

REGULAR MEETING AUGUST 18, 2003

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

Present: Councilors Cascio, Fitzpatrick, Flynn, Gardow, Hemmann, Morin, Sassano (8:20), and Chairperson Czernicki.

Absent: Deputy Mayor O'Connor

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

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

Proclamation: Mrs. Connecticut International - Agnes Pireh

Chairperson Czernicki presented a Certificate of Recognition to Agnes Pireh, Mrs. Connecticut International for her dedication to freedom, the accomplishment of her goals, and wished her well as a delegate at the Mrs. International Pageant to be held in Tennessee in September.

Mrs. Pireh thanked the Council and expressed that the recognition means a lot to her. She said that she always dreamed to claim the United States as her home and this is a great honor for her. She is especially proud to be honored by her home town and appreciates the well wishes as she continues on to the Mrs. International Pageant. She stated that she dedicates herself to freedom and extended herself to the Council for any public events as Mrs. Connecticut International.

Proclamation: Elena Pohl

Chairperson Czernicki presented a Certificate of Recognition to Elena Pohl for her enthusiastic representation of Wethersfield in her race around the bases with the mascots at a July 16 Eastern League All-Star baseball game in New Britain. Elena will be a first grader at Hanmer School this Fall.

Elena was speechless, but expressed that she is thankful and is looking forward to first grade.

Presentation: Town wide Health Fair - September 27, 2003

Linda Bantell, Wethersfield Health Educator, spoke for Joe Dorvan who is the representative from Aetna Ambulance. She said that the Town has been sponsoring a Health Fair for the past five years. This year's Fair will be on Saturday, September 27 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Ambulance Facility on Prospect Street. There will be demonstrations, health screenings and drills; as well as loads of information. The Health Fair is geared for all ages. Ms. Bantell recognized the following for their participation and assistance in putting on the Health Fair: Fair Marshall Gary Santoro who will be bringing the "smoke house", the Social & Youth Services Department who will have various information for youth and seniors, the Police Department who will be having a child safety seat inspection, the Fire Department and Fire Explorers, and the Police Explorers and DARE representatives. Both Hartford Hospital and St. Francis Hospital will be represented. Also the Joslin Center of New Britain will be present to perform blood sugar testing. The Newington Police Department will be participating with their Canine Unit as well as Fidelco. There will be Reiki, Yoga, and Tai Chi demonstrations. Numerous nursing homes will be represented as well as D'Esopo's Funeral Home, a chiropractor and an acupuncturist. Dr. Ken will also be participating. The Red Cross disaster van will be on display and there will be a blood drive as well. Ms. Bantell invited all to attend and bring along friends and family.

Presentation: Vision Appraisal Technology - Revaluation - Angel Johnstone

Wethersfield Assessor Jan Neumuth introduced Angel Johnstone from Vision Appraisal Technology to give a

presentation on revaluation for Wethersfield which will be coming up for the 2003 grant list.

Ms. Johnstone thanked the Council for the opportunity to give this presentation which will educate them and the Wethersfield public about the tax revaluation which will be conducted this year. Revaluations used to be done every ten years and now they are conducted every four years. Ms. Johnstone was involved with the 1999 Wethersfield revaluation and is glad to be back again for this year's. Vision Appraisal Technology has many Connecticut towns and cities as clients. Vision's central focus is the New England states. Ms. Johnstone said that revaluation is mandated by the State of Connecticut. Every four years an interim revaluation is required and in the twelfth year a full revaluation is required. The full revaluation requires that every property in Town is inspected at least once in the twelve year period. A revaluation looks at the sales transpired over a given period of time and updates the value of property in Town to current market value. There are statistical reports that the Town must file with the State in order to certify revaluation. This insures that assessment procedures are done equitably. The goal of the revaluation is to make sure that property values listed in the Assessors Office are equitable across the board for the entire Town and also that they are as current as possible. There will be approximately eight hundred properties looked at over the next two months. The properties included have some sort of permit on them or have sold over the last twelve to twenty-four months. These properties are what are used to determine the fair market value for the rest of the Town. Inspections began today and the inspectors will be circulating throughout Town through October. The inspectors have signs in the windows of their vehicles and have proper identification to provide to homeowners. Residents are welcome to contact the Assessors Office at any time with any inquiries. Statistical analysis required by the State will be ongoing while inspections are being conducted. Primarily the analysis will be looking at the sales that have occurred over the last two years and the statistics are then applied to the rest of the properties in Town. This is how the new value is derived. Notification will be sent out in the mail to property owners in early November. The mailer will provide both the old/current assessment and the new/proposed assessment. Residents will be provided the opportunity to comment, by appointment, on the new/proposed assessment. The hearing appointments run approximately 15-20 minutes and most are during the day. The hearings will be scheduled during late November and early December. Residents are strongly reminded that the current mill rate in Wethersfield is based on the 1999 assessment values; therefore, you cannot multiply the current mill rate to the new/proposed assessment and obtain an accurate tax amount. The new/proposed assessment would need to be divided by .70 which would give a fair market value of the property. If this fair market value seems to be far off what current similar homes are selling for, the resident is welcome to call the Assessors Office. Vision Appraisal has a website that can be accessed for information regarding all of the properties in Town. Once the whole process is done, the Town has a new Grand List total as of October 1, 2003. The Town can then calculate a new mill rate which will probably be announced next Spring. The new mill rate is what will be applied to the new assessment and will go into effect July 1, 2004. After this process, the Assessor's Office will continue to do inspections each year so that by 2011 each property in Wethersfield will have been inspected.

Chairperson Czernicki announced that Town Manager Bonnie Therrien will field any questions received in the next few weeks and pass them along to either Mrs. Neumuth or Ms. Johnstone.

Ms. Johnstone said that the website has a question and answer page. The website is www.visionappraisal.com.

Councilor Cascio moved "**TO REMOVE ITEM C.2.g FROM THE TABLE**", seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HEARING

ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 149, TAXATION

RESOLUTION GRANTING THE AHEPA 58 APARTMENTS PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES

Dick Fippinger, 28 Wells Farm Drive, spoke on behalf of the Wethersfield Fire Department at the direction of Chief Clark and Assistant Chief Mater who are also present at tonight's meeting. He spoke of the Chapter 149 \$1,000 tax exemption for firefighters. The difficulty of the exemption is that it does not allow for any recognition and therefore compensation for Wethersfield firefighters who own property outside of Wethersfield or for firefighters who are non-

property owners but residents of Wethersfield. The department has tried for the past two years to find a way to compensate such members. Jim Shagrue, Pension Coordinator, was told by the Council five years ago to wait five years before looking at the tax exemption. Both the Chief and Assistant Chief are concerned for the Fire Department's youngest members as, because of their age, they have not amassed property and therefore cannot take advantage of the waiver. There needs to be a solution to close the loop hole so that all of those who deserve the break for their terrific volunteer service receive one. The IRS is investigating these tax breaks to determine if they should be considered real or ordinary income. Should the stipend, in the form of a tax exemption, be considered real or ordinary income, this would affect the recipient's income tax. Senator Larson currently has a Bill on the floor in Congress. Mr. Fippinger, with the agreement of Chief Clark and Assistant Chief Mater recommends that Council table this Ordinance and form a committee that would encompass the interests of the Fire Department, Public Safety and the budget. The committee would be responsible to come up with an equitable solution and avoid the difficulties of the IRS.

No one else wished to speak and the Chairperson closed the Hearings segment closed.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Lee Sekas announced that the Stop & Shop on the Silas Deane Highway will be sponsoring a Community Fund Raiser to benefit the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation on Saturday, August 23 from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. There will be many activities and displays and numerous Town Departments and Town Businesses will be participating as well. Chairperson Czernicki acknowledged Ken Romano, Stop & Shop Night Manager, for being the backbone of this fund raiser.

Jim Grise, 455 Wolcott Hill Road, spoke in favor of the funds for technology improvements at the Silas Deane Middle School. Mr. Grise is a twenty-five year resident of Wethersfield and has done engineering mentoring at the High School and has a unique insight of the need for technology in the school system.

Ken Trifiro, 124 Rutledge Road, also spoke in favor of the funds for technology improvements at the Silas Deane Middle School. He is impressed with the Silas Deane Middle School renovations and commented that it will be a first class facility when finished. Mr. Trifaro has mentored at the Learning Corridor and was made aware of what technology is not available to Wethersfield students in the High School. It was very disturbing to find out that the schools are wired for internet access and some for video, yet there is nothing plugged into the wire. The Silas Deane Middle School proposal is aimed at correcting this problem. Computers are essential in the world today and children are going to be expected to be fluent in computer usage. We need to provide students with the tools necessary to achieve the competency required.

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

COUNCIL ACTION

Ordinance Amending Chapter 149, Taxation - Volunteer Fire Department

Councilor Flynn moved "**TO REFER THE ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 149, TAXATION - VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT TO THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE AND ASK THAT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT BE REPRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF THEIR DEPARTMENT AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF THE FIRE PENSION COMMITTEE**", seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Resolution Granting Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement - AHEPA 58 Apartments

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that a letter was received from Mr. Emmanuel Moshovos, President of the Nathan Chapter 58 stating that AHEPA has applied for a Federal Grant for an additional forty-two units. At this point, they don't know if they will receive the Grant funds, but are requesting that the Town Council look at giving them a \$6,150 Pilot Abatement which is the same amount given to them in 1984 for forty-one units. The present value of the 1984 abatement amount is approximately \$17,794. These types of

Pilots are frequently granted by communities and are used to help subsidize the rents for tenants and for building maintenance.

Councilor Cascio asked if the similar facility in East Lyme is also offered the same type of tax abatement by that Town. Mr. Moshovos said that he is fairly sure that each facility has applied for and received the same abatement. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Assessor said that there is not a trigger on the computer that signifies that such an abatement is in effect. Councilor Cascio asked if these apartments are open to all individuals wishing to reside in the facility. Mr. Moshovos said that it is a non-sectarian type of apartments open to all residents.

Councilor Gardow said that he'd like to amend the resolution to update it to 2003 dollars.

Councilor Gardow moved **"TO AMEND THE RESOLUTION TO AN AMOUNT OF \$17,794 PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES"**, seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Councilor Fitzpatrick asked Mr. Moshovos to provide more information as to where the building is located. Mr. Moshovos said that the land just south of the current apartments was purchased and this abutting property is where the new units will be constructed. Councilor Fitzpatrick asked what the current appraisal on the piece of property is. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the land value is \$312,000 and the building value is \$1,403,500. Councilor Fitzpatrick stated that we would be collecting what the taxes would be due on the property without a building on it. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the current assessed value (including the building) is \$1,218,000 which based on the present mill rate would be a tax assessment of \$43,459. Councilor Fitzpatrick said that without the building there, the Town would collect approximately \$5,000-\$6,000 in taxes.

Councilor Flynn said that the original agreement seems to imply that the spirit of the agreement in 1984 was to give AHEPA an abatement equal to 50% of the real estate taxes that would otherwise have been due on the property. To continue with the spirit of the original agreement, we should specify again that AHEPA receives an abatement equal to 50% of the real estate taxes that would otherwise have been due on the property. This would not tie us to a specific amount and this year's abatement would be approximately \$21,229.74. The facility is a tremendous resource for senior citizens in Wethersfield and Councilor Flynn would like to see the motion further amended to reflect that AHEPA be granted an abatement equal to 50% of the real estate taxes that would otherwise have been due on the property.

Councilor Flynn moved **"TO AMEND THE MOTION TO REFLECT THAT AHEPA BE GRANTED AN ABATEMENT EQUAL TO 50% OF THE REAL ESTATE TAXES THAT WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN DUE ON THE PROPERTY EACH YEAR FOR A TERM OF FORTY YEARS"**, seconded by Councilor Morin.

Councilor Fitzpatrick verified the \$21,229.74 amount and compared it to the original amount in the motion which was \$17,794. The difference for this year would be approximately \$3,500. Councilor Flynn said that the abatement amount would change each year depending on the mill rate and the assessed value.

Councilor Morin said that the percentage makes perfect sense as it does not tie the Town to a specific number. This way there is flexibility to adjust the amount as the tax rate changes. The abatement helps people, especially senior citizens, find affordable housing. He supports Councilor Flynn's amendment.

Councilor Gardow asked if the 1984 agreement on the property is on a sliding scale. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that it is at a constant \$6,150 for forty years. There is currently twenty years left on the agreement.

Councilor Flynn said that his intent in offering the amendment is to reconcile the spirit of the original agreement to insure that the new units are kept affordable for the prospective tenants. Part of the problem with establishing a fixed dollar amount is clearly seen by the original agreement of \$6,150 which was appropriate in 1984 but certainly is not in 2003. Mr. Moshovos said that the land that will be used is currently fetching only \$900 per year in taxes. If nothing is constructed, the Town will continue to collect \$900 per year on the land. Mr. Moshovos said that those most affected by the abatement will be the residents of the newly constructed units.

Councilor Gardow agrees with Councilor Flynn's idea of a sliding scale.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE to the motion for the Amendment. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Sassano arrived at the meeting at this time (8:20 p.m.).

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE to the motion passing the Resolution. Councilor Sassano abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

List of Blighted Properties - Property Maintenance Code

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that since the Property Maintenance Code was approved, many phone calls and letters from residents have been received regarding blighted properties. Town Staff and the Police Department have looked at properties throughout Town that might be considered as blighted and a list was compiled. Brian O'Connor, Chief Building Official and Bridig White, Registered Sanitarian of the Health Department went out and took photos and looked at each property from the public right of way. Out of a total of sixteen properties reported, four are being recommended for the list of blighted properties. The Council has thirty days to approve, disapprove or modify the list and if nothing happens within that time, the list is automatically accepted.

Paul Hutcheon, Director of the Central Connecticut Health District approached the podium at this time to answer questions that Councilors had.

Councilor Cascio asked if any of the properties had a problem with tall grass due to the recent grass clipping issue in Town. He asked if there is a safety issue with tall grass. Mr. Hutcheon said that if tall grass was present, it was noted on the list. Councilor Cascio asked Mr. Hutcheon to explain to Council the procedure taken for abandoned vehicles. Mr. Hutcheon said that there is a separate Ordinance in Wethersfield that addresses abandoned vehicles. They are deemed abandoned if they are not capable of operating safely on a road. That Ordinance is enforced by Mr. O'Connor, the Chief Building Official. There were a few properties with unregistered or inoperable motor vehicles on them; however the existence of such a vehicle does not cause a property to be defined as blighted. Councilor Cascio asked if the idea of "curb appeal" could be mentioned to the owners of properties on the list not considered "blighted". Mr. Hutcheon said that there is definitely a reason why these properties were suggested to the Town Manager as blighted and the lack of repair and maintenance should still be addressed. There should be a friendly letter sent to the owners stating that their property did not make the blighted list, but that their property was considered for it. In the future, it is planned that the submitted properties contain information as to why the property is considered to be blighted.

Chairperson Czernicki asked if the Council takes action and approves the list as it stands, would the addition of other properties delay the action taken on the current properties. Mr. Hutcheon said that it would not delay any action. The next step is to issue an order/notice to the property owners requiring them to correct the violations noted. If the corrections are not made within the stated time period, a citation will be issued.

Councilor Flynn moved **"TO PLACE THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES ON THE TOWN'S BLIGHTED LIST AS PER THE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE: 21 MARMOR COURT, 151 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY, 36 STATE STREET, AND 91 NOTT STREET"**, seconded by Councilor Hemmann.

Councilor Gardow asked if those affected by this motion could be notified of the Small Cities Grant to obtain funds for repairs. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that this would be a good connection.

Councilor Sassano asked Mr. Hutcheon if Council action is necessary to publicly categorize these properties as blighted. He thinks that it's been enough to have gone to the properties, photographed them, analyze the results and conclude that the owners need to be notified. Mr. Hutcheon said that the action taken tonight is what is called for in the blight Ordinance. Mr. Hutcheon noted that the process is ongoing and any property can deteriorate at any time and the Health District will continue to accept complaints and requests by residents. An updated list, depending on the number of submissions, will be presented to Council either monthly or twice per month. The action taken tonight will

be required each time.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Community Center Dance Floor

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that there has been a problem over a number of years with the dance floor. The floor has been buckling due to the humidity and water leaks. In 2002, insurance money was received and the Recreation & Parks Department has gone out to bid; unfortunately unsuccessfully. Ms. Bagley, Director of Recreation & Parks, finally received a bid from Modern Carpet at a cost of \$10,752. There is still some money left in the insurance account, but we'd need an additional \$2,869 to complete the bid. The \$2,869 would come from the Mill Woods Access Road Project.

Councilor Cascio asked Ms. Bagley what the actual size of the wooden dance floor is. Ms. Bagley said that it is approximately 840 square feet. Councilor Cascio suggested that the dance floor be removed completely which would eliminate buckling wood. We could then go with a portable dance floor or provide for rental of a dance floor when necessary.

Councilor Fitzpatrick asked what would prevent the moisture in the room from damaging the new floor. Ms. Bagley said that a different type of floor, a floating floor, will be installed. This type of floor gets a much better moisture seal on it so that water cannot penetrate it. There is also a ten-year warranty on the floor. Councilor Fitzpatrick asked how often the dance floor is used. Ms. Bagley said that it is used approximately twice per month. Some programs, such as Ballroom Dancing, run weekly. Councilor Fitzpatrick verified that there is no damage to the surrounding carpet, yet there is damage to the wood floor. Ms. Bagley said that this is because the leak from a water pipe is over the wood floor. Since the high humidity set in this summer, combined with one of the air conditioner compressors going down, there has been additional settling underneath the floor. The floor was installed in 1978 and reached its life expectancy. The glue beneath the wood floor has dried out and separating from the concrete. Councilor Fitzpatrick asked if it is anticipated that asbestos will be found underneath the floor. Ms. Bagley said that in 1996 when carpeting was replaced on a similar concrete floor, there was no problem with asbestos.

Councilor Gardow asked Ms. Bagley if there is an actual Dance Floor account and she said that there is. Councilor Gardow verified that we have money from the insurance company and the difference will come from the Mill Woods Access Road account. Councilor Gardow asked what amount would then be left over in the Access Road account. Ms. Bagley said there would be approximately \$1,800. Councilor Gardow raised the point that renting a dance floor would make it difficult for groups/classes that use it on a weekly basis. Ms. Bagley said that the Ballroom Dancing group has been using the Community Center for the past two years and anticipates the class continuing.

Councilor Morin said that the room at the Community Center is a great benefit for Wethersfield. It is a nice facility for events.

Councilor Morin moved "**TO AWARD THE INSTALLATION OF A NEW DANCE FLOOR AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER TO MODERN CARPET COMPANY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10,752.96 AND TO TRANSFER \$2,869 FROM THE MILL WOODS ACCESS ROAD PROJECT TO THE DANCE FLOOR ACCOUNT TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT**", seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick.

Councilor Cascio asked Ms. Bagley if she has ever seen a portable dance floor. Ms. Bagley said that she has seen them in tents and used in Convention Centers. Councilor Cascio would like to see, before passing this motion, some investigation into the cost of carpeting the whole floor and purchasing a portable dance floor. He believes that the function of the building is limited when there is a dance floor in the middle of the room.

Chairperson Czernicki asked if there were any wedding bookings for the room this summer. Ms. Bagley said that there were bookings in both June and July. The floor has been pressed down to make it presentable for each event. Ms. Bagley said that the floor buckles at the seams and a carpenter cuts the seam and removes a small amount of the

parquet so that the floor will flatten back down again. Chairperson Czernicki said that she recalls the floor buckling during the summer for the past fifteen years. Ms. Bagley verified that the floor buckles during the summer in a number of spots. Chairperson Czernicki asked where the moisture is coming from. Ms. Bagley said that the buckling is caused by the humidity in the air, except for the time the water pipe leaked onto the floor. Chairperson Czernicki asked if a wedding or other function would have to be cancelled and money refunded if the floor were not able to be repaired at some point this summer. Ms. Bagley said that her Department would do all they could to make the floor usable and if this was not acceptable to the customer, she would have to issue some type of refund. Both Chairperson Czernicki and Ms. Bagley agreed that the years that there has been a problem with the floor buckling coincide with the years that there is a problem with the air conditioning at the Community Center. Chairperson Czernicki asked Ms. Bagley if she had any idea of the cost to rent a portable dance floor. This fee could be passed on to the customer renting the room. Chairperson Czernicki suggested looking into a portable dance floor that could be made into different sizes depending on the size of the function. Ms. Bagley said that she has no knowledge of the cost to rent a dance floor. Ms. Bagley said that the condition of both the gym floor and the S2 floor prohibit the Ballroom Dance group from using these rooms.

Councilor Flynn said that going with a portable dance floor, the custodian in the building would be responsible for putting it down and taking it up. Ms. Bagley said that the case may be that if you rent the dance floor, the rental company may come in and install and uninstall it. This would be a weekly expense in the case of the Ballroom Dance class. Ms. Bagley said that there would need to be extra time planned for set up. This eats up the time to be used for events. Councilor Flynn understands exploring a different approach; however, when the Council went to bid for the Community Center renovations, one of the goals was to bring the banquet room into the forefront of banquet facilities in the area. This would certainly include an updated dance floor. He suggests that Council move forward with the motion for the repairs.

Chairperson Czernicki verified with Ms. Bagley that there is an additional cost to renters for added custodial coverage during events. Ms. Bagley said that these added custodians work with the full-time custodian to set up and take down any equipment required. Chairperson Czernicki feels that there are possible alternative ways to solve the floor problem and given the history of the problems with the floor, she cannot vote in favor of the motion until there is further exploration done.

Councilor Gardow agrees with Councilor Cascio and Chairperson Czernicki in that we need to first find out how much it will cost to purchase a portable dance floor. He would like to see this examined and look at this issue again in a couple of weeks.

Councilors Flynn, Morin, and Sassano voted AYE. Councilors Cascio, Fitzpatrick, Gardow, Hemmann, and Chairperson Czernicki voted NAY. The motion failed 3-5-0.

Selection of Architect, Construction Manager - Webb/Stillman/Physical Services Project

Chairperson Czernicki stated that Mr. Drake, Mr. Viani, and Mr. McEntire are present as well as Mr. Menzo, Principal of the Silas Deane Middle School.

Mr. Drake stepped forward to answer any questions and go over the process of the selection. He said that there were twenty responses to the architect bid and ten responses to the construction manager bid. The subcommittee worked these numbers down to seven and three respectively. Formal bids and presentations were given and the committee decided to split the project between two firms in order to have the drawings for Webb within five months so that the project can be completed by September, 2005 (twenty-four months). Friar will be able to complete the drawings in five months in order to stick to this time frame and Bianco is a small firm from Middletown who specializes in Historical buildings such as the Stillman School. The committee felt that it is worth spending a little extra money in order to get the type of expertise required for that building.

Councilor Flynn asked Mr. Drake if the twenty-four month time line is also in effect for the Stillman building. Mr. Drake said that the Stillman building will be done earlier. The anticipated time line for Stillman is approximately fifteen months. Councilor Flynn asked Mr. Drake if the Board of Education needs to be physically out of Webb before construction can begin. Mr. Drake said that they will need to be out. The Webb project will be broken into phases.

Councilor Flynn is concerned with the difference in the bids. Mr. Drake said that when the bids are all equalized to compare apples to apples with what is included in the bid, Friar is the lowest bidder. Friar is currently at \$356,000 just for Webb. This is subject to further refinement.

Councilor Fitzpatrick verified that a number of the bids included fees and that others did not. Councilor Fitzpatrick asked Mr. Drake what would prevent Friar from saying that they can have the drawings in five months and then come back and say that they're not able to do that. Mr. Drake said that Friar knows the most about the Webb building.

Councilor Flynn is concerned that one of the key elements of the agreement is for Friar to prepare the drawings within five months; yet Mr. Drake seemed to indicate that they wouldn't be held to that. Mr. Drake meant to indicate that things happen, but Friar will be held as closely to five months as possible. Councilor Flynn asked if there will be a condition in the contract that Friar must deliver the documents to the Town five months from the date of the contract award. Mr. Drake said that the condition can be added in to the contract. Mr. Viani said that the Town will enter into negotiations with Friar and if, during the negotiations, the committee becomes uncomfortable with Friar's ability to deliver within five months, they will reconsider at that point. The negotiations will also hold Friar to a high level of accomplishment on the documents. Friar will be held responsible to deliver the documents in a timely fashion. Councilor Flynn is very uncomfortable supporting any contract that does not mandate a performance period. There needs to be a substantial penalty clause in the agreement.

Councilor Hemmann verified that Friar is also being selected for Physical Services as well. Mr. Drake said that they are.

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO SELECT THE ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS OF FRIAR ASSOCIATIES, INC. FOR THE WEBB/PHYSICAL SERVICES PROJECTS AND BIANCO/GIOLITTO FOR THE STILLMAN BUILDING PROJECT AND ASK THE TOWN MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE A PRICE FOR THIS WORK AND REPORT BACK TO THE TOWN COUNCIL"**, seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick.

Councilor Gardow said that he is very impressed with the work that Bianco/Giolitto has done in Portland. They are experts in Historic Buildings and he expects that they will do a great job on the Stillman building. He supports the motion.

Councilor Morin said that he supports the motion; however, he believes that it assumes a very ambitious timeline. He suggests that in the future, a presentation/spreadsheet be provided to Council that compares apples to apples. Mr. Viani agreed that the spreadsheet should have been updated, but that the meeting was just the night before.

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

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO SELECT NEWFIELD CONSTRUCTION, INC. AS THE CONSTRUCTION MANAGER FOR THE WEBB/PHYSICAL SERVICES/STILLMAN BUILDING PROJECTS AND ASK THE TOWN MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE A PRICE FOR THIS WORK AND REPORT BACK TO THE TOWN COUNCIL"**, seconded by Councilor Hemmann.

Councilor Morin asked Mr. Drake what the problem had been with the concrete work at the Silas Deane Middle School. Mr. Drake said that the problem with the concrete is that it is simply not drying. The Silas Deane cafeteria concrete is not drying. The concrete has been coated to keep the moisture down. The air conditioning installation has been delayed. Once it is in, hopefully the concrete will dry more quickly. Councilor Morin is concerned about the delay in the cafeteria and requested verification of Newfield's performance. Mr. Menzo said that the cafeteria will be turned over to Chartwell's which is Wethersfield's catering service. This alternate plan was established in January, just in case. Chartwell's will provide bag lunches to those students wishing to purchase one. The lunches will be delivered to the classrooms. Once the flooring is installed, the cafeteria will be used immediately. Kitchen equipment will be installed this week as the floor in there is finished. Mr. Drake said that, other than the cafeteria, the Silas Deane Middle School project is ahead of schedule. Mr. Menzo said that he meets with Newfield's foreman daily. Also, Mr. Santoro, Fire Marshall and the Chief Building Officials meet daily to discuss the Certificate of Occupancy. Mr. Menzo said that the foreman has been very positive and pro-active to deal with and realizes that the priority is the students' safety.

Chairperson Czernicki reminded all that the project was not planned to be completed by the beginning of the 2003 school year. The completion date was anticipated to be some time in the Fall of 2003. Mr. Menzo said that at this time, the project is 84% complete. The actual completion time is scheduled to be in late November. Mr. Menzo said part of the new technology at the school is voice mail for each staff member. Both staff and parents are very enthusiastic about this. Mr. Menzo said that this whole project has been a positive experience for him and he thanked the Council, the Building Committee, the Board of Education and the school staff.

Councilor Gardow thanked Mr. Menzo for his contagious enthusiasm. Councilor Gardow said that the key to Newfield's success with Mr. Menzo and the Building Committee has been their ability to listen to suggestions and accepting new ideas. They have been willing to look at alternatives when moving forward with the project. Mr. Menzo agreed that Newfield's foreman was always willing to focus on what is best for the students.

Councilor Flynn verified with Mr. Drake that Newfield will provide more people than Turner is willing to provide. Mr. Drake said that the Committee can at any time reduce staffing levels and expenses.

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

Mr. Drake informed the Council that the Silas Deane Middle School gymnasium roof was not last redone in 1997, but rather in 1987. There will be a change order necessary to redo the roof. It really should be done before school starts.

Councilor Fitzpatrick asked if the issue is that the roof is failing. Mr. Drake said that the roof is failing and trying to match a new roof with an old roof is very difficult; therefore, the entire roof should be redone.

Councilor Cascio asked Mr. Drake who the source of the dates was. Mr. Drake said there were multiple roofs done at different times and that the numbers were confused with a repair done in 1997.

Silas Deane Middle School - Technology Purchases

Councilor Cascio moved "**TO ALLOW THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE THE ABILITY TO PURCHASE FROM THE STATE BIDDERS LIST, PHASE I TECHNOLOGY NEEDS FOR A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$164,200**", seconded by Councilor Gardow.

Councilor Flynn said that the State Bidders List is an excellent reference to estimate costs. He asked who the manufacturer of the computers is. Mr. Drake said that the original list showed the manufacturer as Dell; however, that could change. Councilor Flynn said that Dell and Gateway are known for their computers for educational use and he'd like to give the Building Committee the flexibility to go directly to the vendor, rather than be tied to the State Bidders List.

Councilor Flynn moved "**TO AMEND THE MOTION TO ALLOW THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE THE ABILITY TO PURCHASE PHASE I TECHNOLOGY NEEDS FOR A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$164,200**", seconded by Councilor Gardow.

Councilor Gardow said that the bid of \$324,000 has been split into two phases to mitigate risk with regard to the whole program. He thanked all of the volunteers who spent their time and input on the purchase of technology.

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

Charter Revision Funding - Secretary, et.al

Councilor Flynn moved "**TO TRANSFER \$3,000 FROM THE CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT TO A CHARTER REVISION ACCOUNT FOR SECRETARIAL SERVICES, PUBLIC HEARING NOTICES, AND SUPPLIES**", seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Status of September 2, 2003 Council meeting

All Councilors present verified that they will be available to meet on September 2. The meeting will take place as originally scheduled.

Use of Open Space by MDC and Waiver of Permit Fees

Chairperson Czernicki said that the MDC has contacted Town Manager Bonnie Therrien about going into the areas behind Ridge Road. She asked the project manager to come forward to answer any questions.

Mr. Donofrio, MDC Project Technician and Mr. Thomas, MDC Manager of Engineering Services approached the podium.

Councilor Morin asked if there were any alternatives looked at rather than going through the open space. Mr. Donofrio said that the pipe does not go through a standing water area, but rather through wetlands soil. Councilor Morin said that he believes this route is more cost effective. He is not comfortable with moving through wetlands. Mr. Thomas said that this project started many years ago. There have been two public hearings in Wethersfield and several options have been considered. Earlier proposals posed the problem of close proximity of the sewer mains to the homes on Ridge Road. These earlier proposals would have required extensive blasting through rock and could have damaged homes in the area. Councilor Morin asked if there has been any discussion of mitigation. Mr. Thomas said that every precaution will be taken so that any impact to the wetlands will be minimized. Councilor Morin asked Town Manager Bonnie Therrien to find out what the process is to fill in the wetlands. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the first time MDC is meeting with Inland Wetlands will be this upcoming Wednesday. Mr. Thomas said that the purpose of tonight's discussion is for the Council to authorize the Town Manager to sign the application as owner of the wetlands. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the project is a use of Town property which the Council also has to approve. Councilor Morin is concerned about the maintenance of the property after the project is completed. Councilor Morin would like it conveyed to the Inland Wetlands Commission that there needs to be mitigation of some sort, whether it be plantings or something else.

Councilor Gardow asked why this project is being done. Mr. Thomas said that the MDC is proposing the installation of the sewer main in response to many requests of the homeowners who have reported that their septic systems are failing. The MDC has an obligation to provide sanitary sewer service when requested. Councilor Gardow said that private systems are failing and these people want the MDC to fix the problems. He asked what the cost is and who pays for it. Mr. Thomas said that the cost is close to \$1 million of which 40%-50% will be recovered through the property assessment. The deficit will be born by the taxpayers of the Metropolitan District. Councilor Gardow asked Health Director Paul Hutcheon if the failing septic system is a health risk. Mr. Hutcheon said that the problem has been going on for a number of years and it is certainly a health risk. He has documented overflowing septic systems on the west side of Ridge Road from Wells Road south. There are twenty-one homes in this area that are currently served by a private septic system. Some septic systems in this area have been replaced over the years and it is a very difficult and costly repair. Mr. Hutcheon has pushed the MDC to bring to Council what is a viable, reasonable approach to solving the problem. They have provided it now and Mr. Hutcheon supports it 100%.

Councilor Flynn asked if the houses on the opposite side of the street are served by sanitary sewers. Mr. Donofrio said that they are. Councilor Flynn verified that not only will the sewer main require construction, but digging will need to be done to place the laterals. Councilor Flynn said that the public health implications justify this project going forward. Mr. Hutcheon said that this is one of the few areas left in Wethersfield where the homes are not served by sanitary sewers.

Councilor Cascio asked if doing the project in this way will eliminate any blasting. Mr. Thomas said that there will be blasting to the west of the homes. Councilor Cascio asked if all precautions will be taken when blasting and who is responsible if any damage is sustained by property owners. Mr. Thomas said that the blasting is done by a professional blasting company and they will be going into the homes to do pre-blasting surveys to assess the condition of the properties prior to blasting. Any damages will then be easily assessed.

Chairperson Czernicki said that her concern is that although there is insurance for the homeowners having the sanitary

sewers installed, what will be the coverage for other homes affected by the blasting. She said that there needs to be a good working knowledge of the effects of the work to be done and proceed cautiously. Mr. Thomas said that this will be taken into consideration.

Councilor Sassano moved **"TO ALLOW THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN THE INLAND WETLANDS PERMIT FOR THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT AND WAIVE THE PERMIT FEES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SANITARY SEWER SERVICE TO THE PROPERTY OWNERS OF HOUSE NUMBERS 741-883 RIDGE ROAD"**, seconded by Councilor Flynn.

Chairperson Czernicki asked what the next step will be should this motion be approved this evening. Mr. Thomas said that the next step is to meet with the Inland Wetlands Commission this Wednesday. Next there will be a public hearing during the last week of September. By the end of November, the advertisement for construction will be run. Construction will hopefully begin this Winter.

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

BIDS

Councilor Morin moved **"TO AWARD THE BID FOR THE 4 LEXINGTON STREET PROJECT TO BIDDER #4 MPK BUILDING - IN THE AMOUNT OF \$16,990"**, seconded by Councilor Hemmann. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Morin moved **"TO AWARD THE BID FOR THE 446 HARTFORD AVENUE PROJECT TO BIDDER #2 MPK BUILDING - IN THE AMOUNT OF \$38,500"**, seconded by Councilor Hemmann. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

MINUTES

Councilor Flynn moved **"TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF AUGUST 4, 2003"**, seconded by Councilor Hemmann. Councilors Fitzpatrick, Flynn, Gardow, Hemmann, and Chairperson Czernicki voted AYE. Councilors Cascio, Morin, and Sassano ABSTAINED. The motion passed 5-0-3.

GENERAL COMMENTS

REPORTS

COUNCIL

Councilor Gardow reported that he attended the International Night Out at Mill Woods Park and said that it was fantastic. The Police Department, Fire Department, and Fire Marshall were present and put on fine demonstrations. He said that this was a wonderful community-building, outreach program.

Councilor Hemmann commented that some of the items needed at the Community Center would be perfect to go on the inventory. These items include air conditioning and the condition of the floors, windows, and roofs. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien agreed that this is a good idea so that these types of issues do not occur again.

PUBLIC

Jim Clynch, 903 Ridge Road, was upset that the Council has allowed the MDC to conduct a project that will involve his property. He is concerned for the wildlife that will be affected by the project. He feels that the only reason the homeowners want to put sewers in is to increase the value of their property. He is frustrated that the citizens in Town have no input with regards to these projects. There is a sign on Wells Road that says that this area is a wildlife refuse, yet the Town is going to allow the MDC to tear it up. Mr. Clynch feels that the MDC has already raped Wethersfield

with the issue of the Cove. Mr. Clynch is upset that the Council approved the tax abatements for fire fighters and AHEPA, yet he has approached the Council to offer Veterans benefits to no avail. The Veterans have not had a decrease in their taxes in years. He thinks it is a shame for the Council to allow this to happen.

Chairperson Czernicki told Mr. Clynch that when the Budget & Finance Committee meets they will be looking at the Veterans tax exemption. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that there were questions with the implementation at the State level and that it has finally been resolved.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:25 p.m., Councilor Cascio moved "**TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**" seconded by Councilor Gardow. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 11:04 p.m., Councilor Morin moved "**TO ENTER BACK INTO THE REGULAR MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Flynn. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 11:04 p.m., Councilor Flynn moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Fitzpatrick. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by vote of Council 9/2/03