposed changes. Chairperson Morin said that it may be wise to have the Town Attorney review the proposed changes. The Committee was provided with examples of rules and procedures from other surrounding communities in Connecticut as well as throughout the Country. Chairperson Morin stated that many of the communities provide for five minute public comment pertaining specifically to agenda items only. This is not restricted in Wethersfield. Chairperson Morin said that the citizens of Wethersfield are provided many avenues to address the Council. These include the Public Comment segment at the beginning of the Council meetings, Town e-mail, and personal phone calls to Councilor's homes.

Councilor Adil returned to the meeting at this time.

Chairperson Morin continued that he agrees that the Council meetings need to be run more efficiently and that he will work on this with the Town Manager. Chairperson Morin said that he will never request that a resident cease speaking and return to their seat simply because the speaker accused him of doing a bad job. Chairperson Morin stated that he has been courteous to every speaker when requesting them to wrap up their comments due to the five-minute time restriction. Chairperson Morin said that the proposed changes are a recommendation from the Committee to the Council body as a whole.

Councilor Adil stated that he asked to be on the Committee because he felt that the meetings have evolved into late night meetings to which people tune out. He reinforced Chairperson Morin's message that the proposed changes are in no way an attempt to stifle public comment and also that the Councilors are all accessible in a variety of ways, including Council Office Hours during which residents can meet in person with a representative member of the Council. Written comments can also be submitted for the record for those who are uncomfortable addressing the Council in person. Councilor Adil stated that the proposed changes are a non-partisan attempt to run the Council meetings in a more efficient manner.

Councilor Hemmann commented that the Rules and Procedures have not been reviewed since 1994. She shared the statistics of the survey of various-sized surrounding communities with regard to their public comment at Council meetings as well as adjournment times. Councilor Hemmann feels that attentiveness is affected when a meeting runs into late hours.

Chairperson Morin thanked both Councilor Hemmann and Councilor Adil for their efforts on the Committee.

Councilor Cascio moved "**TO TABLE THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO RULES AND PROCEDURES TO ALLOW FOR THE TOWN ATTORNEY TO REVIEW THEM AND TO ALLOW THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE INPUT**", seconded by Councilor Fortunato.

Councilor Hemmann said that it was also discussed to change the Order of Business of the Council meetings to allow Councilor Reports and Councilor Comments at the beginning of the meeting rather than at the end.

Councilor Fortunato said that she'd like to have the Committee review the draft again and tone down Section D which speaks to decorum and then have the draft reviewed by the Town Attorney.

Chairperson Morin requested that the Council provide to the Town Manager any issues or requests for discussion with respect to the Rules and Procedures.

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

BIDS

None

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

RESOLUTION CONCERNING AN APPLICATION TO THE CAPITAL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS TO OBTAIN STP-URBAN PROGRAM FUNDS, TO MAKE APPLICATION FOR TRADITIONAL ROADWAY PROJECTS AND NON-TRADITIONAL ROADWAY PROJECTS IN THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD CONNECTICUT

BE IT RESOLVED, that Bonnie L. Therrien, Town Manager, is hereby authorized to submit on behalf of the Town of Wethersfield, Connecticut, a public entity established under the laws of the State of Connecticut, an application for STP-URBAN PROGRAM funds in order to obtain financial assistance under the Capital Region Council of Governments for the following projects in the Town of Wethersfield, Connecticut:

Willow Street, from Wells Road (Rte 175) south to Straddle Hill

- Prospect Street (Rte 187) Intersection with Wolcott Hill Road and Millwood's Park Drive

RESOLUTION CONCERNING AN APPLICATION TO THE CAPITAL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS TO OBTAIN LOCAL ROAD ACCIDENT REDUCTION PROGRAM FUNDS, TO MAKE APPLICATION FOR PROJECTS IN THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD CONNECTICUT

BE IT RESOLVED, that Bonnie L. Therrien, Town Manager, is hereby authorized to submit on behalf of the Town of Wethersfield, Connecticut, a public entity established under the laws of the State of Connecticut, an application for LOCAL ROAD ACCIDENT REDUCTION PROGRAM funds in order to obtain financial assistance under the Capital Region Council of Governments for the following projects in the Town of Wethersfield, Connecticut:

- Prospect Street (Rte 187) Intersection with Wolcott Hill Road and Millwood's Park Drive
- Wolcott Hill Road at Wethersfield High School Entrance Drive
- Main Street at intersection with Church Street and Marsh Street

RESOLUTION FOR A STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION GRANT

BE IT RESOLVED, that the duly appointed Town Manager Bonnie Therrien, is empowered to execute and deliver in the name of the Town of Wethersfield and on behalf of the Wethersfield Public Library a certain contract with the Connecticut State Library, State of Connecticut, for a State Public Library Construction grant.

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION GRANT

BE IT RESOLVED, that Town Manager Bonnie Therrien or Town Clerk Dolores G. Sassano, as her designee, is empowered to execute and deliver in the name of and on behalf of this municipality, an application and contract with the State Library for a Historic Preservation Grant in the amount of \$12,000.

MINUTES

February 2, 2004

Deputy Mayor Karangekis moved "**TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 2, 2004**", seconded by Councilor Adil. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilor Cascio ABSTAINED. The motion passed 8-0-1.

GENERAL COMMENTS

REPORTS

Councilor Cascio said that he received a call from a resident questioning why the Town snowplows push snow up against fences containing utility equipment. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she also received this complaint and she passed it along to Public Works requesting that they be more careful in this area. Councilor Cascio reported that the parking at the Hanmer School was discussed at the most recent Shared Services meeting. He said that a new traffic format will be implemented after the February vacation. Councilor Cascio reported that the completion of the renovations to the High School Lecture Hall is expected to be done by the end of the school year. Councilor Cascio stated that it is very important to him that the Board of Education and Town Council continue to communicate as they have been and that they allow the staff to communicate amongst each other. Councilor Cascio suggested that the communication between the Superintendent of Schools and the Town Manager continues regarding budget concerns. Councilor Cascio reported that the Memorial Day Committee met and appointed a new Chairperson, Larry Spellacy, to take the place of Rose Sipala. He said that signs are being posted outside the schools in order to generate enthusiasm and spirit for the parade. He said that the budget for the parade is limited and that donations are always greatly appreciated.

Councilor Forrest reported that he attended the Conservation Commission meeting and he clarified that the grant of

\$40,000 has to be matched by the Town with \$10,000, but that the budget will allocate \$50,000 and then the Town will receive the \$40,000 back as a sort of refund to the account.

Councilor Fortunato reported that she also attended the Shared Services meeting and that Mark Pellegrini who is the Planning & Economic Developer for the Town of Manchester has agreed to be the facilitator at the upcoming Fireside Chat on February 28. The results of the Fireside Chat are expected to become a sort of road map of goals for the Shared Services Committee. Also discussed at the meeting was the request by the Silas Deane School Building Committee to review a list of items that they would like to add back into the renovation project. She said that after the reimbursement from the State, the cost would be approximately \$106,000. Councilor Fortunato stated that Councilor Cascio asked at the meeting if the lighting at the High School Football Field would include the walkways to and from the field as well. She said that the Town Manager informed her that the walkways are included in the lighting. Councilor Fortunato said that the Capital Improvements Committee met recently and they continue to review the requests from various Town agencies and that the requests will be prioritized.

Councilor Montinieri said that she attended the Conservation Committee meeting as Chairperson of the Land Use and Preservation Committee. She reported that the two Committees are working together on the open space issue. Councilor Montinieri said that she has attended two of the Superintendent of School's Board of Education Budget presentations. She commented that she has never seen such a level of detailed scrutiny of the budget in the past.

Councilor Adil reported that he also attended the Superintendent of School's Board of Education Budget presentation and found it to be very informative. Councilor Adil attended the recent Traffic & Transportation Committee meeting and reported that Town Engineer Mike Turner presented two sets of plans for the revamping of the parking area at Hanmer School and at the Charles Wright School.

Chairperson Morin stated that the Memorial Day Parade Committee does a first class job for the Town. He informed the Council that he has received separate e-mail messages from both Mr. Leigh Standish and Mr. Brendan Flynn regarding the proposed changes to the Rules and Procedures. Chairperson Morin also received a phone call from Maryann Godbout regarding her disapproval of the new automated trash pickup. Chairperson Morin said that he will share all of these concerns with the Town Manager. Chairperson Morin commended the ongoing dialog between the Town Council and the Board of Education. He also announced many upcoming events in Town. Chairperson Morin gave an overview of the direction the Town is taking with regard to the Wethersfield Cove. He stated that the MDC met with him and others and expressed a genuine willingness to work with the Town to avoid a lawsuit. The MDC will design an alternate which depicts the removal of the human waste, not storm water, emptying into the Wethersfield Cove. Status reports will be provided periodically. Chairperson Morin has requested that Senator Fonfara contact the Chairman of the Senate Environmental Committee to try to set up a meeting with the DEP. Chairperson Morin is encouraged with the meaningful dialog between all of the involved parties.

COUNCIL

Councilor Forrest commented that he has heard a lot of talk about Town as to whether the High School Football Field Artificial Turf and Lighting issue should go to referendum and he expressed his opinion that the Wethersfield Code clearly designates what items are and are not to go to referendum. He said that the Council must adhere to the Code and he does not appreciate anyone hinting to the fact that the Council is trying to skirt this. Councilor Forrest shared that the \$100,000 limit is for Special Appropriations from outside of the budget process only.

Councilor Adil stated that he appreciates Chairperson Morin's comments on the Wethersfield Cove and appreciates his leading the Council in a very positive way. Councilor Adil said that he also has been receiving many phone calls regarding the Automated Trash Pickup and concerns of senior citizens. Councilor Adil apologized for any non-courteous impression he may have given with regard to Mr. Courchaine and the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee. His only goal in his suggestion is to gain focus for the project. Councilor Adil brought to light the fact that there is still no rug at the gym entrance of the Silas Deane Middle School.

Councilor Montinieri also commended Chairperson Morin on the progress he has made regarding the Wethersfield Cove. Councilor Montinieri corrected an article that appeared in the Hartford Courant which read that adding lights would increase the cost of the project from \$1.3 million to \$2.4 million. She said that the preliminary estimate for the

lighting is \$125,000 and the electrical service is \$5,000. Both of these amounts certainly do not double the cost of the project.

Councilor Cascio asked if the proposed changes to the Rules and Procedures should be reviewed by the Charter Revision Committee. Chairperson Morin said that it is two separate things. Councilor Cascio stated that the nonprocessible garbage collection times need to be restated for residents. Chairperson Morin said that Paine's has sent out the Automated Trash Pickup brochures and that residents should be receiving them at any time. The brochure provides information on the pickup of all kinds of different types of trash.

Councilor Cascio asked for an update of the status of the Veterans Exemption. Chairperson Morin said that it was decided to discuss the issue during budget sessions.

PUBLIC

Paul Courchaine, 481 Main Street, spoke as Chairperson of the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee. He stated that it would have been a courtesy to let him explain what the Committee has planned for their \$5,000 request and also the courtesy should have been extended to inform him, either by phone or e-mail, that there was to be a proposed change to the nature of the Committee on an ongoing basis. Mr. Courchaine clarified that he never asked the EDIC to include on their agenda the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee's request for \$5,000. Mr. Courchaine said that Town Engineer Mike Turner provided him with a copy of the Federal regulation stating that as of 2012 or 2013 all signs on Federal and State highways must adhere to the set Federal Standard. The Silas Deane Revitalization Committee believes that the signage is a good starting point in showing the Town that they are serious about the project. Mr. Courchaine said that the EDIC was the group initially designated to implement the Silas Deane Master Plan in 1987. The EDIC and the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee must come into agreement on spending priorities.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, spoke as Vice-President of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. Mr. Ruhe commented on the challenges facing the Board of Education this year when developing their budget. He said that the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. supports good education in Wethersfield; however, they do not support uncontrolled spending or spending that jeopardizes the quality of life of many citizens. The School and Town budgets need to reflect appropriate needs. In closing, Mr. Ruhe stated that the citizens of Wethersfield are not concerned with the format of Council meetings in any other Towns. Wethersfield needs to make their own decisions regarding the Council meeting format and the quality of life of Wethersfield citizens.

Penny Stanziale, 15 Harold Street, commented that she is pleased to hear that the Mayor is continuing his open dialog with the Board of Education. She corrected a previous comment made during the meeting by stating that the 9.9% proposed Board of Education budget is the Superintendent's proposal and the Board of Education has not yet voted on it.

Ken Sokolowski, 79 Main Street, stated that his concern over the Cottone Field renovations going to referendum has to do with the will of the public. He said that the Council may not have to take the issue to referendum, but it would be a prudent move. He feels that the Council owes it to the public to let them make the decision, as they are significantly divided on the issue.

Jim Clynych, 903 Ridge Road, stated that he agrees with the proposed changes to the Rules and Procedures with regard to Public Comment.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, speaking on behalf of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc., commented on the proposed plans for the renovation of the Town Hall. Mr. Orsini urged the Council to consider the idea of the 3.5% financial road map at the upcoming Fireside Chat. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. is very concerned about next year's Board of Education budget with the opening of the Webb building. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. supports the automated trash pickup; however there are concerns over the charge of the second barrel. Mr. Orsini remembers it being stated that there would be a one-time charge and now the brochure is saying that there will be an annual recurring charge. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. would like to know what the issue is that made the Rules Committee meet and propose the elimination of five minutes of public comment. There are a number of other ways to shorten the length of the meetings. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. would like

to see a new Committee formed to work with the Strategic Plan as it has a lot of good ideas.

George Wallace, 22 Chesterfield Road, spoke in support of keeping the Council meeting agenda the way it is to allow Public Comment twice during the meeting. Mr. Wallace commented that American Veterans are American treasures and should be treated as such.

Walter Swindell, 46 Oldham Road, said that he is happy to hear that the Town is proceeding with the Cove; however, he would like to know why the Health Department isn't taking a bigger role in the issue. Chairperson Morin said that he will look into the matter.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:26 p.m., Councilor Adil moved "**TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**" seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

At 11:11 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 9-0-0.

At 11:11 p.m., Councilor Montinieri moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Deputy Mayor Karangekis. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk