

REGULAR MEETING JULY 21, 2003

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on July 21, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Fitzpatrick, Gardow, Hemmann, Morin, Sassano (8:20), Deputy Mayor O'Connor and Chairperson Czernicki.

Absent: Councilor Flynn.

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

Chairperson Czernicki announced that there will be an Executive Session at some point in the evening when the Town Attorneys arrive to discuss pending litigation on the matters of Pyquaug Village Open Space, the Metropolitan District Commission, Winding Brook Turf Farm, Real Estate Negotiations, Union Negotiations, and Personnel Matters - Gale DiLuzio.

Councilor Cascio moved "**TO ADD THE ITEM OF JANE DOE V. THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD TO THE EXECUTIVE SESSION**", seconded by Councilor Flynn. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Chairperson Czernicki introduced Wethersfield's financial advisors Christopher Martin and Barry Bernabe from Webster Bank to make a presentation on Wethersfield's present debt level, financial abilities in relationship to other communities and bond rating agencies, and capability for future debt.

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

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Webster Bank presentation will show what bond projects have already been passed by the voters; as well as those that the voters have approved but the bonds have not yet been sold. In order to show the fiscal capability of the Town, she has suggested that we include projects that have been talked about, but in no way have been approved. This is for illustration purposes only.

The presentation was delayed due to technical difficulties.

Councilor Cascio moved "**TO REMOVE ITEMS C.2.h AND C.2.j FROM THE TABLE**", seconded by Deputy Mayor O'Connor. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HEARING

GENERAL COMMENTS

Paul Courchaine, 481 Main Street, spoke about the fee for the Historic District Commission application. Mr. Courchaine has received a copy of the Town Manager's report on the amount of time it takes for Town Hall staff to prepare for a Historic District Commission meeting. He thinks that the \$25 fee compared to the amount of time that is required by Town staff to prepare the application is not significant. He understands that this is part of a program where the Council and Town Manager are looking to make programs and projects within the Town more self sufficient than they currently are. He'd like to see more of this, particularly in the area of sports. He'd also like Council to consider waiving the Historic District Commission fee for senior citizens and those with financial difficulties.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, spoke as the Vice-President of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. Mr. Ruhe wished to share with Council some of the opinions of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc.

regarding the Charter Revision Commission. Chairperson Czernicki reminded Mr. Ruhe that the Council no longer has input with the Charter Revision Commission. Mr. Ruhe said that ultimately the elected officials will be held accountable for the product that comes forth. He would expect that Council will continue to interact with members of the Charter Revision Commission. Chairperson Czernicki said that Council cannot. Mr. Ruhe said that he recognizes that the Council has limited input, but they are not in a vacuum. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. is concerned about the mix of the members of the Commission. There are too many on the Commission with close ties to government. They can identify only one member with no ties to government; there should have been more members like this. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. plans to monitor the process. They plan to make suggestions and urge that taped minutes be provided, transcribed and made available to the community. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. urges the Council to consider the benefits to the community of the Commission's meetings being transmitted on either Channel 14 or Channel 16. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. urges that the opportunity be made on a regular basis for public input. He hopes and assumes that the members of the Commission are monitoring what citizens of Wethersfield are saying about the revision process and paying attention to what is being said. Mr. Ruhe spoke personally about the Mill Woods pumping. He feels that it is not a good idea. He encourages that it be stopped. Wethersfield government should be as diligent at arresting trespassers on the property of Mill Woods as they were in arresting citizens who had every right to be on the property in the past. Mr. Ruhe spoke of the Police in the schools and reminded the Council that any money from the government comes with strings attached. This concerns him. The government is already putting restrictions on libraries who have accepted federal funds.

Chairperson Czernicki asked Town Clerk Sassano to explain the process for Charter revision now that the Commission has been formed and given their charge.

Town Clerk Sassano explained that the Commission will be having two meetings per month starting at the end of July. These are open meetings that will allow for public comment. There will be a published notice in the newspaper for a Town wide public meeting to be held shortly after Labor Day. The Council cannot impose their views on any member of the Commission. The Council has given the Commission their charge and is required to "stand back" at this point.

Presentation: Webster Bank on Wethersfield's Debt Management

Chris Martin, Manager of the Government Finance Department at Webster Bank introduced himself and Barry Bernabe, Vice President of Government Finance. Mr. Martin has been working with Wethersfield since 1991 while at Fleet Bank and again in 1999 while at Webster Bank. He echoed Town Manager Bonnie Therrien in that the numbers being presented are to provide a context in figuring the Town's fiscal and debt position. The Town of Wethersfield has a AA3 rating which is a very high credit rating and the presentation will show just what this means. The Town has, in the past ten years, become diversified more so than many other residential communities. The Town has always been conservatively managed and there is a commitment to having a fund balance in Town. The Town's debt position has always been very well managed relative to other communities. All of these factors figure in a Town's credit rating.

Mr. Bernabe stated that he is not for or against any particular project in Town. He works with the Town Manager and Finance Director and provides the impact to Town Officials for various borrowing scenarios. Credit ratings are important because they are directly related to the Town's cost of borrowing. The higher the Town's bond rating, the lower its cost of borrowing. There is nothing political about it. The bond rating provides a foundation for developing financial and debt policies. Wethersfield's AA3 rating is an above average rating. There are four basic factors that determine a Town's credit rating. The first is the structure and effectiveness of management which is a much more qualitative than quantitative factor. It recognizes continuity in the Finance position and the structure of the management team. The second is the Town's economic and demographic characteristics. Third is financial performance, especially fund balance. Fourth is the amount of discipline a community has to maintain a surplus position. This is very important along with debt management - debt per capita and debt to assessed valuations. All four are looked at together.

Regarding interest rates, Mr. Bernabe explained that since October, 2000 the Federal Reserve has pushed down short term, mid term, and long term rates. Since January, 2003, the yield on 10-year U.S. Bonds has dropped and bottomed out on June 15, 2003 to the lowest rate in forty-five years. Since then, rates have gone up over 1% in one month. Wethersfield's refinancing of existing debt in March, 2003 and borrowing of new money had a borrowing cost of

3.6%. The AA3 rating allowed the Town to refinance existing debt and save over \$300,000 and borrow new money at a cost of 3.6%.

Mr. Bernabe explained the Town's existing debt by the use of graphs and charts. Rating agencies do not like to see a Town's debt service go above 10% of a Town's total expenditures. Wethersfield's debt service is significantly below this guideline. The Town will amortize over 71% of all outstanding principal in the next ten years. The industry guideline is 50%. This 71% provides a lot of flexibility to add new debt on because the existing debt is running off. Mr. Martin cautioned that this statistic should not be taken in isolation; it is one of many statistics that the rating agency focuses on. Mr. Bernabe showed that the Town's debt service will go up almost \$400,000 from fiscal 2004 to fiscal 2005. This reflects the Town's most recent bond issue of \$3.5 million.

Mr. Bernabe showed some approved borrowing projects. The first is the \$10.6 million Webb School, Stillman, and Physical Services conversion which assumes an estimated grant of \$2.6 million with a net borrowing cost of \$8 million. The second is the \$2.6 million Town Hall/Library project. The Town expects to receive a \$400,000 Library grant and a \$300,000 ADA grant for a net borrowing cost of \$1.8 million. The total for the two projects is \$9.8 million. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien requested that potential borrowing be looked at and the \$7.7 million Mill Woods Master Plan, \$3 million for roads, and \$2 million for Town Hall and computer upgrades were considered. Mr. Martin interjected that with the approved projects, the structuring aspects of the bonds vary regarding how quickly the money is spent and what dates are chosen for the original interest and principal payments. The potential borrowings can vary even more. Mr. Bernabe showed that by adding the new debt of the two approved projects, the Town still has the capacity to move up to the guideline. With these new projects, the Town's debt service will go up \$600,000 in 2005. In 2005-2006, it would go up another \$600,000. This is just one possible borrowing scenario amongst hundreds of different scenarios. Mr. Martin said that the State Statute allows Towns to step up principal and amortize it in different ways. A projected borrowing date of Fall, 2004 could easily be a year later. There are a lot of variables to consider. Mr. Bernabe said that one of the responsibilities of a Financial Advisor is to mitigate the highs and lows and work in the new debt with the Town's existing drop off in their existing debt.

Mr. Bernabe said that as of June, 2003 each mill in Wethersfield is worth approximately \$1.46 million. If the grand list continues to grow at 1% each year, and the Town borrows \$9.8 million, the 2005 cost per \$100,000 of assessed value would be an additional \$15. When taken into consideration with the existing debt service, the cost will increase to \$27. These are just borrowing projections and are not set in stone.

Mr. Bernabe said that Wethersfield is above the state average with per capita income. Wethersfield is average with regard to the equalized grant list. Wethersfield's total general fund balance as a percentage of the budget is approximately 8% which could be higher but does not put the Town at risk of a downgrade in bond rating. Mr. Martin said that Wethersfield's predictability of financial operations has shown positively in the last rating reviews as Wethersfield has not always fully spent the appropriated fund balance in the budget. Mr. Bernabe said that the unreserved and undesignated fund balance is looked at by the rating agencies. Wethersfield's is 6.5% which is above some communities and below others such as Cromwell and Newington. The current year tax collections show that Wethersfield collects approximately 98.5% of all taxes each year. Wethersfield's intergovernmental revenues are the lowest which shows that we do not receive many funds from State and Federal agencies. This is a positive in that we are not impacted as much by State cutbacks as other communities are. Also, Rating Agencies like to see communities less dependent on the State and Federal government. Wethersfield's debt management is \$1000 per capita. The gross debt service as a percentage of the total budget has been decreasing since 1997. If the proposed projects go forward, it will increase. The Town has the capacity to borrow debt from a Rating Agency standpoint.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor commented that the presentation focused on the Town's ability to borrow more and that the impact wouldn't be drastic. He'd like to see, in a future presentation, the scenario of what would happen if we didn't borrow any additional money and taxes were to go down. The presentation assumes that taxes would stay steady or go up. Mr. Martin said that he tried to present a historical picture.

Chairperson Czernicki said that any questions from residents in writing or via e-mail can be submitted to the Town Manager who will forward the questions to Mr. Martin and Mr. Bernabe and provide answers at a later meeting or personally.

Councilor Fitzpatrick asked Mr. Martin to further explain how Wethersfield amortizes its debt more quickly than surrounding Towns and if there is a benefit to this. Mr. Martin said that it is required by law to amortize debt in a fashion that does not exceed the useful life of the asset. With each borrowing, the Town must decide how to amortize the debt. The average is 50% over ten years. Wethersfield has retired its debt a little faster than this by virtue of the decisions made on how to amortize its debt. Councilor Fitzpatrick asked if this is similar to paying off a new car in 48 months rather than 60 months. Mr. Martin said that it is. Councilor Fitzpatrick asked if we were to change our amortization to longer periods of time, would it affect Wethersfield's rating? Mr. Martin said that it is one factor amongst many that are considered in rating.

Councilor Gardow said that he'd like to see the information in the presentation put onto Wethersfield's website along with the minutes so that the public can view it.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor asked Mr. Martin what he would advise the Town to do to get a higher rating. Mr. Martin said that the Town has done an excellent job of managing both its financial position and its debt position. It is hard to control some factors such as the affluence of Wethersfield's population. There is some control over how to grow and diversify the Grand List, which is a big part of the potential for an upgrade.

Chairperson Czernicki thanked both Mr. Martin and Mr. Bernabe for their presentation. She said that there will be copies of the presentation in the Library and that Council members will be provided with copies as well.

GENERAL COMMENTS (cont.)

Ballou Tooker, 65 Harmond Place, asked if the Bid for Senior Bus Transportation was related to the Dial-a-Ride program. He was told that it is. He asked that the Council provide some background on the bid before the motion to accept the bid is presented. Chairperson Czernicki said that the Town Manager will be making comments.

Peter Sposito, 100 Surrey Lane, Glastonbury, spoke on behalf of the Randy Lane Association. Ted Jachym, a resident of Randy Lane phoned him on July 1 to report that the Winding Brook Turf Farm pump is back and set up on Town property. The pump ran throughout the July 4 weekend and residents had to listen to the noise of the pump. Mr. Jachym thought that the Contracts Committee and the Town Council had put a stop to the pumping activity. The original letter from Mr. Pitkin to Winding Brook Turf Farm states that any permit required at the time of the letter and in the future is the responsibility of the owner of the Turf Farm. Also, there is a noise issue and a Police report indicates that the current fire truck pump emits 50 decibels when idling and increases to 55 decibels when revved up to operating speed. The pump is not on the east side of the Winding Brook property as the letter states, but on Town property. The Randy Lane Association took a reading of 96 decibels where the pump is operating. Police Officer Power admitted that he did not take the reading at the third setting which is the setting required for the pumping of water. The Department of Motor Vehicles requires that the vehicle be registered. The Fire Truck is considered a tank vehicle. A Doctor at Trinity College has been doing a study of birds in this area and she wrote to Town Manager Bonnie Therrien saying that the noise not only affects the people in the area, but has an even greater effect on the wildlife. Mr. Sposito said that the Inland Wetlands Committee requires that no person shall conduct or maintain a regulated activity without first obtaining a permit for such activity from the Committee. Mr. Sposito said that Mr. Morgan went before the Recreation & Parks Advisory Board on March 26, 1987 to try to lease the section of land and after a fair hearing; the motion was defeated 4-0.

Glen Terk, 81 Wolcott Hill Road, distributed a handout to Council members addressing the Winding Brook Turf Farm. He said that Winding Brook Turf Farm has never had any valid permission to pump and there are permits required. No application was ever made to the Inlands Wetlands Commission for permits. Winding Brook Turf Farm has no lease or right to be on the Park property. The DEP application does not mean that the Inland Wetlands Commission does not have a right to look at it also. On the DEP application, Winding Brook Turf Farm states that they have a lease with the Town of Wethersfield to be on the property. They do not have any lease. The environmental issues addressed by the application with the DEP are significant. Farming activity is not exempt when the farming activity takes place in a Town park. In addition, farming activity is regulated by the Inland Wetlands Commission. Mr. Terk said that there are alternatives to the pumping that have never been addressed. There is three-phase industrial power to the Fire Station on Griswoldville Road for an electrical pump. The athletic fields are an important part of the Park; however, the wetlands

portion is a Town treasure. It is important for the Town to enforce the Wetlands regulations.

Joan Morrison, Assistant Professor of Biology at Trinity College, spoke as a scientist of her research in Mill Woods Park and the relevance to the Winding Brook Turf Farm issue. She began her research in June, 2002 and it involves studying the bird life living in the Park. Her study questioned what function Parks and green spaces within a highly urbanized area such as Wethersfield play in providing nature within a city. Also, the presence of other natural resources and the ecological systems in the Park provide, not only for animals, but also for humans. Services provided by such a natural habitat include the prevention of soil erosion by the presence of plants in the Park, water filtration by the presence of a variety of wetland plants, and the presence of animals. A Park such as Mill Woods provides a quality of life issue for those who use it. Having such a Park in Town is a positive impact to increase property values and the perception of the quality of life in Wethersfield. She urged the Council to consider very carefully any impact their decisions may have regarding this beautiful piece of Park property.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, thanked the Council for passing the resolution to restore the full operation of the Rocky Hill/Glastonbury ferry. Chairperson Czernicki said that Council endorsed the resolution that the Rocky Hill Town Council has passed. Mr. Young hopes that the Council will make contact with the proper State delegates to push this along and keep the ferry floating. Mr. Young said that he is pleased to see the Charter revision process started. He is; however, disappointed with the makeup of the Charter Revision Committee. He doesn't think that the members represent Wethersfield's general public. Mr. Young still opposes the Justice grant for the presence of a Police Officer in Wethersfield High School. Mr. Young is concerned about the request from Sprint to install their equipment on the Karengakis cell tower or to install their own tower at the site. He fears that we have created a commercial site by putting the tower where it is. If Sprint gets permission from the Siting Council, the Town makes out financially; however the site becomes more commercial in a residential neighborhood. This is a gross mistake to allow a commercial item in such a neighborhood. There should have been more possibilities explored for the tower.

Peter Maxwell, 117 Maple Street, also thanked the Council for endorsing the Rocky Hill Council's resolution to restore the full operation of the Rocky Hill/Glastonbury ferry. All three Towns of Rocky Hill, Glastonbury, and Wethersfield have made their sentiments known to the State. The ferry has ties to Wethersfield, having been established just twenty-one years after Wethersfield was established as a Town. Mr. Maxwell urged Wethersfield citizens to support businesses in Town by signing the available petition for the ferry. Mr. Maxwell said that there are not funds available for fuel for the ferry and the fuel supply will run out July 1. The funds for the ferry are funneled through the Department of Tourism and there are no funds available for Transportation to keep the ferry running. Mr. Maxwell said that we all need to impress upon our State legislators to make sure that the money required to operate the ferry is in the pocket of the department responsible for maintaining and operating the ferry. Also, it is important that other Towns are recruited to support the cause.

Rocco Orsini, 95 Broad Street, spoke on behalf of the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. He asked Chairperson Czernicki if the description of the Executive Session could be expanded. The Executive Session for this evening states "Real Estate Negotiations" and Mr. Orsini asks "what real estate negotiations?". Chairperson Czernicki said that she cannot discuss the matter at this time. Mr. Orsini said that the same question applies to "Union Negotiations". Lastly, who are the "Jane Doe" vs Wethersfield? Chairperson Czernicki said that the Town Manager would address this question. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that by Freedom of Information, she is required to put the list under pending litigation of what the name of the case is and that is all. Real estate negotiations never list what the parcel is because the price will go up. The Union negotiations involves 1303-404, the secretarial group. Mr. Orsini said that the attendant at the Transfer Station told him that the grass clippings program is not being used. The lesson to be learned is that money does change people's behavior. Mr. Orsini commented that the presentation by Webster Bank was very good and requested a copy of the presentation. Regarding the fee on returned checks, the Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. encourages that the Council pass this. Mr. Orsini asked for some discussion regarding the Aetna Ambulance and the five-year contract. He asked if there are any other bidders. The Wethersfield Taxpayers Association, Inc. suggests that the Senior Bus Transportation bid be referred to Major Contracts and moved along quickly.

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

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Gardow moved **"TO APPOINT THE FOLLOWING TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

Library Board of Directors

Donna D. Brown	D	39 Dudley Road	7-21-03 to 6-30-06
Eugene M. Grayson	U	226 Hang Dog Lane	7-21-03 to 6-30-06
Lucille Plouffe	D	183 Stillwold Drive	7-21-03 to 6-30-06

Culture and the Arts, Committee on

Patricia Viani	D	72 Sunrise Terrace	7-21-03 to 6-30-06
Heidi Lane	D	164 Windmill Hill	7-21-03 to 6-30-06
Anne F. Eisenman	U	71 Grist Mill Road	7-21-03 to 6-30-06

Youth Advisory Board

Schalleen J. Connelly	D	410 Brimfield Road	7-21-03 to 6-30-06
Maria A. Calleri	D	180 Fox Hill Road	7-21-03 to 6-30-06
Heather Clark Zottola	D	52 Rockland Street	7-21-03 to 6-30-06

Shade Tree Commission

Mark R. Alpert	D	7 Morrison Avenue	7-21-03 to 6-30-06
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Disabilities, Wethersfield Advisory Committee for People with

Diane M. Cosker	U	123 Church Street	7-21-03 to 6-30-05
John F. Cosker, Jr.	D	123 Church Street	7-21-03 to 6-30-05
Carol Keenan	U	403 Wolcott Hill Road	7-21-03 to 6-30-05

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Sponsorship of Program - Wethersfield Medical Equipment

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Public Safety Committee met with representatives from the Wethersfield/Rocky Hill Graduate Nurses Association regarding the Wethersfield Medical Equipment program. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien spoke with the Town Attorney and Wethersfield's liability carrier, CIRMA. The Town Attorney had no concerns except that we be sure to provide a proper waiver form. CIRMA said that if the Town sponsors this program, a staff member must be in charge of the program and make sure that the equipment is properly maintained, those who borrow the equipment are properly trained and that the waivers are completed properly in order to receive insurance. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that there would not be any increase in the Town's insurance costs. Youth and Social Services is down one staff member and this would create a problem with staff availability to oversee this program. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien is concerned that we are already stretched thin at this moment.

Councilor Fitzpatrick said that he is concerned about putting the responsibility of this program into the hands of a staff member who may not be skilled in doing so. The staff member may not have the knowledge of the equipment and if it is working properly as seems to be required by CIRMA. He'd like to see this referred to Nancy Stilwell, Director of Social & Youth Services to see how she would integrate this into her department and what other options may be.

Councilor Morin asked if this program were to be taken over by Social Services Staff, would it stop being run by volunteers out of the Moeller Home. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it could either be stopped being run by the volunteers or roll the dice. Councilor Morin said that there is a good consensus that this program be continued; however there is a concern of the cost to the Town. He'd like to see this service continued to be offered to Wethersfield residents.

Councilor Cascio said that at the Public Safety Committee on July 9, the consensus was that the service continues and the issue was for the Town to pick up the liability for insurance coverage. At the meeting it was concluded that this would be a Wethersfield-only program and that it would no longer include Rocky Hill as they now have their own stand alone program. Councilor Cascio supports the motion to table this item and send it along to Nancy Stilwell.

Councilor Fitzpatrick clarified that he supports this program as it is a great benefit to the citizens of Wethersfield. He is concerned that this program be assigned to a staff member who has some knowledge and background in the program. He'd like to see Nancy Stilwell come up with a way to continue to provide the program.

Chairperson Czernicki asked Kay Zakarian, a member of the Graduate Nurses Association, to step forward.

Chairperson Czernicki said that the Council would like to see the program continued; however, they have some concerns regarding the ability of staff to meet the requirements of CIRMA. She asked if there is currently in place a policy that addresses the issues. Ms. Zakarian said that there are currently waivers that need to be signed and a volunteer who does repairs. Chairperson Czernicki asked if there is certification required to repair the equipment. Ms. Zakarian said that she does not believe that there is. Chairperson Czernicki asked if a member of the Graduate Nurses Association inspects the equipment after repairs are made to insure that it is in proper working condition. Ms. Zakarian said that whoever loans the equipment checks it; however the volunteers are nurses and not equipment technicians. Chairperson Czernicki asked if a nurse goes to the home of the person who will be using a piece of equipment. Ms. Zakarian said that sometimes a nurse takes the equipment to the home and sometimes a relative or friend will pick up the equipment for the person requiring it. Instruction is provided to either the patient or the relative or friend. Chairperson Czernicki asked Ms. Zakarian if either she or Ms. Jagel would be available to meet with Nancy Stilwell to discuss this matter.

Councilor Fitzpatrick moved **"TO REFER THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE WETHERSFIELD MEDICAL EQUIPMENT PROGRAM TO DR. NANCY STILWELL, DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL AND YOUTH SERVICES TO REPORT BACK TO COUNCIL ON AUGUST 4, 2003"**, seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 8:55 p.m., Councilor Cascio moved **"TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION"**, seconded by Councilor Morin. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 10:05 p.m., Councilor Fitzpatrick moved **"TO ENTER BACK INTO THE REGULAR MEETING"**, seconded

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

Councilor Morin moved "**TO CHANGE THE MEETING ORDER AND ADDRESS THE SILAS DEANE MIDDLE SCHOOL CHANGE ORDERS**", seconded by Councilor Gardow. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Change Orders - Silas Deane Middle School

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Change Orders are for asbestos abatement, phone cards, and floor sealer/moisture barrier.

Councilor Cascio moved "**TO APPROVE THE CHANGE ORDERS FOR THE SILAS DEANE MIDDLE SCHOOL**", seconded by Deputy Mayor O'Connor.

Councilor Fitzpatrick asked Mr. Drake, Chairman of the Silas Deane Middle School Building Committee, to give a brief overview of what these changes are.

Mr. Drake said that the asbestos abatement is in addition to the recently requested amount. This should be the end of the asbestos abatement. The phone lines in the school are being eliminated and there will be a piggyback with the trunk lines to the High School. The concrete in the Administrative are is not drying and the rug cannot be installed. The sealer will allow the project to be kept on schedule.

Councilor Morin asked why the concrete is not drying. Mr. Drake said that it was very wet since Christmas and the moisture keeps coming up through the concrete. With the sealer, the rug can be installed and all the furniture brought in.

Councilor Sassano asked why these are changes. He asked if the amounts are higher or lower than originally planned, or if the work itself is different. Mr. Drake said that as more work is done, more asbestos seems to be found and as soon as it is found, it has to be dealt with. The floor sealer amount is totally in addition to the original budget as the problem could not be predicted.

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

Bid Award - FY 03-04 Mulch Sealing - \$35,000

Councilor Gardow moved "**TO AWARD THE BID FOR MULCH SEALING TO THE STATE LOW BIDDER TO MARINE BROTHERS OF NE INC. IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$35,000**", seconded by Councilor Morin.

Councilor Hemmann said that she thought that it was decided last year that the Town would not do mulch sealing again.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that Mr. Turner, Chief of Engineering, addressed the problem which was a total disaster the first time it was applied last year. There are only certain types of streets and roads that this should be done on and after trying the application a second time, there were no complaints by residents.

Councilor Gardow asked Mr. Turner what roads this mulch sealing would be applied to.

Mr. Turner answered that the mulch would be applied to collector and arterial-type roads. Roads with much more traffic than normal. The list of roads has not been developed yet, but would include roads such as Ridge Road, Wolcott Hill Road, and Griswold Road. The conventional, hot sealer would be used on residential roads.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor remembers the mulch being put down on Church Street and it was pretty bad and there for a long time. He wonders if there were not complaints the second time it was applied because residents thought it was still the leftovers of the first application. He remembers Council saying that we would not do this again. He is not

comfortable with using the mulch sealer. Mr. Turner said that the mulch sealer is 15%-20% more expensive than the hot crack sealer, but it lasts 40% or more longer. Over all it is much more cost effective. The DOT does not use the hot crack sealer anymore and only uses the mulch sealer.

Councilor Gardow asked why there is only one bidder on the State Bid. Mr. Turner said that it is a patented process which Marino Brothers provides.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Deputy Mayor O'Connor voted NAY. The motion passed 7-1-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Fee for Returned Checks

Councilor Fitzpatrick moved "**TO SET A \$25 RETURNED BANK CHECK FEE FOR ALL CHECKS THAT ARE RETURNED TO THE TOWN A SECOND TIME FOR INSUFFICIENT FUNDS**", seconded by Councilor Hemmann. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

One Year Extension - Aetna Ambulance Service

Councilor Cascio moved "**TO EXTEND THE AETNA AMBULANCE SERVICE WITH THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD FOR ONE YEAR WITH THE SAME TERMS AND CONDITIONS, WITH AN ENDING DATE OF JUNE 30, 2004**", seconded by Deputy Mayor O'Connor.

Councilor Gardow asked if there is a bid requirement to go with the extension of service. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that under State law there is a Preferred Service Agreement and Aetna is Wethersfield's preferred provider. With an extension, we have made to sure that what is important is continued to be provided. We cannot go out to bid because the State has divvied up the ambulance providers between certain sections of Towns. It needs to be decided in the future whether the agreement will be extended to five years.

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

August Council Meetings

Chairperson Czernicki said that the August Council meeting dates have been provided by Town Manager Bonnie Therrien so that Councilors can plan around them to insure that there are quorums at each meeting.

BIDS

Councilor Gardow moved "**TO AWARD THE BID FOR SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR TO BIDDER #1 WESPRO LTD. - IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$67,800**", seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick.

Councilor Gardow was amazed at the vast difference between the lowest and highest bidders.

Mr. Turner said that Wespro is a very good vendor and has been Wethersfield's contractor for the last three years.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilor Cascio ABSTAINED. The motion passed 7-0-1.

Councilor Fitzpatrick moved "**TO AWARD THE BID FOR THE TOP DRESSER MOWER TO BIDDER #1 ACORN THOMPSON EQUIPMENT - IN THE AMOUNT OF \$12,870**", seconded by Councilor Gardow. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Cascio moved "**TO REFER TO MAJOR CONTRACTS THE BID FOR SENIOR BUS TRANSPORTATION**", seconded by Deputy Mayor O'Connor.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that two bids were received under the \$195,000 budgeted for this fiscal year. She is familiar with one vendor and felt it a good idea for Major Contracts and any Council members to attend the interviews to get a feel for the delivery products are. The reference checks for the low bid have been excellent.

Councilor Sassano supports referring this to Major Contracts but asks that they also include in their agenda some discussion on the ADA screening. This screening could be intimidating and could result in citizens not applying for the service. Councilor Sassano would like to see how many Wethersfield residents using the current Dial-A-Ride system will be referred to the ADA program. While we are attempting to pare down our services to meet the financial reality, we don't want to lose those riders who require the present transportation service.

Councilor Fitzpatrick said that he will ask Town Manager Bonnie Therrien to invite Dr. Stilwell to the Major Contracts meeting to answer any questions that are raised about ADA eligibility and how riders are identified. Chairperson Czernicki said that those who qualify for the ADA service have already been identified.

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

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

None.

MINUTES

Councilor Cascio moved "**TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 30, 2003**", seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilors Fitzpatrick and Sassano ABSTAINED. The motion passed 6-0-2.

Councilor Cascio moved "**TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF JULY 7, 2003**", seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilors Hemmann and Sassano ABSTAINED. The motion passed 6-0-2.

Councilor Fitzpatrick moved "**TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 7, 2003**", seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Councilor Gardow said that the public comments have moved back into verbose mode. He spoke to the Town Clerk back in December and is curious as to why we have come out of the terse mode of recording the minutes. Public comments by some residents are taking up half of a page, when they would be typically boiled down and summarized.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilor Gardow voted NAY. Councilors Hemmann and Sassano ABSTAINED. The motion passed 5-1-2.

GENERAL COMMENTS

REPORTS

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Goodwin Park bus will be moving over the corrections area on November 11. She provided a time table for the Kasper Group drainage. There is approximately \$3,770 in fees still to be paid. The Cove signs that are missing will be replaced with larger signs. The Town Manager said that she will be attending all the meetings of the Manchester binding arbitration.

Chairperson Czernicki asked what the problem is with the Kasper Group projects. Mr. Turner said that the company went out of business and reformed themselves. Chairperson Czernicki asked if we have gone out to bid to use Kasper. Mr. Turner said that we did and that they were assumed to be a reputable company and then they folded. Mr. Turner said that the Town Attorney is in contact both orally and written with the Kasper Group. The Flood and Erosion Control Board met this past week and have stated their opinion to the Drainage Committee that even if it is required that another firm be hired to complete the drainage drawings, they would support that.

Deputy Mayor O'Connor asked Mr. Turner if the prime principals who left the original firm of the Kasper Group are now the prime principals of the new firm. Mr. Turner said that they are not. The new firm cannot seem to locate the original drawings.

Councilor Gardow said that he attended the Flood and Erosion Control Board meeting and there needs to be a meeting with the Chairman of the Drainage Committee. Chairperson Czernicki said that Town Manager Bonnie Therrien will set a date for this.

COUNCIL

Councilor Cascio reported that the Library's Saturday openings have met with success. There were over 874 patrons on the first Saturday and 842 on the second Saturday.

Councilor Gardow said that he attended the Moeller Home open house and the Nature Center folks were very excited about the attendance that day. Councilor Gardow said that a resident spoke to him about the process of appointment to a Board or Commission. There seemed to be a formality lacking to being appointed and he'd like to see this looked into. Councilor Gardow said that it will be a year in September since the Council has modified the rates for the dump passes and he'd like to get a report on how we are doing with recouping costs.

PUBLIC

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:35 p.m., Councilor Fitzpatrick moved "**TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**" seconded by Councilor Morin. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 11:50 p.m., Councilor Morin moved "**TO ENTER BACK INTO THE REGULAR MEETING**", seconded by Deputy Mayor O'Connor. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 11:51 p.m., Councilor Hemmann moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Morin. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by vote of Council 8/4/03