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## **FEBRUARY 3, 2003 REGULAR MEETING**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on February 3, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Fitzpatrick, Flynn, Gardow, Hemmann, Sassano (late), Deputy Mayor O'Connor and Chairperson Czernicki. Absent: Councilor Morin.

Also present: Joseph Swetcky, Jr., Interim Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

**PRESENTATION:** Award of Medal of Valor — Police Officer Christopher Morris

Chairperson Czernicki asked Acting Police Chief Cetran to come forward. He presented the Medal of Valor to Officer Christopher Morris because on December 19, 2001 he responded to a call and came upon a suspect and questioned that person. During the questioning, the suspect stabbed Officer Morris in the neck, just missing his carotid artery, knocking the Officer down. The suspect then ran and the Officer called in for help. Several Officers responded immediately and despite being wounded, Officer Morris chased the suspect and attacked him from behind as the suspect attempted to stab other Officers. The Awards Committee of the Wethersfield Police Department has decided to award Officer Morris with the Medal of Valor. In the history of the Wethersfield Police Department, this is only the third Medal of Valor to be awarded.

Chairperson Czernicki thanked Officer Morris on behalf of the Council for all that he does to keep the community safe and for putting his life on the line on a daily basis. He shows to us what true spirit is and we're happy that he is back on the street, doing the job that he loves.

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Officer Morris.

**PRESENTATION:** Ray Carpentino, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager

Chairperson Czernicki introduced Mr. Carpentino who clarified items on the monthly report he submitted to the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Carpentino said that he has seventeen years of experience in nine different towns in Connecticut. He started as an aide and worked up to being an integral part of a redevelopment project in the northwestern part of the State. He gave an update of activities that occurred in 2002. Although some items may seem small, Mr. Carpentino said that small businesses are the backbone to economic development and prosperity in our country. Activities included:

- North American Bank moved into the former Equity Bank offices at 1160 Silas Deane Hwy
- The Bakery located within Stop & Shop at the Jordan Lane shopping center was converted in part to a Dunkin Donuts
- Verizon Wireless located in the former Motophoto shop at 957 Silas Deane Hwy.
- Construction has started for the Connecticut River Community Bank (6,000 sq. ft.) and a Starbucks (4,000 sq. ft.) located at 1210 Silas Deane Hwy.
- Extra Storage Space located at 132 Silas Deane Hwy. was approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission is approximately 88,000 sq. ft.
- A new Dunkin Donuts was opened at 1750 Silas Deane Hwy. (5,000 sq. ft.)
- Absolute Mortgage Solutions located at 990 Silas Deane Hwy. has completed extensive interior and façade renovations.
- New King (Burger King) completed their remodeling
- AGS Realty is in the process of remodeling the front entrance and interior at 506 Silas Deane Hwy.

- Summitt Properties has renovated the building façade at 636 & 644 Silas Deane Hwy.
- Boston School of Bartending was approved by the Commission for a change of use.
- George Zenie has received approval for a change of use at 500 Silas Deane Hwy. Renovations are incomplete. Supreme Limousine is in operation currently at the site.
- International College of Cosmetology opened its doors at 632 Silas Deane Hwy.
- Max Bibo Deli at 691 Silas Deane Hwy. is in full bloom.
- Approved 7,500 sq. ft. of office space on the south side of Wolcott Hill Road. No building permits have been issued yet.

Since December 2, Mr. Carpentino has held staff meetings with the Town Engineer and Building Official/Zoning Officer referencing items of development. At this time, some of the current items include:

- A potential Chinese restaurant in the Silver Cove Plaza
- The Masonic Temple, 245 Main Street, is in the process of extensive interior and exterior improvements to the property.
- Working with a realtor, the potential tenant, and CERC (the Connecticut Economic Resource Center) for 1170 Silas Deane Hwy. This is the former Fun Zone property. There was interest by Goodyear to occupy the building as the commercial tire operation. This has not gone through. It is on hold for now.
- He spoke to a potential buyer of a restaurant on the Silas Deane Hwy. looking to rehab the restaurant into a retro-style restaurant.
- He spoke to the owner and realtor of 1000 Silas Deane Hwy. (the Weight Watchers building). They may be interested in redeveloping the property into a 45,000-50,000 sq. ft. retail site.
- Sterling Jewelers Plaza, 965-969 Silas Deane Hwy., will be coming before the Planning Commission tomorrow night for some façade improvements and expansion.
- He is working with the realtor of 724 Silas Deane Hwy. The Exxon/Texaco station is looking to build a new 800 sq. ft. retail building.
- He's been talking with the probable purchaser of 151 Silas Deane Hwy. They're interested in redeveloping that site into a retail and gas station with car wash combination.
- There is possible reuse of the Grange Hall as a catering-type commercial business.
- Talking with the purchaser of a property on the Berlin Turnpike looking to turn the vacant gas station into a retro-style restaurant.
- Considering a comprehensive zone change for a portion of the Berlin Turnpike currently zoned residential. This is in conformance with the plan of development adopted two years ago.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor asked Mr. Carpentino if the Goff Brook Shopping Plaza transaction has gone through and if so has he had an opportunity to meet with the new owners. Mr. Carpentino said that it has gone through and that he has not yet met with the new owners; however it is on his to-do list. Deputy Mayor O'Connor said that this is a very important parcel of land in Wethersfield and he thinks that attracting the right type of business would be a great situation for us. He asked that Mr. Carpentino include the Mayor and the Interim Town Manager in the meeting and let the new owners know that we are serious about working with them.

Mr. Carpentino proceeded to explain the tax incentive policy he proposed. The policy was developed when he worked with the Town of Portland. This policy implements State statutes as far as tax deferments or tax abatements. He recommends it because with all the competition there is for economic development, it provides an incentive for new and established businesses to choose our town over another town. A tax incentive policy is a fairly easy policy to adopt. At a minimum it is a marketing tool. The policy will fix the assessed value of a property at the current level. The cost of improvement will determine the cost of tax deferment the Council wishes to defer for a certain amount of years at the end of which the Town will receive the full benefit of the improvement. The town will continue to collect at the current rate until the "contract" is ended. At the end, the full impact of the improvements will come into play under the current mill rate and assessed value. The policy is geared to real estate improvement in machinery or property. Within the policy and application, there are stipulations and binding items that Council could work into the agreement. There is nothing committing the Council to approve any tax incentive request. The application would be submitted to the Interim Town Manager, Finance Director, Assessor and Mr. Carpentino for review who would at that point generate a report to the Town Council for action. It is for existing properties as well as new properties. It is

however, not retroactive.

Councilor Gardow asked how many other towns have adopted this policy at this time. Mr. Carpentino said that he is not sure. He knows that Portland, Torrington and Winsted have adopted the policy. The intent is to never use the policy if we don't have to, but it does help to entice developers.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor asked who has the best program in the State for this type of effort. Mr. Carpentino said that the larger municipalities and cities have very active incentive programs. He said that the towns don't really have much flexibility as to deferring or abating taxes, as they must follow what is in the statutes. Deputy Mayor O'Connor asked how this policy would be marketed to current businesses in town. Mr. Carpentino said that he would use as much press as possible. This policy could be used to help a business stay in town.

Councilor Fitzpatrick asked how Mr. Carpentino would validate the value of the improvements and what would happen if there were any type of disagreement on the assessment. Mr. Carpentino said that the application form has a section to be completed by the Town Assessor who will place a value on the property. The value is decided before the application comes before the Council. The Council can write stipulations into the conditions of the contract.

Chairperson Czernicki asked Mr. Carpentino when the Connecticut River Community Bank would be opening. Mr. Carpentino said that he does not know, but he will let her know. Also Chairperson Czernicki asked if Starbucks would be coming or not. Mr. Carpentino said that at this point it still is Starbucks. Chairperson Czernicki thanked Mr. Carpentino for bring forward a tax incentive policy that is very implementable. The Interim Town Manager has recommended that it be referred to Major Contracts and the Town Attorney for review.

Chairperson Czernicki asked Board of Education Chairperson Penny Stanziale to introduce the new Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Patrick Proctor. Dr. Proctor served 12 ½ years in Windham as the Superintendent of Schools and prior to that as Assistant Superintendent. It is an exciting time for both Doctor Proctor and for Wethersfield and its school district. Chairperson Czernicki welcomed Dr. Proctor and wished him well.

Councilor Cascio moved "**to remove items C.2. a, j, k, m and n from the table**", seconded by Deputy Mayor O'Connor. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

## HEARING

**ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$10,612,974 FOR RENOVATIONS TO WEBB SCHOOL, STILLMAN BUILDING AND PHYSICAL SERVICE BUILDING TO ACCOMMODATE REOPENING WEBB SCHOOL AS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$10,612,974 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION**

Ed Kardas, 850 Cloverdale Circle, provided the Council with a handout addressing the bonding appropriation. He said that it is not clear why the proposed costs approved for the Public Comment on the renovations to the Webb and Stillman buildings have changed so dramatically since the NESDEC team conducted its architectural design and cost analyses in 1999. He cited comparison amounts between the Public Comment proposed and the original NESDEC costs. Chairperson Czernicki clarified that the Interim Town Manager has amended his dollar figures to show the \$10,612,974. There was an error in his first narrative. Mr. Kardas; however, used the \$11.1 million total and came up with an increase of \$4.3 million. Mr. Kardas would like to know the reasons for the increase. Chairperson Czernicki said that she will advise Interim Town Manager Swetcky to provide answers to Mr. Kardas.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, spoke on behalf of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. They need clarification of the breakdown of the \$10,612,974. He asked if the ordinance will be amended to read "and additions" in the Stillman description. Will there be an addition or is the work being done within the existing footprint? He understood that originally there was to be an elevator and six bathrooms (3,700 sq. ft.) added to the back of the Stillman. Is this still on there? Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that at the Town meeting the proposal was to include the addition. The dollar figure in the ordinance provides funds for this addition. Mr. Orsini said that an addition at the Town Garage

was originally talked about and now that is not to be done. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that there will be an addition at the Town Garage. He wants to know if revised cost quotes will be available to the public and Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that they will be. The vote is to spend \$10.6 million. Does this mean that money can be moved between the projects? Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that the money can be moved between the projects only by vote of the Council. Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. wants to know what the recurring costs are of opening Stillman. Mr. Orsini then read from a prepared statement from the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. which said they support the project and urge its approval.

Mr. Buganski, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, was called forward to answer some of Mr. Orsini's inquiries. He said the addition to Stillman is not recent. Fletcher-Thompson's initial projection was that there would be an addition necessary that would house the elevator, bathrooms and fire-rated stairwell. The feasibility of incorporating those features into the existing footprint was looked at; however, at the time of the meeting, it was still Fletcher-Thompson's opinion that those components could not be incorporated because of the structural format of the Stillman building. This is not carved in stone, should the situation change, fitting these components into the existing building will be pursued. The only addition at this point to the Marsh Street facility will be an external elevator tower. Mr. Buganski does not at the current time have a figure for recurring costs at Stillman. This will have to be worked on with the architect once the final footprint is known. The current net cost to the Town of the entire project is \$7.9 million.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, a member of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. concurs with Mr. Orsini's statement. He stressed that spending will be watched very closely. He suggests not adding the words "and additions". These words could give the ordinance a vastly different meaning. He urges that the Town not think of coming before the community with any other referendum until they get the debt load under control.

Edward Tevald, 894 Ridge Road, commented on the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. He has lived in Wethersfield since 1952 and never had a friend or neighbor who has belonged to the Association. Who is Mr. Orsini referring to when he says "many of our members"? He spoke to the Town Clerk's Office and they have no information in relation to the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. membership.

Chairperson Czernicki reminded Mr. Tevald that this time is allowed for comments on the hearing. All other comments should be held until the General Comments segment of the meeting.

Mr. Tevald continued that he would like to know whom Mr. Orsini is speaking for when he says that he is speaking for the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. He is a taxpayer, but the Association doesn't speak for him. He's spoken to people who have lived in Wethersfield for many years and they have never even heard of the Association. Is there a membership of 10? 10,000? How much of the Town do they represent? Chairperson Czernicki said that she does not know the number of the membership in the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. She suggested that Mr. Tevald ask these questions to Mr. Orsini himself.

Woodrow Warren, 9 Nutmeg Circle, said that he is honored to be involved with the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. He's been involved with them a number of times. He always tries to stay unbiased. The Association is very inclusive. Anyone who wants to join, can join.

Chairperson Czernicki again reminded that comments at this point are to be directed to the hearing.

Mr. Warren said that the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. went into the details of the ordinance to find loopholes where money could be saved. What else could taxpayers ask for? What the Association is proposing is very realistic. The figures fall in line with what was proposed.

Leigh Standish, 278 Hartford Avenue, supports the referendum whole-heartedly. The Board of Education, Building Committee and Architects have done a real service to this town. He thanked the Council and all involved in this project.

Gretchen Tomaro, 24 Colonial Drive, was pleased to hear that the Council is leaning in a progressive and positive way of moving the referendum along. It is vital that the Webb gets opened. Schools are desperately overcrowded at this point and we need to do whatever it takes to get this building opened and occupied. People need to vote for this

referendum for our children.

Anne Kuckro, 471 Main Street, encouraged the Council to vote unanimously to get the referendum on the ballot. The quality of education in Wethersfield is important for property values. It is important to act on this now.

No one else wished to speak and the Chairperson declared the hearing closed.

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Rick Garrey, 35 Harding Street, supports the ordinance for the schools. This is all about stopping overcrowding. Regarding the Police furniture bid, he believes the number could be brought down a lot. He doesn't want to see the number brought down by furniture being eliminated. The building needs all the furniture on the list and he'd hate to see used furniture. The building deserves new furniture.

Jim Woodworth, 5 River Road, distributed invitations to Council and members of the audience to another walk on Saturday at a newly purchased Great Meadows Conservation Trust property. The cost of the property will be reimbursed by the State. The property is between the Village and the marsh and the meadows. It has a brook and uplands with trees. It has a pond and six acres of farmland.

Shirley Steinmetz, 375 Brimfield Road, addressed the Tourism Commission funding request. She urged the Council to authorize the transfer of money from the Festival to the Tourism account. She asked the Council to continue to support Wethersfield's volunteers.

Charlie Forsdick, 18 Monticello Drive, has served for the past six years as member or Chairman of the three festival boards or committees supporting economic development through the promotion of heritage tourism. As a current member of the Tourism Commission and Chairman of the Commission's Heritage Partnership Committee, he asks Council to support the transfer of funds from the Festival to the Tourism

Commission. Some of these funds are critical to the Fireman's historical exhibit. The marketing brochure also needs to be printed. It will improve tourism marketing and position us as a leading player in the State and regional tourism marketing movement. He emphasized it may seem that this is not the time to do this; however marketing tourism takes a while to build a reputation. It can take two years to feel any benefit. Wethersfield will attract new business if it is clear that we actively promote business in town. We need to provide visitor transportation to prevent traffic in Old Wethersfield.

Greg Curtin, 115 Center Street, Chairman of the Wethersfield Public Library Board of Directors, gave an update of the Library. Usage for 2002 of all items loaned was up 16% over 2001. Over ¼ million items were loaned in 2002.

Gina Deangelo, 16 Dennison Ridge, is concerned that the other schools in town are not left behind. Highcrest and Hanmer Schools still do not have air conditioning. She urged Council to reconsider funding for this.

Paul Courchaine, 41 Main Street, a member of the Tourism Commission, reported that the Commission had a very successful meeting with the Budget and Finance Committee. They are in favor of the ordinance being acted on tonight and urge acceptance of it. Regarding a point of order at Council meetings, he feels that it is not appropriate for special interest groups in town to think that Council meetings are a forum for them to address questions that can be answered in other ways. As far as he knows, the format of the meetings has not been changed to become an interactive question and answer session. In the future, there should be a stop to this type of procedure.

Barbara Ruhe, 79 Main Street, a Wethersfield resident also with a business in town, toured the new Police facility and believes that people's attitudes change when they work in buildings that are lovely and beautiful such as this new facility. She has spare furniture that can be used in the new facility. She will write a check in the amount of \$40 to Transfer Enterprise to open an account for the new furniture in the facility. She hopes that others will follow suit. The furniture there is nice and not very costly.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on the Police Building. He visited the new facility and describes it as

a "monster". He questions why it is so big. It started as 28,000 sq. ft. and the value to build it was \$7 million. The building is 26,000 and still spent all the money. Now we need to take money from another area of the bond. He thinks this is wrong. He hasn't heard much about Dial-A-Ride. He hopes there will be discussion again in the future to find an economical way of running the service. He said to keep thinking of "0" for the budget. We should be looking at consolidations of similar groups within the Town Hall and the Board of Education.

Donna Feliciano, 7 Dennison Ridge, reminded Council that Highcrest and Hanmer Schools cannot take the heat. There are children with respiratory problems and hopes that the air conditioning for these schools can be put into the budget.

Judy Parker, 366 Pine Lane, President of the Historical Society, spoke of the transfer of funding request for the Tourism Commission. This funding helps all of our current merchants. The brochures and firefighter's exhibit both fall into the category of economic development. She urges the Council to transfer the whole amount.

Woody Warren, 9 Nutmeg Circle, apologized for speaking inappropriately during the hearing. He is very proud of his association with the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. He is concerned about safety in Wethersfield. The snowplows have piled up big banks of snow at the ramps where sidewalks meet the street. People are forced to walk in the road. This needs to be addressed. It is confusing at this point as to whom to go to in Town to get something taken care of. He attended the last meeting of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. and Kelly Weinberg also attended. She said that she was told by one of the Superintendents that there will be a cut "across the board" for the budget. Officials should be careful making comments of that type. A budget of 10% is ridiculous at this time. It should be in line with what our wage earners are confronted with. Money is scarce. Seniors are still not being addressed. They need help. They are not being projected into the community. Seniors contribute a lot to this town and are getting so little in return.

Leigh Standish, 278 Hartford Avenue, commented on the tax incentive program. Wethersfield has a wealth of commercial properties and the more deals we offer, the less taxable commercial property to offset residential property values. Also, the proposal as it stands is subject to arbitrary application by Council. It has potential for abuse and some preferential treatment to insiders. Unless it is an objective standard, it should not be employed.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, spoke of the greeting around town meaning "zero". He urged the Council to keep thinking "zero". He also toured the new Police Facility and was impressed with the building. He did think that the Chief's suite was a bit overdone. He, too, will write a check for \$100 for the Police Department to help purchase furniture. He recommends giving Transfer Enterprises in Manchester a good look.

Anne Kuckro, 471 Main Street, Chairperson of the Tourism Commission, urged Council to approve the transfer of \$20,000 from the Festival fund to the Tourism budget. None of the funds have been committed at this time. Copies of estimates are available.

Julie Montinieri, 43 Amato Circle, commented on the Board Budget and the upcoming referendum. She reminded Council that bare bones is not always good enough. "Wants" need to be met occasionally as well as "needs".

Ed Tevald, 894 Ridge Road, commented on the Police Facility furniture. Wethersfield is behind Rocky Hill, Newington, Windsor and others in a Connecticut Magazine ranking. Their libraries are beautiful. Wethersfield needs to look at going first class once in a while. The opinion of Wethersfield is slipping. We should be joyous over the new Police Facility and not put crappy furniture into it. If we keep looking at dollars only, we will not improve our rating. Public safety is one of our most important services and we have a fine Police Department. We should be proud of that. He is surprised that Council has no idea of who the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. represents.

John Karangekis (former Chief of Police), 15 Chestnut Circle, commented that the original furniture costs for the Police Facility have been cut by more than half. Transfer Enterprises was called and given a list of requested furniture. Their bid for the same (refurbished) furniture was \$350 less than the total budget arrived at. The homework has been done. The Chief's "suite" is just that, a suite. It houses a secretaries office, waiting room, conference room and the Chief's office. These all require furniture. We did right by the taxpayers in cutting costs for this furniture. Also, furniture has been transferred from the old facility. He urges that Council not diminish a beautiful edifice that has opened up the north end of the Silas Deane Hwy.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, speaking on behalf of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. Their goal is to keep essential services affordable for all taxpayers. They are not for dumbing down the Town of Wethersfield. The new Police Facility is beautiful. They do not want to put "junk" in the building. The \$71,000 furniture budget has not been cut down to \$59,000. The Police Department has a \$5 million budget. Can't we find \$71,000 eliminating costs here and there and give them \$71,000. Council should challenge the department to come up with the money. Regarding C.3.b on the agenda, the Friends of the Wethersfield Nature Center have come forward with a proposal to take the Moeller Home, renovate it, and make it into a new nature center. A grant of \$250,000 and the Friends have received a commitment of another \$200,000 in private funds. Their association have offered another \$50,000 for that building. In addition, they're willing to spend another \$10,000 on the façade. This sounds interesting. The nature center returns 60% of their expenses back to the town. The nature center is supposed to be self sufficient. A larger facility will have more recurring costs. They would like to see a study conducted of what the impact will be of them moving there. Other than that, this is a good initiative.

Dr. Ken Sokolowski, 79 Main Street, noticed that the feral cat resolution was coming off the table for this evening and would like to know why. He wants to know what the community will gain by this ordinance. Is there truly a problem with domestic cats being allowed outdoors? There can only be one reason for this ordinance. It is to eliminate any cat's presence out of doors. The only reason to license cats is to locate the owner. This custom made ordinance has not been shown to be truly necessary. There has been no comprehensive poll or survey of Wethersfield residents to show that there is a groundswell of enthusiasm for it. This ordinance should be tabled until we can be shown how necessary it is and how effectively it will be enforced.

Patti Silva, 24 Hillcrest Avenue, addressed Dr. Sokolowski's questions regarding the feral cat ordinance. The ordinance was proposed for residents who have experienced damage to their property by stray cats, whether feral or domestic. It addresses cat owners who refuse to take responsibility for damage done by their cats.

Fran Tevald, 894 Ridge Road, recently attended the new Police Facility open house. She was extremely impressed with the building and the enthusiasm of the Officers. She is proud of the Police Department. It is hard to put a value on the safety they provide our community. The building and especially the Officers deserve the allocation for the furniture for the facility.

There being no one else wishing to speak, the Chairperson declared the Public Comments closed.

### COUNCIL ACTION

**"TO APPROVE THE ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$10,612,974 FOR RENOVATIONS TO WEBB SCHOOL, STILLMAN BUILDING AND PHYSICAL SERVICE BUILDING TO ACCOMMODATE REOPENING WEBB SCHOOL AS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$10,612,974 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION."**

Councilor Flynn said that he is pleased to see the proposal indicating that the renovation of Stillman can be accomplished in a cost effective manner. He requested through the Interim Town Manager that a good faith estimate of the annual recurring operating costs of the building is essential to the credibility of the bond question. He also questioned the details of the proposal. He's received calls from residents regarding the parking lot at Webb. Will it be rebuilt or repaved as part of this program? The proposal shows existing pavement. Mr. Buganski answered that the North parking lot, the general parking area, will remain unchanged. Any further paving would be beyond the referendum. He asked Mr. Buganski what the construction time line looks like. Mr. Buganski said that it is not up to him to determine; however, he anticipates that there will be a construction manager brought on early in the process to work with the architect to develop a phasing plan. Current preliminary projections for a time line suggest that Webb will be fully operational for September, 2005. Maintenance would be the first operation undertaken, freeing up an entire section of the building for renovation. The alternate day program will be relocated to the High School. Next would be to get administration out of the building to free up the second floor for renovations. The question is whether the kindergartners will continue to be housed in the building or if modulars will be leased to house them. Also, whether renovations can continue while others are in the building.

Councilor Flynn asked if the removal/relocation of Administration is a condition of the building opening in 2005. Mr. Buganski said that in order for Webb to open as a fully functioning K-6 school; the Administration would have to out of the building. The renovations to Stillman would have to be complete or substitute space would have to be found for the Administration. Councilor Flynn asked if the proposed addition at Stillman was part of the original proposal and if options will be explored where that addition is not necessary. Mr. Buganski said that it was part of the original proposal and that option continues to be explored and discussed. What Fletcher-Thompson has done up to this point is what they refer to as a "fit". Once final design phases are entered, we will know better what will actually fit or not fit into an existing footprint. Councilor Flynn said that the issue of Webb as a 5-6 was discussed in the past and there was an issue of other elementary schools needing renovations. Will other elementary schools need renovations in order to accommodate the kindergarten classrooms? What are the cost estimates? Are they built into this proposal? How will this be accomplished if it is indeed an issue? Mr. Buganski said that the costs to recapture kindergarten space in the other elementary schools are not included in this referendum. There were kindergarten classes in all of those schools before opening the Webb kindergarten center in 1989 and we need to go back and recapture those spaces. There may be some expense involved which would be covered by the normal Board budget. Each elementary school would have three kindergarten classrooms. There is not a dollar amount at this time. He anticipates that the former classes can be recaptured relatively quickly and relatively inexpensively. Councilor Flynn asked where the Board stands on the needs of the other elementary schools, such as the air conditioning issues at Hammer and Highcrest. How does the proposal for Webb and Stillman impact on those needs. He'd hate to see all "eggs" put into the Webb basket. Mr. Buganski said that the Board recognizes the work to be done at the other elementary schools.

Councilor Cascio asked about the current parking at the Webb building. He asked if there has been a complete overlay to the parking lot. Mr. Buganski said that a section of the parking lot has been done, but not the entire lot. Councilor Cascio said that the parking was discussed at the meeting and asked Mr. Buganski how the number of parking spots at Webb was determined. Mr. Buganski said that the architect uses a formula based on the seating capacity of the auditorium. It is an extreme because over the course of the year, how often is every seat in the auditorium occupied. A lot of that capacity would require approximately 400 spaces. This is neither practical, nor feasible. Councilor Cascio asked if the Board has discussed redistricting with regards to moving Webb forward as a K-6. Mr. Buganski said that the Board has gone on record stating that the opening of Webb would involve redistricting of the attendance areas for each of the schools.

Councilor Sassano said that originally the amount of \$790,000 had been allocated to providing space for the Administrative offices if they were to remain at Webb. Instead the decision to relocate to Stillman will cost Wethersfield \$2.9 million. We are however killing two birds with one stone. He asked Mr. Buganski if the Board of Education considers housing the Administrative offices the highest and best use of the Stillman facility. Mr. Buganski believes that the only way to house the Administration at the Webb building would be to put on a significant addition. It would maximize the use of the facility and cramp the space available to Administration and not allow any flexibility for future growth should enrollment in the district continue to grow. Therefore there were a number of factors involved in the decision to relocate to Stillman. Councilor Sassano asked if the rate of reimbursement from the renovations to the Webb building has been reduced because the State considers the Webb building too large for the number of students to be housed there. Mr. Buganski said that using State Department of Education criteria for square footage per pupil, the Webb facility is larger than what the State indicates is necessary for a facility that will house 420 students. A lot of the square footage at Webb is there because the facility originally functioned as a Junior High school. For example the size of the gymnasium, auditorium and cafeteria. Many would argue that the State's criteria for square footage per student is an old number that is unrealistic. Councilor Sassano asked if there has been any projection made of the cost of redistricting that will occur. Mr. Buganski said that the costs would come in the form of additional busses and it is too early to project that number. Councilor Sassano addressed the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc.'s moratorium on future bonding. He asked how the school administration feels this would delay future renovations to the other elementary schools. Mr. Buganski said that the question would be more appropriate for the Board of Education to answer. The renovations to the other school would be done incrementally over a period of time using the Boards operating budget or through capital improvements rather than a bonding.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor commented that he whole-heartedly supports moving forward on this ordinance. The overcrowding issue needs to be addressed. He thanks the Board of Education for rallying and making this a reality.

Councilor Gardow said that he is new to this process and believes that this is a project that has matured to where it is today due to a lot of hard work done by a lot of people. The project fulfills the many needs that we have in this community. It solves overcrowding, moves Administration to a gem of a building and moves the School's maintenance down to Marsh Street to share services with the Town.

Councilor Hemmann feels that this is a proposal that has due diligence behind it and needs to be supported.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor moved **"TO AMEND THE ORDINANCE TO ADD THE WORDS "AND ADDITIONS" AFTER THE WORD "RENOVATIONS", IN THE STILLMAN BUILDING DESCRIPTION"**, seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor moved **"TO AMEND THE ESTIMATED COSTS TO READ: WEBB SCHOOL \$6,416,158; STILLMAN BUILDING \$3,680,806; PHYSICAL SERVICES BUILDING \$516,010"**, seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick.

Councilor Flynn asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky to explain the changes.

Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that the architect did a preliminary draft program study and cost summary and incorporated the Council's January 11 changes. This revised the cost estimates to where they are now.

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

Deputy Mayor O'Connor moved **"TO ADOPT THE ORDINANCE AS AMENDED"**, seconded by Councilor Gardow. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor moved **"THAT THE APPROVED ORDINANCE BE SUBMITTED TO A REFERENDUM VOTE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TOWN CHARTER ON APRIL 1, 2003, BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 6:00 AM AND 8:00 PM UNDER THE FOLLOWING BALLOT HEADING:**

**"SHALL THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD APPROPRIATE \$10,612,974 FOR RENOVATIONS TO WEBB SCHOOL, STILLMAN BUILDING AND PHYSICAL SERVICE BUILDING TO ACCOMMODATE REOPENING WEBB SCHOOL AS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE SAID APPROPRIATION?"**

**AND THAT THE TOWN CLERK PUBLISH A NOTICE OF PASSAGE AND NOTICE OF SUCH REFERENDUM AND MAKE ABSENTEE BALLOTS AVAILABLE"**, seconded by Councilor Flynn.

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

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

##### Street Lighting (referred to Budget & Finance Committee)

Deputy Mayor O'Connor reported that the Budget & Finance Committee met last week and the street lighting was deemed not feasible as far as purchasing the lights. The cost of the lights would be almost \$300,000. It does not make economic sense to do this.

Councilor Hemmann said that there was discussion of changes in the rate structure. The competition in that area is no longer. There has been no information as to any changes in the rate structure at this time.

Councilor Flynn said that the projected changes in the rate structure were based on assumptions regarding the present rate programs established by the Department of Public Utility Control. CL&P plans to challenge those rate structures. Also, there is no bargaining to be done. We are told what we're to pay for the lights and it is a take it or leave it

proposition.

#### Ordinance to Control Feral Cats (referred to Public Safety Committee)

Councilor Cascio reported that on January 17 the Public Safety Committee met to discuss the issue. The animal control officer and health department coordinator were both in attendance. After lengthy discussion it was decided that this ordinance would be very difficult to enforce. There are concerns that the animal control and health department coordinator had regarding staff training and additional personnel. It is the committee's recommendation that this ordinance not move forward at this time. He said that Councilor Flynn was also present at this meeting.

Councilor Flynn, after hearing from staff, said that unless the Council is willing to make an additional investment in staffing in the Police Department and Animal Control Facility, it doesn't make sense to implement this ordinance. He suggests that the ordinance could potentially address the situations that residents have raised to Council. This may want to be revisited at budget time.

Chairperson Czernicki asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky if the residents experiencing problems with cats on their property have any recourse. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that there may be recourse through the Health Department if it is deemed that there is a health issue. Residents can make a complaint to the Health Department and problems will be handled on a case by case basis.

#### Request from Great Meadows Trust (referred to Budget & Finance Committee)

Deputy Mayor O'Connor said that the Budget & Finance Committee discussed this issue at their meeting last week. The Council had already voted to waive over \$3,000 of taxes owed by the Trust. Most members of the committee agreed that the Town has already been generous and the consensus is not to move forward and issue a check for \$1,150.42.

Councilor Flynn disagreed with this decision for several reasons. The amount requested was miniscule. There is money in the budget in the open acquisition account. This account paid for the original tax forgiveness. From a policy angle, the Town will not be able to undertake open space acquisition on the scale that it would like to on its own. For a successful undertaking, it will need to be done in conjunction with private organizations. A very modest grant of additional funds is a positive signal that those efforts will be supported.

#### Tourism Commission Funding Request (referred to Budget & Finance Committee)

Deputy Mayor O'Connor reported that the Committee discussed the request and the consensus of the committee was to move forward with the request and allow the funds to be transferred. Deputy Mayor O'Connor believes that we should obtain the rights to an electronic version of the brochure that we own and have the ability to use it on our own.

Councilor Hemmann said that there was a long discussion on the Tourism Commission's plan. This is the beginning of a marketing plan. The consolidation of the Heritage Festival Committee with the Tourism Commission is a very appropriate move. They both work in similar fashions. They can do more collectively.

Councilor Flynn said that this proposal accomplishes a number of goals. First it solidifies the reorganization of the Tourism Commission and the American Heritage Festival into one organization which benefits the Town. It also represents a positive cooperative effort between the Tourism Commission and the Historical Society. Finally, the marketing brochure is truly a work of art. It could result in significant benefits to the economy of Old Wethersfield.

Councilor Sassano applauds the decision made by the Budget & Finance Commission with respect to this transfer. Economic development is an ongoing activity. He congratulated them on the brochure.

Councilor Sassano moved "**to transfer funds from the Heritage Festival Committee to the Tourism Commission**", seconded by Councilor Flynn.

Councilor Fitzpatrick opposed the motion because of the current situation with the State. We will need to make budget

decisions for next year and also look at the allocations for the current year. This money was allocated for one purpose and we are now changing it. Essentially it was destined for one and it was taken back. Before reallocating money, Council needs to make a priority list for reallocation. What about the air at Hanmer and Highcrest schools? Councilor Fitzpatrick would prefer to allocate money to those first before allocating it to a brochure. We've already spent \$15,000 on brochures. This sets a precedent that Commissions need to approach the Council with a concept before Council says to proceed or not.

Councilor Gardow asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky what the procedure is for organizations to acquire earmarked funds. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that once the appropriation is made, the commission is notified that the funds are available for them. The Commission then requests it from us and the money is turned over to them. This is the case 80% of the time. Some Boards/Commissions retain their money within the Town budget. A transfer was made out of the general fund to another account for the American Heritage Festival and the \$20,000 would go to them to spend. He said that a group that needs the monies should do what is being done here, submit a request for the money. Councilor Gardow verified that this request is within the bounds of procedure. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that the \$20,000 would sit in the budget since there is not going to be an American Heritage Festival. Groups wanting the money would submit a request for it. He said that once it was announced publicly last fall that there would not be an American Heritage Festival; the monthly financial reports showed that amount of money not being spent for the rest of the year. Councilor Gardow said that this brochure is in line with the spirit of the American Heritage program. He supports it. Also, Councilor Gardow addressed the issue of parking behind the Keeney building. He'd like the map to reflect this.

Councilor Cascio said that last fall when it was announced that there would not be an American Heritage Festival, it was determined that this would free up funds to allow the Fire Department to move forward with their plans. He asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky if any communication has taken place with the Fire Department with these funds. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that he spoke with Deputy Chief Mahder and mentioned to him that this proposal is out there. He felt that between the money saved from last year and this year that they have sufficient funding. This money could only be used for the Anniversary Celebration this spring. It cannot be applied toward the parade because that is in another fiscal year. He indicated support for the proposal for the fire exhibit. Councilor Cascio clarified that the Anniversary Committee has sufficient funds for their celebration. Councilor Cascio said that the air conditioning proposal for the elementary school will cost approximately \$40,000. Everything is important. He is concerned that out of courtesy, the lines of communication between all committees/commissions and the Interim Town Manager be maintained.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor commented that he agrees with Councilor Fitzpatrick. There are priorities to be set when allocating money. He differs with Councilor Fitzpatrick however in that he believes that we need to move forward with the brochure today. He reiterates that he would like to have the rights to an electronic copy. He will never again support going outside to do this because with this copy we will have the means to make our own flyers. It is the right investment to make now, but he would not support making this investment again.

Councilor Flynn said that the Tourism Commission has not gone out and spent this money as yet. They have received estimates to provide the Council. They are now going through the appropriate process to receive the money.

Councilor Fitzpatrick responded that the money has been spent to set up the design. This indicates that they are heading down the path. This is not simply a concept. Money has been spent already. This is a bad way to do business with Commissions. They can't start a process and then look at Council for money to continue.

Councilor Gardow asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky if when the appropriation is made, does the Commission get a letter indicating what they can and can't do with it. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that this is a unique example. Were this just the American Heritage Festival, the money would be transferred into their account in April and they would follow procedures for purchasing, quotes and bidding. The money never actually leaves the Town's possession. The expense is monitored. They have a special fund that is included in the audit report.

Chairperson Czernicki asked the Interim Town Manager if the proper procedure is not being followed here. The appropriation of money to the Heritage Committee has not actually been appropriated yet. Interim Town Manager

Swetcky said that is correct. Chairperson Czernicki said that she has a problem with the process. She asked if the two groups have melded into one group that is a subcommittee of the Tourism Commission. She said that Mr. Walsh came before Council last fall to say that there would be no Heritage Festival and that the money was to be used for the Fire festivities. She agrees with Councilor Fitzpatrick on the effectiveness of a brochure. The last brochure is still hanging around in places. She wished that the committee had come out with a recommendation to do the fire portion of it. She could easily support the fire portion. She asked what the trolley rental will be.

Anne Kuckro said that there are two events in May and two in June. First is the opening of the Fire Department exhibit. Second is International Museum Day. Third is the Fife and Drum Corps muster and the opening of an exhibit at the Athenaeum. A trolley would encourage people going to the Athenaeum to also go to the Webb house where there will be an additional exhibit. The trolley will run from Wethersfield to Hartford and back. Finally there is the Rose and Garden Weekend at Elizabeth Park. Transportation would take people from the Hartford events to Wethersfield. Chairperson Czernicki asked if the city of Hartford is bearing any of the cost of the trolley. Mrs. Kuckro said that the events are not sponsored by the City of Hartford, but by various heritage groups. These groups are not participating in the costs as the transportation is to benefit Wethersfield.

Councilors Cascio, Flynn, Hemmann, Gardow, Morin, Sassano and Deputy Mayor O'Connor voted AYE. Councilor Fitzpatrick and Chairperson Czernicki voted NAY. The motion passed 6-2-0.

#### Police Facility — Furniture (\$71,000) (tabled from January 21, 2003)

Councilor Sassano corrected the memo of January 28 from the Town Engineer to the Interim Town Manager that states that the Council voted to reject the bid of \$71,000. The Council did not reject the proposal, they merely tabled it.

Chairperson Czernicki is concerned because she asked Acting Chief Cetran to take a second look at the furniture in the training and community areas. Because the areas will be used by members of the Police Force and the community for meetings, there is a need for comfortable chairs. She asked if there is a way to update the chairs in these areas. The Chief has reduced the budget for furniture considerably.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor moved "**to amend the bid for Police Facility furniture to the amount of \$59,438.22**", seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Councilor Hemmann cited concerns with regards to expense; however, she thought that the grade of furniture would be looked at as well. Chief Cetran said that if the furniture is changed then we lose the pre-January 2003 prices quoted to us for the furniture. If we downgrade, we will have to use the 2003 prices which could be as much as 8% higher. Furniture had to be actually eliminated. The furniture eliminated can be lived without at this time.

Councilor Fitzpatrick feels that we are borrowing from Peter to pay Paul. This sets a bad precedent. He is concerned that there is \$7,000 left in the budget for the communication system and we're on the edge with that also. This is not finished yet and if that starts to go, where do we start to borrow for that. Also, Councilor Fitzpatrick finds it tough to accept that 50% of the budget is going into one suite. Now 1/3 of the furniture budget is going into one suite. We're talking about \$800 for a 2-drawer file cabinet. He asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky what is meant by the restocking fee. Why is there a restocking fee? Interim Town Manager Swetcky said the conference room table was ordered after the building committee approved it.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor clarified that the Council wants to give the Police the furniture, but there is no money left in the bond to purchase the furniture. Money is being taken from the Town Hall portion of the bond leaving the Town Hall with \$71,000 less to spend. The goal was to find a less expensive way of procuring the furniture. The intent was not to cut furniture; however, this seems to be the only way to cut the expense. Eventually the additional furniture will need to be purchased. Do we buy it now or later? He asked the Chief if this will cost us more in the future. Chief Cetran said that this is hard to answer. The facility can get by with the \$59,438.22 although it is not what he would have liked. This suits their needs at this time. He is comfortable with this number and the furniture it will provide.

Councilor Gardow clarified that the rooms x'd out on the map will not have furniture. The map shows that there will be no chairs in the lobby. Chief Cetran said that some of these were cut out before the \$71,000 amount. The waiting room

downstairs in the building will have chairs. He suggests that the chairs in the community room can do double duty with the lobby.

Councilor Cascio asked what the warranty is on the products we are planning to order and is the furniture comparable to other new facilities that have opened. Sherry Rowley from Advent Design is a consultant to the architect. She does not sell furniture, nor represent any furniture vendor. She said that she recommended State contract furnishings so that they could be purchased in a phased way. All State Contract manufacturers have been selected and evaluated for quality and warranty. She does not have information on the warranty. It is an industry standard appropriate warranty. The furniture is similar to other comparable facilities.

Councilor Fitzpatrick is not as concerned with the lobby as he is with other places in the building. He asked if we are done with the furniture in the building after this. Ms. Rowley said that furniture will be brought over from the existing building. There will be a small quantity of rooms left unfurnished if Council accepts this proposal. Councilor Fitzpatrick said that he hates to see 1/3 of the budget used on one suite while other rooms are left empty.

Councilor Cascio asked about the time frame for delivery of the furniture. Chief Cetran said that if ordered tomorrow, it could be delivered by the end of March. The move to the facility will take place without the furniture.

Councilor Sassano commented that it's a bad idea to leave any room unfurnished. He will vote against the amendment, not because he doesn't want the facility to have the furniture, but the original amount ought to be restored. The building committee has worked long and hard and demonstrated excellent judgment for several years to produce this first class \$7 million building and to quibble over furniture is unnecessary. It is shortsighted. There may be some sticker shock; however, all of the equipment will be used for a long time for commercial purposes. We should get the very best we can. He admires the discipline in cutting back the proposed request, but further cuts are unwise and he will regretfully oppose them.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor responded that he does not view this as a lack of foresight. The lack of foresight should be addressed with regard to the fact that we ran out of money and cannot afford the furniture. Chief Cetran said that he is comfortable moving forward with this amount. This is acceptable enough to move forward on this.

Councilor Fitzpatrick supports the cutback. It's nice in a perfect world to spend as much money as we can, but we unfortunately are heading toward a very tight fiscal time and the money is just not there.

Councilors Cascio, Hemmann, Fitzpatrick, Gardow, Deputy Mayor O'Connor and Chairperson Czernicki voted AYE. Councilors Flynn and Sassano voted NAY. The motion passed 6-2-0.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor moved "**TO AWARD THE BID FOR POLICE FACILITY FURNITURE UNDER STATE CONTRACT #RFP989-A-07-0448-C IN THE AMOUNT OF \$59,438.22**", seconded by Councilor Cascio. Councilors Cascio, Fitzpatrick, Flynn, Hemmann, Gardow, Deputy Mayor O'Connor and Chairperson Czernicki voted AYE. Councilor Sassano voted NAY. The motion passed 7-1-0.

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Tax Incentive Policy

Councilor Flynn moved "**TO REFER THE TAX INCENTIVE POLICY TO MAJOR CONTRACTS FOR REVIEW**", seconded by Deputy Mayor O'Connor. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Chairperson Czernicki asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky to have a copy of the policy sent to the Town Attorney so that Major Contracts can have his recommendation.

### Letter from Friends of the Wethersfield Nature Center

Chairperson Czernicki referred to a letter from the Friends of the Wethersfield Nature Center requesting an

expenditure of \$10,000 of their funds to update the existing architect study of the Moeller Home to use the building for single department usage.

Councilor Flynn suggested that the Friends meet with the appropriate committee of jurisdiction to work out the specifics and flush out a more efficient presentation to Council.

Chairperson Czernicki said that the Friends would like to have the architectural study done before coming before the Council.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor said that Moser Pilon did a study costing out the Moeller Home as a single use of a Nature Center. The Friends may want to review and verify this plan before spending more money.

Councilor Gardow said that one of the problems would be the parking at the entrance to the Park.

Chairperson Czernicki said that by allowing the Friends to do this, Council is in no way committing any funds from the Town side. She asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky to pass along to the Friends that Council has approved the funds for the study and that hopefully it will not cost as much as \$10,000.

### BIDS

Councilor Flynn moved "**TO AWARD THE BID FOR STANDBY EMERGENCY GENERATORS TO BIDDER #1 ANCHOR ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$37,776**", seconded by Councilor Gardow.

Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that this is for the tower sites for the radio system. This amount comes out of the Police Bond fund.

Councilor Gardow asked if there is synergy with other generators Wethersfield currently has and also who would maintain these generators. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that we would be responsible for maintenance of these generators after the warranty period. We did look into using generators that we currently own, but CL&P had concerns with this. Councilor Gardow asked who the manufacturer of the generators is. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that these are standard generators made by Kohler and are able to supply our needs in terms of powering the radio system should the electricity ever go out. Councilor Gardow also asked about a page on the budget that has a line showing "soccer contingency". Just what is this? Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that the original budget reflected the uncertain site of the Police Facility. This is a contingency that was built in just in case we had to move a soccer field.

Councilor Sassano asked where the original budget amount is for this. He asked if the \$84,602 was a planning figure. If \$84,602 is allocated for the generator and we are only spending \$37,776, does this mean that there is money available within this bond to use toward the Police Facility? Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that there is a report in Council's packet called Radio Budget Sufficiency that breaks out the various items for the radio communications portion of the bond. Line 3 is the generator for the Callahan site and the original budgeted amount was \$5,000 the estimated cost was \$25,000 which came in at \$18,800. The generator for Firehouse #3 had an estimated cost of \$25,000 and the final cost will be \$18,800. The dollar amount available shows the authorization amount. The Charter reads that we have to show the overall balance in the bond. There is \$87,000 left in this particular portion of the bond. Provided the bids are approved tonight, the remaining balance will be \$27,182. At this time, this entire amount is unencumbered.

Councilor Gardow verified that we have \$27,182 left in the radio portion of the bond. He asked how we are doing on the building portion. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that all the numbers are not in on the building, but at this point we will use the \$150,000 for the elevator paid for by the grant rather than the bond fund. The cost recovery on the contractors who are late will also impact this amount. The full amount of cost recovery will be close to \$90,000.

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

Councilor Sassano moved **"TO AWARD THE BID FOR STATE BID: POLICE VEHICLES TO BIDDER WARNOCK FORD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$64,550"**, seconded by Councilor Gardow.

Interim Town Manager Swetcky shared that the State has amended the bid for police vehicles. Warnock Ford is the actual bidder for the police vehicles.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor asked to table this bid allowing Interim Town Manager Swetcky to have a conversation with Acting Chief Cetran regarding postponing the purchase of these vehicles until the next budget cycle. Are these vehicle desperately needed at this point or can we hold off a bit. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that we purchase either five or four new cars every year. This turns the fleet over in three years time. The vehicles get high mileage and high idle time so there is a lot of wear and tear. The vehicles are eventually put into our town fleet to be used as town vehicles. This year there is only funding for three cars. The cut off date for ordering is either March or April. We would not receive these vehicles until July even if ordered now. We have the money budgeted for these vehicles and because of the uncertainty of what next year will bring; he would prefer to purchase the vehicles this year. He could wait two weeks and speak to the Chief about this. The Chief has requested five vehicles for next year. Deputy Mayor O'Connor suggested sending this to public safety to discuss the purchase. Are Taurus's an option?

Councilor Flynn does not agree to table this and said that one of the reasons the replacement schedule was established is because the repair costs were going through the roof. What will be the impact on our fleet maintenance budget of delaying replacement for a year? He believes that GM may have gotten back into the market for police vehicles. The New York City Police Department drives Chevy Impalas. This may be an alternative that is cheaper.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor moved **"TO TABLE THE BID FOR POLICE VEHICLES"**, seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Flynn moved **"TO AWARD THE BID WAIVER FOR SITE WORK — CALLAHAN TOWER TO COSTROTTA CONSTRUCTION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$19,644"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor O'Connor.

Chairperson Czernicki asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky if the \$27,000 excess in the radio budget took this bid into consideration. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that it does include the two generators and the site work.

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

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO AWARD THE BID WAIVER FOR LAND RECORDS INDEXING TO ACS ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$28,000"**, seconded by Councilor Flynn.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor asked Town Clerk Sassano if we are being provided with the same services or if services have been cut back. Town Clerk Sassano said that all equipment is provided for indexing. The work will be changed it has not gone up. This will allow the office the ability to do the books in-house where they can be processed more quickly. The dollar amount varies slightly each month depending on the number of documents processed.

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

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO AWARD THE BID FOR STATE BID: SDMS FURNITURE TO BIDDERS OFI CONTRACT INTERIORS (\$58,870.94), ROBERT H. LORD (\$91,786.78) & LONG ASSOCIATES/DIRECT LINK (\$2,745.60) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$153,403.32"**, seconded by Councilor Gardow.

Councilor Flynn thanked David Drake for staying in attendance at the meeting and asked him if there is a budget sufficiency report available. Mr. Drake said that there is \$400,000 in the budget for furniture. He will return in two weeks with the bid package expected to be approximately \$375,000 total. These two bids will come out of the \$400,000. He said that 90% of the furniture at the school is being kept. This is furniture for the new spaces and the media center and science rooms.

Councilor Gardow commented that he attended the School Building Committee meeting in November and there was an architect's representative who explained the plan. This works well and is within the budget and Councilor Gardow

is very happy with it.

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

Councilor Flynn moved **"TO AWARD THE BID FOR COOPERATIVE BID: SDMS FURNITURE TO BIDDERS OFI CONTRACT INTERIORS(\$82,032.65) & BKM TOTAL OFFICE(\$27,417.87) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$109,450.52"**, seconded by Councilor Hemmann.

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

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO AWARD THE BID FOR CHANGE ORDER: SDMS HARDWARE & DOOR REVISIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$8,115"**, seconded by Councilor Flynn.

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

#### ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

NONE

#### MINUTES

Councilor Hemmann moved **"TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 11, 2003 SPECIAL MEETING"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor O'Connor.

Councilor Gardow amended the minutes to read 11:30am on the last page. On page 15432, Mr. Roberts should read Mrs. Roberts.

Councilors Cascio, Hemmann, Gardow, Deputy Mayor O'Connor and Chairperson Czernicki voted AYE. Councilors Flynn, Fitzpatrick and Sassano abstained. The motion passed 5-0-3.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor moved **"TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 15, 2003 SPECIAL MEETING"**, seconded by Councilor Gardow. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor moved **"TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 21, 2003 SPECIAL MEETING"**, seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Gardow moved **"TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 21, 2003 REGULAR MEETING"**, seconded by Councilor Flynn.

Councilor Flynn amended the minutes to read that he arrived late to the meeting at the start of the General Comments segment.

Councilor Gardow noticed on page 15446 of the minutes, the motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Adil was tabled. This needs to be shown on the agenda as unfinished business. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said it will be added to unfinished business. On page 15452, the motion passed should read 7-0-2.

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

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

##### Reports

##### COUNCIL

Councilor Gardow addressed the makeup of the Insurance Committee and why the appointment of Mr. Adil was tabled. He asked the Town Clerk to explain. Town Clerk Sassano stated that normally all boards and commissions follow minority rules. Some have other rules that also apply. The Insurance Commission can only have four of the total seven members belonging to any political party. Also, the rules state that only so many can be active insurance people. A packet combining the list of Committee members and committee rules is being worked on presently in the Town Clerk's office and should be complete by the end of February.

Councilor Gardow said that Channel 16 with the Cox Cable Commission is still in the works. It will be good to have all meetings broadcast on this channel.

Councilor Cascio attended the Library Board meeting on January 28 and reported that the Friends of the Library has contributed \$10,490 to the library for purchases of various equipment and print media. He thanks the Friends for their generosity. The Shared Services Committee met tonight to discuss the renovations, the parking issues, the Webb project and Munis. There was not much action taken. Also, Councilor Cascio spoke to the schools regarding the Memorial Day Parade. He asked if they would want to get involved in the advertising by making posters or posting signs in front of the schools. He spoke with Dr. Proctor and Ms. Gray to discuss approval of this.

Chairperson Czernicki reminded the public that the Nature Center will have a Cupid's Record Hop on Saturday, February 15 at 7:00 p.m. at the Pitkin Community Center. Fifties attire is welcome, but optional. The cost is \$15 per person or \$25 per couple. This is a fund raiser for the Nature Center. There will be a DJ and door prizes. Also, Councilor hours on February 13 and March 13 will be 5:30-6:30 p.m. Councilor Flynn will be doing those two dates and is not available until 5:30 p.m. All other dates will remain 4:15-5:15 p.m.

## PUBLIC

Jim Clynych, 903 Ridge Road, attended the Memorial Day Committee meeting and reports that Lee Sekus has compiled a book of Wethersfield Veterans who have died in the past year. Chairperson Czernicki confirmed that the number was 85 as of last April. Many of these people are heroes and have made great sacrifices. Regarding Property Relief for Veterans, Mr. Clynych said that Mr. Dagata, Town Assessor, has reported that there are 52 veterans in Town who are eligible for the \$10,000 relief. The \$10,000 is a reduction in the assessed value of the property which comes out to approximately \$300-\$320 in tax relief. This would cost the town under \$20,000. Something should be done to assist these 52 veterans. He urges the Council to table this issue. Deputy Mayor O'Connor reported that the Budget & Finance Committee met last week and right now the State Legislature is discussing the issue. The State sets the standards. Mr. Clynych appreciates any work on this topic.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, shared that many have positive feelings about the current Council. He compliments the Council in being flexible when allowing citizens to share feelings and opinions with the Council. The Council did not always hold speakers to the five minute allotment. This Council, as well as the last one, allows for a dialogue with the public. Government officials can easily become arrogant and selective with their dialogue. Mr. Ruhe encourages the Council to continue to be flexible as members of the community share their thoughts and ideas.

Walter Swindell, 46 Oldham Road, cannot believe that we are so proud of our new Police Facility and the first thing off the list is chairs for the lobby. He urges Council to think of the people.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, spoke on limiting dialogue with the Council. He believes that attendance to meetings has increased. The Council makes people feel comfortable compared to the Board of Education. Town residents are not afraid to speak here. He asked if the Mayor is planning to announce who the two candidates are for Manager. Chairperson Czernicki said that she is not announcing at this time. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. would like to know because they may want to find out more information on them. They are looking for a different kind of Town Manager. They did not have a good interview with Mr. Bennett as they got the impression that he would bring forward the same old stuff. They don't want that. He recommends that if there is not a good, strong candidate who is not afraid of change, don't select him/her. The one selected will be her for the next 10-20 years and he doesn't want one with the demeanor of the prior Town Manager. We don't want a pawn of the Council anymore. We want a Town Manager with ideas. Regarding the Police Chief, the Town of Rocky Hill went a year with an acting Police Chief. Mr. Orsini suggests that we not replace the Chief right away. If money is as tight as it, this is an opportunity to

save. Think "0".

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:35 p.m., Councilor Flynn moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Gardow. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk