

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

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## **DECEMBER 20, 2004 REGULAR MEETING**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on December 20, 2004 at 7:20 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.

Absent: 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 Montinieri.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis announced that there will be an Executive Session following the Regular Meeting to discuss real estate negotiations.

### Proclamation - Wethersfield High School State Soccer Champions

Deputy Mayor Karangekis presented a proclamation to the 2004 Wethersfield High School Boys Soccer team who won the State Soccer Championship for the 14th year, which is a State record. The proclamation recognized the efforts of both the team and the coaches on their successful season.

At this time, "Santa" Harry Lichtenbaum presented candy canes to those in attendance and urged all to keep the spirit going.

### Honorable Mayor of Griswoldville Richard Lasher

Mr. Lasher brought Christmas greetings from the 7,942 residents of Griswoldville. Mr. Lasher presented various holiday gifts to the Council and thanked them along with the Town Manager and the Town Clerk for their hard work which is appreciated by the residents of Wethersfield.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

#### HEARING

None.

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Woodrow Warren, 9 Nutmeg Circle, commented on the issue of Pyquaug Village stating that the Association does not deserve to be placed on the tax delinquency list. Mr. Warren suggested that the Council look at the total value of the area which is \$1,300 and equates to a yearly tax amount of \$29.86 or \$.05 per person. He does not think it's worth it to re-form the Association.

Judy Emmick, 88 Westway, congratulated the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. for winning their lawsuit against the Town of Wethersfield. She said that the decision was not based on a recommendation of the judge, but rather on the Town Attorney's request to negotiate a settlement before going before the judge. Ms. Emmick questioned how certain people became aware of the decision prior to the time allowed for those involved to speak of it. Ms. Emmick said that a portable light structure, powered by a generator was placed at Cottone Field and she wonders who

O.K.'d this. She asked for clarification as to who a resident should actually call when something of a questionable nature occurs at the field. Ms. Emmick said that she met with twelve realtors from Prudential who reported that property values around Cottone Field will decline by \$45,000-\$60,000 with the installation of lights at the field.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented on the recent ad for a Wethersfield Police Officer and that it indicated that Wethersfield is looking for high quality candidates. He said that the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. concurs with the Town on this. Mr. Ruhe presented to the Town Manager and Council a letter from the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. dealing with the issue of the hiring of a Wethersfield Police Officer. The letter stated that the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. strongly urges that greater care be exercised in filling the position. Mr. Ruhe requested that the letter be placed in the record of the minutes. Mr. Ruhe spoke of the settlement of the lawsuit mentioned by Ms. Emmick, and that the Association is disturbed that Attorney O'Brien spoke of the terms of the settlement without first checking with their attorney. Mr. Ruhe commented that, perhaps, many Wethersfield Officials are ethically challenged.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, commented that it appears that the Strategic Plan Committee is struggling. Mr. Orsini stated that, in the past, the Plan worked because there was a Council member, a senior staff member, and a cross section of residents on every major committee. Mr. Orsini said that he feels that the Plan is just another report that is put on the shelf and not followed. Mr. Orsini commented that there has been much in the newspaper lately regarding Assistant Town Attorney O'Brien and the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. is very disappointed in what they see and hear. The Association thinks that Mr. O'Brien was not truthful to the Council as he has been accused of violating several rules of professional conduct and ordered to the Superior Court for discipline. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. supports the firing of the Assistant Town Attorney at this time.

#### COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS

Councilor Fortunato said that she attended the Library Board meeting and reported that Library usage continues to be up. She said that presently there are nine computers in the Library that need to be replaced immediately. These computers aren't functioning due to an upgrade of the Library server. Councilor Fortunato attended the Shared Services meeting where the draft facilities maintenance upgrade plan was discussed and stated that recommendations are still welcomed. The Fireside Chat meeting dates were discussed and it was suggested that the meeting be held on a week day at 5:30 p.m. Councilor Fortunato said that an agenda for the meeting was also discussed.

Councilor Montinieri attended the School Projects Building Committee meeting and reported that a tour of the Webb Building was conducted showing the building to be in a state of demolition. She said that walls have been torn down to form classrooms and painting has started. Councilor Montinieri said that she is concerned about some of the old windows that have not been slated for replacement. She said that the Committee is hoping that the money coming over from the Stillman project will replace the Willow Street windows; however, there are others that will not be replaced. Councilor Montinieri thanked the Building Committee for their fine job of overseeing the project.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien announced for the Mayor that there was a meeting with the MDC regarding the Cove and the MDC's Public Works Committee will be discussing the issue at their January meeting and reporting back to the full MDC Board by early February. She announced that the Health Department continues to offer appointments for the flu shot for those at high risk or 70+ years old. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien announced that the leaf collection has ended and additional leaves need to be taken by residents to the Town Transfer Station. She said that the Fire Department held an awards ceremony recently to recognize great service.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis announced many of the Town's upcoming events, including the Toys for Tots program at the Police Facility being held until December 20.

Councilor Czernicki asked the Town Manager when the MDC will be attending a Council meeting to report on their long-term plans. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the plan has yet to be released. She said that she anticipates that they will meet with the Council some time in January. Councilor Czernicki asked if there can be arrangements made to schedule Therapeutic Recreation parties on nights other than Council meeting nights. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she will pass this request along to the appropriate staff member.

## COUNCIL ACTION

### Resolution for \$500,000 STEAP Grant for Silas Deane Highway

Councilor Forrest moved "**TO APPROVE THE TOWN MANAGER'S APPLICATION FOR AND ACCEPTANCE OF \$500,000 FOR THE SMALL TOWN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**", seconded by Councilor Adil. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Transfer of \$4,000 - Woodside Drive

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the Council approved the expenditure of \$4,000 to lower the water pipe at 100 Woodside Drive and now needs to transfer the funds to cover the expense of the work.

Councilor Montinieri moved "**TO TRANSFER \$4,000 FROM THE CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT T1910900-5250 TO THE NOTT STREET PROJECT ACCOUNT 303-5437 11103 TO COVER THE EXPENSE OF MOVING THE WATER PIPE AT 100 WOODSIDE DRIVE**", seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Councilor Cascio asked if the contractors had any idea that this water pipe existed when the project was being designed. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien deferred the question to Town Engineer Mike Turner. Mr. Turner clarified that the water main did show on the original plans and that the project limits include any relocation of a water main or such up to the property line. The issue at 100 Woodside Drive is with the water main from the shut off valve to the house. It was hoped that the grade of the driveway could be kept steep so as not to have to lower the water main; however this was unsuccessful. Councilor Cascio asked if it will be the Town's responsibility from this point on to take care of construction problems that occur with future projects. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that this is so and explained that if the issue had to do with the road project, the State would pay for it. This problem had to do with the sloping of the driveway and the State said that this is a Town issue.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilor Czernicki voted NAY. Councilor Cascio ABSTAINED. The motion passed 6-1-1.

### Waiver of Fees - Mikey's Place - 5K Road Race - Police Services

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that there has been a request to waive the Police fees for the Mikey's Place 5K Road Race. She said that it was approved by the Council in the past to waive 50% of the fees for another road race; however this was not budgeted for this year. She recommended that this be budgeted for in the future should future requests be made.

Councilor Fortunato moved "**TO WAIVE 50% OF POLICE FEES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$383.66 FOR THE MIKEY'S PLACE 5K ROAD RACE**", seconded by Councilor Montinieri.

Councilor Montinieri asked how this will be kept track of in order to include it in the next budget. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Police Chief will need to raise his overtime budget to cover the amount waived.

Councilor Fortunato asked if, for planning purposes, the Town Manager knows of other upcoming events that will be requesting the waiver of fees. She said that there may be a point during the year at which the Town cannot afford to waive any more fees. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she will have her staff work on putting a list together.

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

### Waiver of fees - Cornfest Event - Police Services

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the Chamber of Commerce has requested a waiver of fees for Police services at the Corn Fest. Although the Corn Fest was cancelled due to inclement weather, the fees are for Police Officers who had to be paid due to the minimum call-in policy in the union contract.

Councilor Adil moved "**TO WAIVE POLICE FEES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$383.66 FOR THE CORN FEST**", seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilor Cascio ABSTAINED. The motion passed 7-0-1.

#### Town Council Meetings Meeting Dates - Charter Changes

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that as a result of the Charter changes, some of the dates for Council meetings need to be revised.

Councilor Montinieri moved "**TO APPROVE THE REVISED SCHEDULE OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR 2005**", seconded by Councilor Adil.

Town Clerk Dolores Sassano stated that the Council will need to decide if they would like to choose another date for the April 18 meeting since this is the date of the Budget Hearing.

Councilor Forrest suggested that the Council meeting time be changed to 6:00 p.m. in the future since commencement at 7:00 leads to a late end to the meetings.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis commented that some Council members may not be able to get out of work and to the meeting for 6:00 p.m.

Councilor Fortunato said that a number of committees meet prior to the Council meetings and that this would need to be considered as well.

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

#### BIDS

Chairperson Morin arrived at the meeting at this time (8:20)

#### Church Street Reconstruction

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that State LoCIP funds will be used for the Church Street Reconstruction project and four bids were received.

Councilor Adil moved "**TO AWARD THE BID FOR THE CHURCH STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT TO GENERAL PAVING, INC. AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$598,702**", seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Councilor Forrest asked if the excess funds will go back into the fund to pave additional roads. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the left over funds stay in the LoCIP allocation and it can be reallocated to another road project.

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

#### ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

None.

#### MINUTES

Councilor Adil moved "**TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 6, 2004**", seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

At this time, Town Manager Bonnie Therrien announced that an Executive Session will not be required after the meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:25 p.m., Councilor Adil moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk