

**REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 17, 2013**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, June 17, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Kotkin, Manousos, McAlister, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann. Absent: Councilor Hurley.

Also present: Ann Marie Stanford from Harris and Scott Tschetter from Eastern Communications, Mike Turner, Town Engineer, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Mr. Bridges the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Mayor Hemmann announced that the next item on the agenda is a presentation on the town-wide radio system replacement plan.

Mr. Bridges asked Assistant Town Manager, Rae Ann Palmer to introduce the item.

Ms. Palmer explained that we are going to hear about a plan tonight that staff has worked on for more than a year to look at the existing radio system and to look at potential replacement radio systems. Ms. Palmer explained the history of the use and purchase of the old system and the plague of maintenance and service issues with the current system. Ms. Palmer also explained the proposal from Harris for the new radio system.

Ms. Palmer introduced Ann Marie Stanford from Harris and Scott Tschetter from Eastern Communications who gave a presentation regarding the new radio system. Their PowerPoint presentation is included in the minute's record. The Councilors asked questions regarding the need for a new radio system and the selection and operational testing and operational date for the new system.

PUBLIC HEARING PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Hemmann introduced the first hearing item.

Resolution to Approve the Amended Educational Specifications to create District Storage at Wethersfield High School.

With no members wishing to speak on the particular hearing topic, Mayor Hemmann declared the hearing closed.

Mayor Hemmann introduced the second hearing item.

Ordinance to Approve the Establishment of a CNEF Fund for the Wethersfield Public Schools Surplus.

With no members wishing to speak on the particular hearing topic, Mayor Hemmann declared the hearing closed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mike Cuddigan, 49 Westlook Rd., commented on the radio system plan and urged the council to hire an independent consultant to review what services Harris would provide for the town and if it is in the right direction.

Mr. Bridges commented that we do have an independent consultant on our roster. He explained that Trott Communications has reviewed all this and they have been working with us for 10 years on our system. Mr. Bridges explained that they actually met with the Town Council and the Infrastructure Committee a week ago and have reviewed the same information being presented this evening.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented on the asphalt paving, milling and sealing work in Town and commented that sealing is a serious problem here. The Town should contact those vendors to correct the problems so we will not have to pay for it. He also questioned whether the old radio system is really that bad and what the cost would be to get the replacement parts for it. He also commented on the money that is still owed on the old system.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Cir., commented on the radio system stating he seriously doubts that anyone on the Council can really address the technical aspects of what is being sold' He urged the Council to be very careful; make sure to explore all the alternatives before making a decision; and ask questions. Also he questioned, if the people using the equipment, will have the skill to use all the features of the equipment. Mr. Ruhe commented that \$3.5 million dollars is a lot of money; believes that a referendum is an absolute must; and urged them to go out to referendum regarding the new radio system.

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Rd., commented on the radio system and stated that we should get a money back guarantee if something is at fault with it. Going out to referendum isn't the answer but we need to do some double checking to make sure it is a good purchase. Mr. Sekas also commented that the Historical Society should make their house tours more accessible. He commented that when a business with a single step changes hands, it should be in our law to make it handicap accessible before the next tenant opens.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Drake reported that the Infrastructure Committee met again last Monday to discuss the radio project. He commented that all Councilors and public safety officials were invited and we listened to a presentation from the consultant. He explained that they reviewed all the past issues and problems and where we want to go with the new system. It was pretty similar to what we

reviewed tonight. Councilor Drake stated that this has been on our list of issues to be dealt with for a long time. He stated that this was purchased 10-12 years ago and has never worked properly. He added that it was bought at the end of its lifecycle. The issue of trying to keep it going is that we cannot get parts; and it is going to get worse before it gets better. Councilor Drake stated that we have no choice, we have to fix this and we have to do something now. This seems like the way to go, it makes sense. He realizes that it's a lot of money and knows that we are all concerned. He stated that this system is at the beginning of its life cycle curve, the last one was at the end. This system will get a third location in place; right now, we only have two. Again, the nice thing about this is we've had 10 years of learning. We know what not to do and where we want to go and he thinks this is going to take care of it. He explained we are going to do a contract based on performance not on equipment. This will work. Harris is a big company and if awarded the contract, they will get it right. He commented on discussions over the last week having a referendum. There seems to be a feeling that we want to have one. We talked about the legalities about it, but we made a commitment when we got into Town Council 3½ years ago. We are trying to get all the long-term items, that we pay yearly for now, actually in the budget so we are not falling behind and going to borrow money to catch up. He explained that we have the roads caught up and we are funding those in our budget fully, we have maintenance trucks, maintenance equipment—all of this is now being funded regularly, the fire trucks, we are going to put this in place where we are going to be funding these on a yearly basis and this radio system is going to be the same thing, continue the way we are going to do it. This is not special; it is going to be different. If we did bonding of all these things we would have a problem. He stated that Jeff is going to talk about this more. Councilor Drake stated that he believes this is something that we need to do and commented that we still have some more work to do on it. He tried to do this presentation tonight to get people up-to-speed. In the next couple of weeks or month this is the direction we are going to go. He stated that this is not something that's been just in the last year; it's been going on a long time and has come to a head so we are trying to go in the right direction.

Deputy Mayor Console asked to explain about Trott Communications.

Councilor Drake explained that they are not experts by any means on this and stated that he believes that RaeAnn is an expert because the Council has been listening to her for three years about this system. He stated that we have a consultant from Trott Communications that has been on this since the beginning who has been fighting the battle with the existing supplier. He explained that this problem with the existing supplier is not a new problem it has been a long, long time. This consultant has reviewed everything. This is the way the world is going and believes this is pretty well proven where we want to go. There are other towns that are going to be going in the same direction. He added that there will be more discussion, but he believes this is where we need to go.

Mayor Hemmann read a letter that she received from the Mayor of Nagoya. The letter stated that the Mayor will be visiting Wethersfield in September or October of 2013. Mayor Hemmann asked that the Council be available to help plan and welcome the Mayor of Nagoya at an event to be held at Highcrest School.

Mayor Hemmann commented that Open House Day was a nice day and commented that Lee brought us some very good points in regard to accessibility. One of the open house items was the Griswoldville Chapel and their partnership with Fire House No. 2. Their relationship with the Chapel in the early course of their chartering was a very good event for the Town.

Councilor Roberts commented that she was able to visit the Griswold Chapel and saw the Mayor there with members of her family and stated that it was interesting to see the old pictures in the fire house from what Griswoldville really use to look like and encouraged people to stop in to visit and tour.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bridges reported that the legislature has wrapped up this session and we are in the process of getting information to you through CCM on what was passed, what was not passed and what impacts, if any, the legislation will have on the towns. He has sent you out a budget report showing the impact of municipal aid on the town's budget. He explained that roughly we are going to be expect \$64,000 more than we anticipated in our budget overall, so that is very positive. He commented that there was some legislation that had some impact, so we are going to be providing some documentation on where it went and if it got passed and what its impact could be.

Mr. Bridges commented regarding a referendum and under what conditions the town has a referendum. He explained that the Town Charter has a particular section in it that states that if there is a special appropriation of more than \$200,000 then that must be submitted to the public for referendum. However, these types of expenses are not special appropriations. Mr. Bridges explained that a special appropriation would be something that does not occur in the budget process. Both the radio system and the fire truck have been provided for in the municipal budget, so those would not be considered special appropriations. Also a referendum is held if you were to issue general obligation debt. That is a function of providing the bond holders a guarantee that the town's people will provide the full faith and credit of the municipality which means that you will pay for those bonds before you pay anything else. That's what the vote on a general obligation bond entails—that is what the community says and the hold to referendum. So when we voted for the \$74,000,000 bonds for the high school, we told those people that we will eventually purchase those bonds before anything else we will pay those bonds. That is what it means. Mr. Bridges explained that in this particular situation, we don't intend to issue general obligation debt. We actually did an evaluation based upon the length of time that the system would be financed and the interest rates and the cost of issuance and it would actually be less expensive to issue this through the lease purchase agreement. So from a cost-factor and an efficiency factor going the way we planned would be more beneficial to the community than issuing general obligation debt. Therefore, a referendum would not be necessary. So absent those two conditions, what you are left with is an advisory question and those are not permitted under state statute. You cannot take the pulse of the community through a public vote. You can use surveys and drop boxes and people can submit letters, but to have a formal public vote on an

advisory question is not permitted under law. That was something that the town attorney and I have wrestled with over the past week of so. So those are the conditions under which we are operating when we talk about a referendum. In these situations they are not warranted nor are they permitted. He would be happy to answer any more questions about that.

Dolores Sassano reported that you can license your dog through the end of June without a penalty.

COUNCIL ACTION

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

Councilor Drake moved **“TO PASS THE RESOLUTION AMENDING THE EDUCATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE WETHERSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION TO AUTHORIZE THE REUSE AS DISTRICT STORAGE OF WETHERSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL SPACE THAT WAS FORMERLY USED AS A MECHANICAL/BOILER ROOM”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Mr. Bridges asked Mike Turner and the Chair of the Building Committee Christine Fortunato to review the item.

Mr. Turner explained that the Building Committee voted to eliminate geothermal on the high school renovations. With that, the Architect and the construction manager started to look at the interior of the building and any spaces. They felt that it would be more appropriate since there are two boiler rooms that they be combined into a single boiler room so that all the electrical and mechanical systems all head out of one space. What that does is free up some space of one of the boiler rooms of about 1,500 sq. feet. The Board of Education has voted to amend the Education Specs to call that district-wide storage which will allow the Town to get at least partial reimbursement of renovation of that space rather than no money at all. Estimated savings is about \$125,000.

Mayor Hemmann asked if this will eliminate the potential use of the trailers?

Mr. Bushey replied yes, he would hope that the district storage could be kept in these spaces.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved to **“APPROVE AN ORDINANCE CREATING A RESERVE IN THE CNEF FUND FOR THE BOARD OF EDUCATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 10-248A OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES”**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges explained that as discussed during the budget process there was a desire to find a way, at the end of the year, rather than acceleration of expenditures or through a lapse of funds back to the general fund, we can find a way to preserve dollars not expended by the Board of

Education into a fund that can be used for capital items. Mr. Bridges explained that State Statutes Section 10-248a provides a mechanism where the Town Council can establish a fund for that very purpose and can authorize expenditures from the fund for particular purposes if requested. This ordinance creates that fund within the CNEF fund and allows us to do that.

A Council discussion ensued.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT TO THE WETHERSFIELD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER'S PENSION TRUST”**, seconded by Councilor Drake.

Mr. Bridges provided some history. The Town of Wethersfield has provided its Volunteer Fire Fighters with a Pension Plan, roughly a modified 457 plan for some time. He explained that in each year the Town can contribute “X” amount of dollars directly for members that have a good year based upon the amount of points they accumulate, based upon a chart that’s been adopted. He explained there is also distribution of interest income on those funds. As we have discussed in the last year or so, we have moved those funds and created a trust very similar to the regular pension trust, and other trusts. They have created these trusts, and as a result, this particular one has generated some discussion because it had a very good year in terms of investment gains. That led the fire fighters to ask a question that wasn’t anticipated with the creation of trust--what if we had a good year and there was excess funds. Mr. Bridges explained that the current document provides that there is a floor of two percent to which the town must provide to each member—a 2% increase in their account value with a maximum of 4%, but after the four percent everything would be excess. In some instances, if there is a very good year for investments that excess fund could be quite a bit and it would not be allocated to individual towns. Mr. Bridges explained that this 457 plan is somewhat unique where the members have individual accounts but they are not managing the investments as you would your own mutual funds selection. He stated that it is still in a pot but each member has a certain allocation of the resources of the fund based upon length of service and how it’s grown over time. He explained there was discussion at the Pension Committee meeting about what we do if there is a significant amount of excess fund. Rather than raise the floor and the ceiling, what we came up with is to address everybody’s concerns, because the Town’s concerns, where this is still investment although most of it is in fixed income which is very stable, there is the potential for a market drop, so how do we protect the fund against market fluctuations and still provide the firefighters the benefits of very good years. Having had discussions with the fire fighters and the Pension Committee we are proposing what was called the donut hole where, if there are excess funds over 10% of the account value, the full market value of the assets, then that percentage over the 10 percent could be distributed back to the individual members accounts. So, the Town would still hold on to 10% to guard against market fluctuations in the fund, but the members would benefit from extremely good years and there’s a kind of formulary on the podium this evening on how that would work. That is what we are

proposing. It gets away from increasing the ceiling or decreasing the floor and so on, it just says if you have a really good year you get to benefit from those excess funds. He stated that the Fire Department whole-heartedly supports this amendment as did the Pension Committee on Thursday evening.

A discussion ensued regarding the changes to the Pension Plan.

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

Mr. Bridges pointed out a typo that needed to be amended on page 2 of the Pension Plan. 2014 should be changed to 2013.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AMEND THE MOTION TO MAKE IT FOR 2013”**, seconded by Councilor Drake.

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

BIDS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AWARD A BID FOR PAVING TO TILCON CT, INC, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$166,000”**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges asked Mike Turner to discuss.

Mr. Turner explained that this is part of the road maintenance CNEF account and we use that in cooperation with town aid and LOCIP funds equal \$1.2 million dollars which is essentially our total road budget. In this case, we are using a State bid for paving as was prevalent in the past. He explained that Tilcon is the low vendor for our district for the work and we are going to be looking in the 66 to 67 dollar a ton for asphalt price range. He stated that right now we are paying \$62 to \$64 range and stated the prices have gone up but are still below what they were years ago which was the \$75 – \$80 dollar price range. Mr. Turner explained that what we have done is base our budget for the fall roads that have been approved by Council and the Capital Improvement Committee based on this current bid.

A discussion ensued regarding small street paving. Deputy Mayor Console asked if the Council can have the list of streets to be paved at the next council meeting. Mr. Turner replied yes.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AWARD A BID FOR PAVEMENT MILLING TO COSTELLO INDUSTRIES, INC. FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$30,000.”**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges asked Mike Turner to describe this item.

Mr. Turner explained that again we are piggy backing off of the State bid. In this case, Costello Industries is the low vendor. They currently are the low vendor and they are the low vendor in the upcoming season. Their prices have gone from about \$1.41 sq. yd. to about a \$1.45 a sq. yard. Very marginal increases but well within the budget and that's what we were setting when we set the \$30,000 budget up--it's for those particular roads that we were planning on doing in the fall.

A discussion ensued regarding milling use.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AWARD THE CRCOG BID TO ANNSEAL, INC IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$50,000 FOR CRACK SEALING, HOT APPLIED METHOD, OF TOWN ROADS”**, seconded by Councilor Drake.

Mr. Bridges asked Mike Turner to describe this item.

Mr. Turner explained that in this particular case, CRCOG puts out a bid for the capital region for hot crack sealing and cold crack sealing. They are two different methodologies, the hot crack sealing which is AnnSeal the low vendor here, is essentially the hot tar that they apply with a wand and then they spray a material called glenz oil on top of it so it doesn't attach to the vehicles. This is an appropriate crack sealing material for lower volume roads, cul-de-sacs and your typical residential streets. Mr. Turner stated that crack sealing is probably the most cost-effective way to save our roads. He explained that there are two ways to go about it. One is you want to do it maybe 3-5 years after a road is paved when some of the cracks starts to open up, the overlap and the centerline joints, if you seal those, you are going to add 5-7 years of life easily to the pavement. He explained that other areas where the roads are actually starting to fail; there are different types of cracks. There are transverse cracks and longitudinal cracks and each of those means a different thing when we are looking at the stress that it's causing. Mr. Turner explained that one is temperature related, the other one might be structural related, but again, the crack sealing is the best way if the road is just starting to exhibit these things, if you hit with crack sealing, it brings it back as though it were a 100% complete road and 5-7 years before you would have to mill it and pave it and that is how our road maintenance program is balanced with a combination with the millings and the crack sealing.

Mr. Bridges asked why it is so difficult to keep that seam from spreading.

Mr. Turner responded it's because it is a cold joint which means that you are laying down a lane of asphalt, you are rolling it, and that is curing. You then have the paver come back up and pave against that, so now you have the hot asphalt being laid against the cold material. He explained there is always going to be a joint and it's one of the things that have plagued the industry. He stated one of the things that has been tried, the DOT has just done it on Prospect St., it's called

the overlap joint where they actually take the edge of the paver and then they taper it down to nothing so that the next joint when it's overlaid, there is like an overlap instead butt up to each other's seam, one layer actually overlaps the other. That's typically the joint that you will see down the center of the road, again it's a function of the fact that you have 12 -13 foot as the maximum width that the paving box can lay at one time, so there will always be a joint typically in the center.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if we have warranties with the paving company if newer roads start to crack. Is it there issue to fix it.

Mr. Turner responded that it is not a warranty issue it's just a function of the material. We're using very good quality paving companies and they are doing it right, it's just a matter of the material that is being used. Asphalt is a natural material and again you have a cold material and hot material fusing up against each other and you have joints. Mr. Turner responded that we have no recourse it's just inherent in the product itself with expansion and contraction. It's just a function of our temperature.

A discussion continued regarding paving projects within the town.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO AWARD THE CRCOG BID TO MULCHSEAL, LLC IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$50,000 FOR CRACK SEALING, COLD APPLIED METHOD, OF TOWN ROADS"**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges asked Mike Turner to describe this item.

Mr. Turner explained that we have probably used this process of the past 10 years or so. It is a messy process but it is a very effective process that we use on heavier travelled roads. That is why we have the two methods.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO AWARD A BID TO ADVANCED MECHANICAL SERVICES, LLC IN THE AMOUNT OF \$21,165 TO INSTALL A ROOF TOP HEATING AND COOLING UNIT AT FIREHOUSE 3,"** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

Mr. Bridges explained that the existing unit at Fire House 3 does not work and it cannot be fixed as we cannot get parts so we have bid out the replacement for that system for \$21,165 and there is money available to do that work and that includes installation and everything.

A discussion ensued regarding the condition of the internal system of the building and the qualifications of the vendor.

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

Deputy Mayor Console moved to **“AWARD THE BID FOR CUSTODIAL SERVICES TO CAPITAL CLEANING CONTRACTORS, INC. FOR THE LUMP SUM AMOUNT OF \$83,038”**, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges asked Sally Katz, Director of Physical Services to describe the item.

Ms. Katz explained two years ago, a contract was awarded for cleaning services. It was a one-year contract. The contractor was able to have a one-year extension on that contract. This year we took a look at the RFP and what we were requiring for cleaning services for the Town Hall, the Library, the Police Station and the Physical Services Department. We spoke with everyone in those departments to make sure that their services and cleaning needs were being met and to expand on what was required. Our buildings are obviously very public and used at all times of the day and night. She explained when we went out to bid Capital Cleaning, which is a well-established cleaning company in Connecticut; they did come back as the second lowest bidder. However, they were able to assure us that they have the number of staff that would be able to provide a high level of cleaning. She stated that they also are able to keep up with the latest technologies and eco-friendly cleaning. There are many people with allergies and have reactions to cleaning products and so they try to use as eco-friendly products as possible. She stated they are not currently the contractor.

A discussion ensued regarding the reasoning behind not using the lowest bidder. Ms. Katz explained that they had a very small staff available and they would have just barely been able to cover the buildings on a good day and on a day and when you would have multiple people out we were not assured from the inventory of people that they have that we would be able to get the same level of service consistently from them. Also they did not provide us with the level of information regarding references, the type of cleaning and products that they use and the schedule that they would use to maintain the buildings as Capital did. She stated that there is about an \$8,000 difference. A discussion ensued regarding the use of using one vendor rather than multiple companies.

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

Mr. Turner announced that there is a public informational meeting at the Riverfront Community Center in Glastonbury regarding the Putnam Bridge multi-mobile trail connections. He explained that part of the Putnam Bridge renovation is to add a 6-foot walkway across the bridge. He stated what the project does not include is the way to get off the bridge and down into our bike trail system on our side and the Glastonbury side. He explained that he and Kathy Bagley have been attending meetings and working with the DOT staff and their consultant. They actually have an informational meeting tomorrow to share the committee's recommended scenarios to get down from the bridge to our bike trail which is essentially right below us, right on Great Meadow Rd. He explained what you see is essentially the whole road the contractor is using -- like a U-shape loop. That is essentially what our connection will be but it will be paved and landscaped

and dressed-up and some parking spaces will be placed somewhere in that vicinity. Mr. Turner stated that the Council and the public are invited. It starts at 6:30 p.m. over at Glastonbury at their Community Center and 7:00 p.m. will be the formal presentation.

Mayor Hemmann stated that they did discuss it at one of the Conservation Commission meetings and one of the items that came up was in trying to help fund some of the bridge projects, in order to get some federal dollars, they looked to the bike trails as a mechanism to get some of those federal dollars so that did happen with this project and so it's helping to fund and actually access across the river.

MINUTES

Councilor Drake moved **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 23, 2013"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 6-0-2. Councilor Hurley absent. Councilors McAlister and Manousos abstained.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 3, 2013"** seconded by Councilor Drake.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 5-0-3. Councilor Hurley absent. Councilors Kotkin, McAlister and Montinieri abstained.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 10, 2013"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 6-0-2. Councilor Hurley absent. Councilors McAlister and Manousos abstained.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council
July 23, 2013