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REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 18, 2003

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on February 18, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

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

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

Councilor Cascio moved "**to add personnel issues to the agenda of the executive session at the end of the regular council meeting**", seconded by Councilor Flynn. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

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

Councilor Flynn moved "**TO REMOVE ITEMS C2 j, i AND I FROM THE TABLE**" seconded by Councilor Morin. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HEARING

GENERAL COMMENTS

Susan Grady, 25 Westlook Road, spoke on behalf of the Library Board. She stated that computer usage at the Wethersfield Library has increased. In January, adults used the computers 1200 times and children used them 745 times. The computers are used to access the internet as well as e-mail usage even when people have a home computer.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, spoke on behalf of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. He thinks members of town committees/commissions should read the Strategic Plan and the Plan of Conservation and Development. Members are voting on very important issues without knowledge of these plans. Council needs to make this a requirement when selecting members for these committees. One way to jumpstart economic development is to beautify the Silas Deane Highway. Town residents have had to go to meeting after meeting to fight to beautify the Silas Deane Middle School. This seems to be a simple subject and it has had to be debated over and over again. He is bothered by the approval of the cell towers. The plans say that we want to strengthen the neighborhoods and improve the appearance of the town. Why aren't Council and Town committees being the spokespersons for residents of Wethersfield? Lastly, the Mill Woods master plan states that we want to enhance sports. However, over 50% of the money allocated is for blacktop. Neighbors on Wolcott Hill Road have asked the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. for help. The neighbors shouldn't have to ask the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. for help to convince the Planning & Zoning of the right thing to do. It may be time to update the Strategic Plan.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented on the recent Board of Education budget release of 6.9%. Dr. Proctor stated that this budget is necessary to do business the way we are doing it now. Mr. Ruhe pointed out that this may not be what we want. We want to do it differently. Some 84% of the BOE budget is made up of salaries. We need to go after take backs and make reductions as the Governor is doing. More importantly, Mr. Ruhe recommends that our highly-paid staff put their money where their mouths are and take cuts in pay, possibly only for one year, for "the good of the children". Paid staff needs to make contributions to the town. The current referendum could easily be in jeopardy if the Board of Education and Council do not bite the bullet. The Council needs to take control and tell where

cuts will be made.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, attended the recent Board of Education meeting. He said that it was indicated that the Town Council was looking for a 5.26% increase. This is shocking as it will be difficult to stay within the 3.5% roadmap. UCONN and some surrounding municipalities are offering 0% salary increases and Wethersfield needs to look at this as well. He stressed again the consolidation of Town Hall and Board of Education employees who have dual functions. The Plan of Development does need to be addressed. At this time, it appears to be a waste of time. All committee members need to read it.

Dennis Walter, 326 Hartford Avenue, asked why there was no meeting tonight with the MDC. Chairperson Czernicki informed him that last week the MDC was still running the test models. They are not prepared yet to disclose information. They are scheduled for the March 3 meeting.

There being no one else wishing to speak, the Chairperson declared the public comments closed.

COUNCIL ACTION

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Appointment of Sey Adil to the Wethersfield Insurance Advisory Committee

Councilor Flynn moved "**TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF SEYMOUR A. ADIL TO THE INSURANCE COMMITTEE FOR THE TERM OF 2-18-03 TO 6-30-05**", seconded by Councilor Morin.

Councilor Flynn stated that Mr. Adil has changed his party affiliation to unaffiliated and that based on the opinion of the Town Attorney, this removes any impediment to his appointment to the Insurance Committee.

Councilor Gardow asked if an amendment needs to be added to this motion because of the change.

All Councilors present including the Chairman vote AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Old Spring Street ROW - Request for Abandonment

Chairperson Czernicki called upon the Interim Town Manager for information on this. He reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission, at their meeting of February 4, 2003, gave a Positive Referral to the

Town Council for the abandonment of town land in front of 171 Spring Street. If the Council wishes to proceed with this request, he will direct staff to prepare a resolution for introduction at the next Council meeting. The consensus was to have it prepared.

State Bid: Police Vehicles (\$64,550.00)

Councilor Morin moved "**TO AWARD THE BID FOR POLICE VEHICLES TO WARNOCK FORD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$64,550**", seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Councilor Hemmann said that the additional information included in her packet was very helpful. It will also be helpful moving forward into the budget session as some questions are now asked and answered with regard to alternative vehicles.

Councilor Flynn asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky to thank Acting Police Chief Cetran for the report on the Chevy Impalas.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Pension Committee Action - Small Cap Mutual Funds

Interim Town Manager Swetcky stated that the Pension Committee has been looking at one of the Town's investment vehicles, a small cap mutual fund with the Franklin Funds. They've been monitoring its performance and it is not performing well. They've been looking at when would be a possible good time to switch. At the November, 2002 meeting the Pension Committee felt that the fund was underperforming and that now would be a good time to switch. The Fund's rating has dropped and it has lost its focus as a small cap fund. The investment consultant was directed to research alternative funds and he recommends a small cap mutual fund that is administered by The Hartford and managed by the Wellington Group. He recommends that we switch our assets to this fund. The Pension Committee agreed and voted to recommend to Council that this switch be made. There is approximately \$1.4 million in the fund that would be transferred to The Hartford fund.

Councilor Gardow asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky if Mr. Sullivan is the investment consultant for The Hartford fund. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that Mr. Sullivan is the pension consultant for the Town's pension plan. He's been with the town since approximately 1990-91. He provides quarterly performance monitoring. He is the go-between with the investment managers.

Councilor Cascio asked if the town will incur any penalties with this transfer. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that we will not pay any penalties to withdraw from the Franklin Fund, nor will we pay any fees to join the Hartford fund. There are ongoing fees while participating in the fund, however.

Councilor Sassano directed his comments to both Chairperson Czernicki and Interim Town Manager Swetcky. He said that in the past whenever a fund, and its manager, was underperforming, the Pension Committee would meet and decide to watch it more carefully. If the performance did not improve the Committee would invite the fund manager in for an explanation. He asked if this occurred in this case.

Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that this did not occur. The Town has not brought in managers of mutual funds the past few times we've transferred. Councilor Sassano said that the Franklin small mid cap fund appears to be biased toward growth as opposed to the Hartford fund which is a more blended approach. He asked if Mr. Sullivan thought the success of the Hartford mid cap fund is due to this. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that this was one of the factors. The other is the consistency of managers at the Wellington Group. Also, although the Franklin fund started as a small cap fund it is now considered a mid cap fund. We want to get back to a small cap fund. Councilor Sassano asked if there is an outline for a schedule of improvement. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that the practice of the committee has been three years. After 11/2 years, if performance isn't where we feel it should be, we will then call in the fund's manager and question the performance. Councilor Sassano asked if there are other funds also being monitored by the Pension Committee for possible transfer. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that there are two other managers being watched. The fixed income manager, Osprey, will be brought in if the performance does not improve in the next two quarters. Also, the active equity manager, Bessemer Trust, has already been brought in because their performance is down. They will probably be brought in again for review. Councilor Sassano asked what the likely contribution from the general fund will be this year to fund these pension payouts. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that he does not have a final number, but believes that the number he provided to Council at their goal-setting session was \$800,000 maximum; most likely \$400,000-\$500,000.

Councilor Flynn moved **"TO TRANSFER FUNDS FROM THE FRANKLIN SMALL CAP MUTUAL FUND TO THE HARTFORD SMALL CAP MUTUAL FUND"**, seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

BIDS

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO APPROVE THE CHANGE ORDER: SDMS CONCRETE WALKS, CURBING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$36,862.50"**, seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick.

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO APPROVE THE BID CHANGE ORDER: SDMS NEW BOILER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60,628.79"**, seconded by Councilor Gardow.

Mr. Drake said that these are bid alternates that have been carried along in the available funds log since the beginning of the bid process. These need to be done right now.

Councilor Flynn asked Mr. Drake to explain why the work is being done on the concrete walks. Mr. Drake said that the original plan provided for asphalt sidewalks; however the long term interest favors concrete as there will be fewer repairs and also concrete will last longer. Councilor Flynn verified that there will be no State reimbursement for the boilers. Mr. Drake said that this is correct. Councilor Flynn referred to the SDMS status report which shows a negative amount of almost \$600,000. Mr. Drake said that the report includes items that we want to do. The alternate roofing of \$145,000 will not be done. There is a \$1million contingency being carried currently. As we go further into the project, the \$520,000 will be taken out of the contingency provided the funds are available. It is projected that this amount will end up being approximately \$400,000. The roof bid will affect this number. Councilor Flynn asked how the project is going with respect to the beautification plans. Mr. Drake said that the canopy has been put on the back burner until the parking situation is resolved. There was a vote to remove the parking in the front.

Changes will need to be made to the landscaping. A lot of money has been and continues to be spent on landscaping. Councilor Flynn asked that in the future, the reports consolidate all of this into one bottom line.

Councilor Morin commented that he finds it interesting that there was such a ruckus about the Police Facility furniture; but there hasn't been a word mentioned about the \$153,000 to be spent on furniture at SDMS. Mr. Drake said that this isn't a change order, it is part of the \$400,000 budgeted. The first phase was the bid that went through the State. This is approval for the Town to buy directly. The Council has to approve anything over \$5,000. Councilor Morin asked if the contractor was not specific enough regarding the concrete walks. Mr. Drake said that this amount has been carried as an alternate from day one.

Councilor Cascio asked Mr. Drake if everything being presented is within the budget and Mr. Drake said that it is all budgeted. We are in very good shape. There are concrete issues because of the cold weather.

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

Councilor Gardow moved **"TO APPROVE THE CHANGE ORDER: SDMS UNIT VENTILATOR FEEDERS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$11,500.00"**, seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO AWARD THE BID FOR SDMS FURNITURE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$153,160.37"**, seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Sassano moved **"TO AWARD THE BID FOR CUSTODIAL SERVICES - POLICE FACILITY TO BIDDER #1 CLASS ACT CLEANING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20,475.00"**, seconded by Councilor Morin.

Interim Town Manager Swetcky explained that the majority of the cleaning services for Town buildings are through private companies. The vendor who is currently cleaning the Town Hall building was the low bidder. There are sufficient funds in the budget to cover the services.

Councilor Fitzpatrick asked if these services are for the entire building or just the windows. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that this is for cleaning of the entire building. Window cleaning was a separate bid. Class Act Cleaning included that amount in their price. Councilor Fitzpatrick asked if the cleaning services of the old Police Offices offset the expense of the cleaning of the new facility and how much it is. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said the cleaning of the Police Department while at the Town Hall had been done by Town staff until recently. Since September, 2002, Class Act was asked to pick up the cleaning of the Police Dept at Town Hall. It is expected that there will be a savings of \$1000-\$1,300 per month by eliminating this cleaning now.

Councilor Sassano asked if those expenses will reappear once that section of the Town Hall is renovated. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that they would. Councilor Sassano asked how long the gap will be. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that the Building Committee and Council have to decide that. The goal would be to have the

space available by this time next year.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

Resolution Authorizing the Town Manager to Enter Into A Lease Financing Agreement

Be it resolved, by the Town Council of the Town of Wethersfield as follows:

1. Determination of Need. The Town Council has determined that a true and very real need exists for the acquisition of the Equipment described on Exhibit A of the Lease With Option to Purchase Agreement dated as of November 8, 2002, between Town of Wethersfield, Connecticut (Lessee) and Kansas State Bank of Manhattan (Lessor).
2. Approval and Authorization. The Town Council has determined that the Agreement, substantially in the form presented to this meeting, is in the best interests of the Lessee for the acquisition of such Equipment, and the Town Council hereby approves the entering into of the Agreement by the Lessee and hereby designates and authorizes the Interim Town Manager to execute and deliver the Agreement on Lessee's behalf with such changes thereto as such person deems appropriate, and any related documents, including any Escrow Agreement, necessary to the consummation of the transaction contemplated by the Agreement.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL OR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO ENTER INTO AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF WETHERSFIELD TO IMPLEMENT WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS

WHEREAS, the Federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 provides for a number of improvements to the job training system including: consolidation of numerous training programs; universal access to placement and training services for all individuals; enhances accountability; and the use of vouchers to promote increased flexibility; and

WHEREAS, the Workforce Investment Act continues to give chief elected officials and their municipalities roles including: joining together as the grant recipient; designating a sub grant recipient; providing oversight in the activities of the Regional Workforce Board approving the annual budget and work plan of the Regional Board; appointing members of the Regional Workforce Board; assuming ultimate responsibility for the fiscal integrity of programs funded by the Workforce Investment Act and other activities; and

WHEREAS, the Workforce Investment Act requires an intergovernmental agreement among the municipalities and their chief elected officials in each workforce investment area specifying: the process for selection of regional workforce board members; the designation of a grant recipient and a sub grant recipient or administrative entity; the powers and authority of the consortium created by the participating municipalities; a statement with respect to accountability for funds allocated and other matters;

WHEREAS, the Governor has recently reconstituted and designated a new Workforce Investment Area, thus requiring a new intergovernmental agreement;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Municipality of Wethersfield acknowledges its authority and responsibility under the Workforce Investment Act and authorizes the chief elected official or chief executive officer to enter into the intergovernmental agreement on behalf of the municipality;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Municipality of Wethersfield authorizes the chief elected official to serve as a member of the Consortium created by the intergovernmental agreement and to act for the municipality on all Consortium matters.

MINUTES

Councilor Flynn moved **"TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 3, 2003"**, seconded by Councilor Cascio. Councilors Cascio, Fitzpatrick, Flynn, Gardow, Hemmann, Sassano and Chairperson Czernicki voted AYE. Councilor Morin abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Chairperson Czernicki shared a letter of thanks from Reverend Jey Deifell of the First Church of Christ for the gift in memory of Viola Morris.

Chairperson Czernicki also shared a list of those who have contributed to the Police Facility Furniture fund. A committee established themselves to receive contributions and to expedite the process. She thanked Sey & Carol Adil, Arthur & Merle Nacht, George & Helga Ruhe, Lee & Anne Kuckro, Steve and Pauline Ucich, John & Nancy Karengakis and Dick Lasher.

REPORTS

The SDMS February update and Town Attorney Opinion of composition of the Insurance Committee were distributed to Council members in their packets.

COUNCIL

Councilor Flynn told of concerns shared with him during his Council hours last week. A resident would like to know if the Town could replace the benches and tables at the soccer field in Cove Park. He noted that there is overgrown dead brush on the "Welcome to Wethersfield" sign along route 3. Finally, he suggested that Physical Services establish a "sign & lines brigade" whose job it would be to reduce the number of street signs by consolidating signs on one stanchion and having uniform placement on street corners in hopes of reducing clutter and improving maintenance.

Chairperson Czernicki asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky to address the STP Enhancement program. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that the Town received notice last week from CRCOG that our STP Enhancement project for revitalization of the Silas Deane Hwy. was chosen as one of the ten finalists by CRCOG staff. The next step, on March 10, is for each finalist to make a presentation to a subcommittee of CRCOG. The five highest finalists at that step will go on to the CRCOG Transportation Committee and Policy Board for approval. Those five, once approved, will go on to the State Department of Transportation for review. At that point, we'll be competing with applications from throughout the State.

Councilor Morin asked about the status of the snow budget. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said there is a January Financial Report at Councilors' places that shows the impact of all the snow on the Physical Services budget. Right now we have a \$23,000 overexpenditure in our snow budget (this includes the February 17 storm). If this continues at this rate, there is a potential for a \$115,000 deficit in the Physical Services budget. The good news is that Town finances are in good shape. There is a revenue surplus of \$431,000. We are projecting an underexpenditure of \$120,000. Councilor Morin asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky to share the process of hiring the new Police Chief. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that the procedure for hiring a department head such as the Police Chief requires advertising the position, taking applications both internally and externally. There were 78 applicants for the position. The Personnel Director and Interim Town Manager reviewed each application. The field was narrowed down to 17 candidates. After further review, Interim Town Manager Swetcky came up with a list of 12 candidates whose names were given to the Personnel Director for testing. Ten of the 12 were brought in for an oral panel composed of two Town Managers and two Police Chiefs. They ranked the candidates based on answers to a series of questions. Each candidate was scored and a list was developed of the top 3 scoring candidates. The list was handed over to the Interim Town Manager and this is where the process is at this point. The next step would be background checks on the three candidates. This is a State requirement.

Councilor Sassano commented that there does not seem to be an internal candidate being considered for the Police Chief position. He asked if there is a process for selecting the panel of two Town Managers and two Police Chiefs. Also, since the final decision is the Town Manager's, are we going to wait and have a new Town Manager make the decision or is the decision to be made before a new Manager is hired. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that there

is not a process in place for selection of those on the panel. We try to come up with appropriate people to serve on the panel in terms of a profile. The position we're seeking to fill would report to the Town Manager; therefore two Town Managers were chosen. Two Police Chiefs were chosen because they have knowledge of the position. As far as whether the decision would be made by Interim Town Manager Swetcky or a new Town Manager depends on the actions of the Town Council as they move forward in hiring a new Town Manager. If the Council is close to hiring a new Town Manager, Interim Town Manager Swetcky will not go any further in the process. If Council informs him that they are not close to appointing a new Town Manager, he will go forward with the process. Should a new Town Manager be hired but not take office for a few months, he will approach the new Town Manager to see how he would like to proceed.

Chairperson Czernicki asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky if the Town has sold the two parcels of land in Rocky Hill. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that we have and that the closing on the last parcel was last Friday. Chairperson Czernicki asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky if during the spring, he would have the Engineering Department look at the backyards and the system currently in place and get back to Council with a report.

Chairperson Czernicki asked Interim Town Manager Swetcky to determine a date for the ribbon cutting ceremony at the new Police Facility. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that we are trying for Saturday, March 1. He will let Council know by the end of this week.

Councilor Fitzpatrick asked if signs have been posted indicating that the Police Department has moved. Interim Town Manager Swetcky said that the signs at the Town Hall have been covered and those at the new facility are uncovered. Notice of the move will be posted at the Town Hall ,on the website and also on the sign in front of the Town Hall.

PUBLIC

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, spoke on behalf of Mr. Young when he asked if the Ethics Committee only meets when and if there is an ethical problem. Chairperson Czernicki said that they meet when there is a reason for an inquiry. They do not have regularly scheduled meetings. Also he would encourage that the Charter Revision Committee move forward with their task. Chairperson Czernicki said that is on the to-do list once a new Town Manager is hired.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, speaking on behalf of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. informed Councilor Flynn that the Wethersfield Beautification Committee is selling benches. These should be considered for the Cove Park. Councilor Flynn said that he mentioned this to the resident requesting the benches. Mr. Orsini commented on the STP grant. He suggested that being that this is a "marketing presentation" at this point, we need to put the best team together with an excellent communicator who can sell the concept and win it for Wethersfield. Mr. Orsini said that the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. feels that the Police Chief is one of the most important positions in town and they agree that it is very specialized. The one thing that they don't want is a "Rambo-type" Chief. They want a Chief with strong communication skills who is very people oriented and can relate well with the public. Mr. Orsini commented about the fact that people simply have less money and that Mr. Drake and his committee are doing a fine job in finding ways to save money. We are now in contract negotiations with the unions. Council is urged to put \$0 on the table. Keep in mind that there is a 31/2% roadmap and the way to get back on track is to have a 1% tax increase this year.

Ed Tevald, 894 Ridge Road, commented on Mr. Orsini's presentation. Once again Mr. Orsini is speaking for the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. using such phrases as "our members", "we" and "the taxpayers think". Mr. Tevald is a taxpayer and Mr. Orsini does not speak for him. He asks again what the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. represents and what the membership is in it. Mr. Orsini is not speaking for the taxpayers, he is speaking for the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. Mr. Tevald feels that if there is a good cause, the money should be spent. The Council cannot always hold the line and expect that Wethersfield will continue to be a good town in which to live.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:25 p.m., Councilor Flynn moved **"TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS CONTRACT**

NEGOTIATIONS" seconded by Councilor Gardow. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 9:44 p.m., Councilor Flynn moved "**TO GO OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION AND BACK TO REGULAR SESSION"** seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 9:45 p.m., Councilor Sassano moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk