

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Town Council Chambers

November 10, 2015

6:30 p.m.

RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES

The Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Town Council was called to order at 6: 41 p.m.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were: Chairman Vincent Cervoni; Vice-Chair Tom Laffin; Councilors John LeTourneau; Christine Mansfield; Larry Russo; John Sullivan; Craig Fishbein; Vincent Testa and Bob Parisi.

Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr., Town Attorney G.E. Farrell, Sr. was also at the meeting. Comptroller Jim Bowes was not in attendance.

3. Consent Agenda

- 3a. Consider and Approve Tax Refunds totaling \$5, 659.93 (#367-390)
Acct. #1001001-41020/Tax Collector
- 3b. Consider and Approve Acceptance of Donation of Funds from Uptown
and downtown business owners in the amount of \$556 and Consider
and Approve Appropriation of Funds in the amount of \$556
to Special Revenues-Misc. Grant and Donations Fund Acct. #2502002
47152 and to Expense Donations Acct. \$250 Misc. Acct. TBD/Police Dept.
- 3c. Consider and Approve Transfer in the amount of \$910 from Materials &
Supplies Acct. #10030000-561 to Rotary Laser Level Capital Acct. #TBD
and Transfer in the amount of \$5,559 from Maintenance of Bldg. & Grounds
Acct. #10030000-5431 to Carpet Personnel Capital Acct. #TBD/Public Works
- 3d. Consider and Approve Acceptance of donations in the amount of \$245 and
Consider and Approve Appropriation of Funds in the amount of \$245 to
Donations Rev. Acct. #2134002-47152 and to Expenditures Acct.
#21340100-58830/Youth & Social Services
- 3e. Consider and Approve Acceptance of Donations in the amount of \$480 and
Consider and Approve Appropriation in the amount of \$480 to Donations Rev.
Acct. #2134002-47152 and to Expenditures Acct. #21340100-58830/Youth &
Social Services

- 3f. Consider and Approve Acceptance of Donations in the amount of \$377 and Consider and Approve Appropriation in the amount of \$377 to Donations Rev. Acct. # 2134002-47152 and to Expenditures Acct. #21340100-58830/Youth & Social Services
- 3g. Consider and Approve Acceptance of Donation in the amount of \$250 and Consider and Approve Appropriation in the amount of \$250 to Rev. Acct. # 2134002-47152 and to Expenditures Acct. #21340100-58830/Youth & Social Services
- 3h. Consider and Approve Acceptance of Donation from Wallingford Peer Advocates in the amount of \$993 and Consider and approve Appropriation in the amount of \$993 to Donations Rev. Acct. #2134002-47152 and to Expenditures Acct. # 21340100-58830/Youth & Social Services
- 3i. Consider and approve Appropriation of \$980 to Revenue Acct. #22604002-47152 And to Expenditures Acct. # 22640150-58830/Youth & Social Services
- 3j. Consider and Approve Acceptance of donation from Wallingford Energy, LCC In the amount of \$2,500 and Consider and Approve Appropriation in the Amount of \$2,500 to Donation Rev. Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Acct. # 250 (Special Revenues) Misc. Grants and Donations Fund/Fire Dept.
- 3k. Schedule a Public Hearing for November 24, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. for An Ordinance Appropriating \$1,000,000 for Northford Road Bridge Reconstruction and Authorizing the issue of \$1,000,000 Bonds of the Town to meet said Appropriation and Pending the Issuance Thereof the Making of Temporary Borrowings for Such Purpose.
- 3l. Schedule a Public Hearing for November 24, 2015 at 6:35 p.m. for an Ordinance Appropriating \$1,000,000 for Toelles Road Construction and Bridge Rehabilitation and Authorizing the issue of \$1,000,000 Bonds of the Town to Meet Said Appropriation and Pending the Issuance Thereof the Making of Temporary Borrowings for Such Purpose
- 3m. Consider and Approve Town Council Schedule of Meetings for year 2016.
- 3n. Consider and Approve Town Council Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2015

Motion to approve and accept Consent Agenda Items 3a to 3n

Made by: Laffin
Seconded by: Parisi

4. Items removed from Consent Agenda – None

5. PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked Mayor Dickinson about an article in the paper regarding the girls softball fields in Town, noting Toll Brothers had backed out of purchasing the property from Gaylord Hospital. He asked if the Town had approached Gaylord about purchasing some of this property for women's and girls softball. Mayor Dickinson said he had no knowledge of this. Mr. Gross asked if this would be the function of Mayor Dickinson's department. The Mayor responded that he was told by the Recreation Dept. that there are an adequate number of fields to provide for all of the leagues. He said the Town is in the process of repairing several fields for the eventuality that they won't be able to play there. He said this is one factor and noted he was aware that 50% of the 200 acres is wetlands, so the area of the fields and some other areas are the prime building areas, and would not be a motivation for the sale of those properties.

Mr. Gross noted the Town keeps growing and have more women playing softball and said the Town should be more proactive with activities for young people and even young adults. He said he was at a loss to hear there are plenty of fields, because he was under the impression that Little League had a deficit regarding the number of players and the number of quality fields. Mayor Dickinson said he believed all of the leagues were showing a reduction in the number of participants mirrored by the steadily reducing number of students in the schools. He said there is expected to be a continual decline through 2025 which is a national phenomenon. Mr. Gross said the Town has the opportunity. Mr. Gross asked how many STEAP grants the Town has applied for. Mayor Dickinson said a STEAP grant request to purchase a generator was denied. Mr. Gross cited North Haven, who he said has received several STEAP grants. He said it is the quality of the application and the grant that is being sought and whether it is a benefit to the community. He said these types of grants for softball fields and recreational activities for young adults and teenagers, are the type of STEAP grants given.

Mr. Gross, Long Hill Road, asked the Mayor about Town enrollment in schools decreasing through 2025. He said at the last meeting, the possibility of a study was discussed to see if one school would be appropriate. He said he hoped based on the Mayor's comments that he would ask the Board of Education to consider this study which he said should be done now.

Gina Morgenstein, S. Main Street, spoke about grants. She said the Town is working on the State mandated Plan of Conservation and Development. She said the other side of the railroad tracks is ripe for some development, i.e., the Brothers Restaurant parking lot area. She said the pizza shop and the liquor store were recently sold and being refurbished. She said there might have been some awareness that these businesses were for sale and should have been considered; she noted that available open space property wasn't considered and pointed out that the Brother's Restaurant may be for sale which she said was prime real estate in the center of Town, just south of the new railroad line in the Transit Oriented District. Ms. Morgenstein said she understood that 50 S. Main Street near the Post Office was sold and emphasized the Town needs to start looking at investments for the future.

Public Comments closed at 7:46 p.m.

6. Discussion and Possible Action regarding a Tentative Agreement with the Educational Administrators' Association of Wallingford for a Contract Effective July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019/Board of Education.

Appearing in front of the Council was Cindy Lavalette, Assistant Supt. for Wallingford Public Schools and Roxane McKay, Board of Education Chair. Ms. Lavalette provided a summary of the changes to the existing contract. She said there is a tentative agreement with the Educational Administrator's Union for a three-year contract with a general wage increase in year one of 1.8%; year two, a general wage increase of 1.9% and in year three, a general wage increase of 1.95%. She said in addition to the wage increase, there would be an annuity of \$500 provided in year two of the contract, and an annuity of \$500 in year three of the contract. Ms. Lavalette said the other big change in the contract is insurance related. She said the Board of Education is trying to mitigate the potential of having the Affordable Care Excise Tax (Cadillac Tax), so the Board has switched to an HSA with a buy-up option to the PPO, which the administrators currently have. She noted the HSA provides some savings and is not as "Cadillac" in nature. Ms. Lavalette said any administrator remaining on the PPO would have to buy up to that plan themselves, rather than having it provided by the Board of Education.

Ms. Lavalette said the premium cost share for the Administrator's insurance package would be 20% for years one and two, and 21% in year three. She said this contract would also reduce the waiver the Administrators have so that in year three in the contract, it would be reduced from the current 25% down to 20%.

Councilor LeTourneau asked for an explanation of the HSA and PPO acronyms. Ms. Lavalette explained the HSA is a health spending account plan where the employee puts in \$2,000 if they are on a family plan with the Board of Education matching with an additional \$2,000. She said users of the plan would have to fund all of their medical expenses until they reach the \$4,000 at which time the plan would take over and cover the insurance expenses from that point. She said the PPO is the traditional co-pay when visiting a doctor's office with the insurance plan picking up the rest of the cost.

Councilor Fishbein asked about how the high school assistant principal 10-month position was different from the high school assistant principal position. Ms. Lavalette said there is no 10-month assistant high school principal but there was a time when Lyman Hall had three assistant principals; two year round and one for a 10-month position. She said even though this no longer exists, the line item is kept in the budget because it is for high school assistant principal/curriculum coordinators. She said the curriculum co-ordinators are 10-month positions and are paid by that line item. Councilor Fishbein asked if the 10-month assistant principals were on a different pay scale than the curriculum co-ordinators. Ms. Lavalette said the coordinator near the assistant principal line item are the special education co-ordinators which are 12-month positions and the curriculum co-ordinators are 10-month and are paid at the 10-month rate at the high school assistant principal rate.

Councilor Fishbein asked if there was a need for both positions. Ms. Lavalette said there is not a need for both positions, but the Board of Education has elected to keep the high school assistant principal 10-month position in the budget in the event the need arose to have this position. She noted once this position is removed from the contract, it would be difficult to have this reinstated. Councilor Fishbein asked if it would make sense through attrition to get rid of the assistant principal position and have them all at 10-months. Ms. Lavalette said in her purview, it doesn't make sense and noted there is a high volume of work which goes on during the summer months, including scheduling, updating and keeping the school safety and security plan intact, planning and executing freshman orientation, online credit recovery programs,

bridge academy, and credit recovery programs not online. Councilor Fishbein said this contract allows for principals to be doing other things other than their regular duties and to receive a stipend during the summer. Ms. Lavalette said for as long as she has been aware, this was something that was a someone was not able to put in for and has had approved, so even though it exists in the contract, it is not something which has occurred. Councilor Fishbein asked if there were any members of the bargaining unit hired after July 1, 1996 or anyone hired prior to July 1, 1996. Ms. Lavalette said she could think of one person here longer than this probably more. Councilor Fishbein wondered if the longevity payments needed to remain in the contract. He said this seems to have sunset, but still appears in the contract. Councilor Fishbein asked about the mileage reimbursement which he noted was still in the contract. Ms. Lavalette said the mileage reimbursement was reviewed during the course of the negotiation, and found it was more cost effective to remain at the stipend mileage reimbursement instead of the IRS rate.

Councilor Fishbein said this could be contractually bargained away because if the payment is being made whether or not mileage is actually being incurred, it could be part of the contract that if a personal vehicle is used, they are not entitled to some sort of reimbursement. He pointed out that every person in this bargaining unit makes in excess of \$130,000 a year. He said the long-term disability aspect of the contract is on the shoulders of the Town. He said most people want it, but not everyone elects it when it is given as an option and wanted to know the cost. S. Lavalette said she would obtain this cost figure for Councilor Fishbein.

Councilor Fishbein said there are three steps in the bargaining unit and his understanding that in addition to the gross wage increase, each year the first three years, someone in the bargaining unit also gets the step. Ms. Lavalette pointed out that currently, someone who is not on step three will get the general wage increase, plus the step, so there are a number of people in the bargaining unit on step 3 and they won't have any step advancement, and those currently on steps 1 or 2, will get step advancement including a general wage increase.

Ms. McKay clarified that it is not 100% accurate that every single member of the bargaining unit makes a minimum \$130,000 a year. Councilor Fishbein noted the average is \$117,000 a year and the maximum is \$146,000 a year. Councilor Sullivan said he believed this was a fair contract, and noted that during the last contract, the administrators were the first ones to take a zero. He observed that a good job was done placing language in the contract which allows for mid-term negotiations to avoid the "Cadillac Tax". He noted the bargaining unit also agreed to this and this could save the Town a lot of money. He said the HSA was a good thing and asked about percentage of participants. Ms. Lavalette said there are no administrators in that plan because it isn't part of their contract, but this plan was moved forward with the teacher's bargaining unit and approximately 70% are involved in this, higher than anticipated. Councilor Sullivan said if the administrators went along with the HAS, it would be fair to say there would be a high participation. Ms. McKay said financially this makes sense. Councilor Sullivan asked about the reduction in the waiver. He asked for a definition. Ms. Lavalette explained that is a person decides not to take the insurance plan, the Board of Ed pays according to this contract, the first year, 25% of what the cost would be to the Board of that insurance policy. She said this provides savings to the Board, citing an example that if the cost to the Board was \$25,000, and it was a 25% waiver, then the employee is paid \$250 because they elected not to participate.

Wallingford, CT
Regular Town Council Meeting

Councilor Sullivan said that in each of the contract that has come before the Council from the Board of Education, we are pecking away at reducing this percentage on the waiver. Ms. Lavalette said if the Board could eliminate the waiver, one advantage that would still be to the employee would be that they wouldn't be paying the premium cost share. Councilor Sullivan noted he always believed the benefit is the insurance, not the monetary equivalent or percentage. Ms. Lavalette said this is why the Board is working to eliminate this waiver. Councilor Sullivan pointed out that he didn't have any problem with this contract, and told the Board of Education representatives they did a good job negotiating. He asked Chairman Cervoni if the Council needed to vote on this contract.

Chairman Cervoni noted that if the Council took no action, the contract goes into effect in 30 days, but the only thing the Council could do is reject the contract. Councilor Fishbein asked Ms. McKay about how much people are making in this union and asked what the minimum would be noting there are no 10-month high school assistant principals. Ms. McKay said there are two employees who would be on that line item, step 1 as curriculum resource co-ordinators and two employees on that line item on step 2 as curriculum resource co-ordinators, so there are four employees on this line item. Councilor Fishbein noted he didn't see curriculum resource added in two years ago where a few curriculum coordinators were made administrative positions and prior to that, they were curriculum resource teachers but became part of the administrators union to assist with the evaluation. She said on page 14 of the redline document, specific language was added with a stipend for the 10-month curriculum coordinator and this is something she will make more clear.

Motion to accept this contract as presented
Made by: LeTourneau
Seconded by: Sullivan

Public Comments

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road asked for clarification regarding the long-term disability contract option. He asked if not everyone accepts this. Ms. Lavalette said this option is part of the contract so everyone gets this. He asked about the HSA and if there was a premium after the administrator and the town both pay \$2,000. Ms. Lavalette said there is nothing additional and this would be the insurance for the covered medical expenses 100%, but doesn't cover medical supplies. Mr. Gross said this is a generous plan at \$2,000 but wondered why 70% would jump out of a Blue Cross plan to the HSA. Ms. Lavalette said this is for a couple and a family and noted the cost is \$1,000 for a single.

Chairman Cervoni said he was confused by the answers to Mr. Gross's questions. He asked about the \$2,000 deductible and if this was an exposure to the co-payments for medical treatment. He asked if one would still be paying a co-payment on the premium for the insurance. Ms. Lavalette explained one would still be paying a premium cost share at 20% for the first two years, but if you are a couple or a family, the Board of Education will put in \$2,000 into a health spending account, and the couple or family has to put in \$2,000 of their own money for a total of \$4,000. She said when the couple or family has doctor visits or get prescriptions, this is paid for out the health spending account. She said once the maximum (\$4,000) is reached, the plan picks up and covers the medical expenses for the most part,

noting there are exceptions. Mr. Gross asked what the premiums would be. Ms. Lavalette said it is approximately \$15,000 for an HSA insurance plan. She noted the premiums are right out of the gate but the premium cost share is deducted from the paycheck throughout the year and the HAS contributions are pre-taxed. Mr. Gross asked about the \$500 annuity. Ms. Lavalette said this is part of the wage every year on top of the salary. She said 27 people are in this union. Mr. Gross asked about the buying out of the health insurance and asked how many people opt on. Ms. Lavalette said she believed seven opted out but would have to check the number. Mr. Gross said these are obscene and to be able to piggy back and take additional dollars off the table is obscene because this is a tight budget and these dollars could go for books or something of this nature, and hoped this could be negotiated in a faster timeframe and they could see this is an obscene benefit.

End of public comments.

Councilor Fishbein said he thought the annuity was \$1,000 a year. Ms. Lavalette explained that in year one of the contract there is no annuity, and in year two there is a \$500 annuity and in year three there is an additional \$500. He asked where this was in the contract. Ms. Lavalette said in the redline copy this is on page 21 on the bottom of the page.

Roll Call Vote: Fishbein-no; Laffin-yes; LeTourneau – yes; Mansfield-yes; Parisi-yes; Russo-yes; Sullivan-yes; Testa-yes; Chairman Cervoni-yes

Contract passes

7. Discussion and Possible Action regarding Job Description for Security Guard position/Board of Education.

Motion to approve the job description for the Security Guard position for the Board of Education.

Made by: Laffin
Seconded by: Parisi

Appearing in front of the Town Council was Cindy Lavalette, Assist. Supt. Wallingford Public Schools.

Ms. Lavalette said this is a position which has been in existence but prior to her arrival, was never brought before the Town to have the job description approved. She explained there are two positions at the high school; a security guard which historically started out at 30 hours per week but over the years, the hours have increased because of security issues involving the country, to 40 hours per week for the day position and the night position, going as far as 40 hours per week, depending upon night events and the length of the hours required. She said she looked at possibly contracting this position out, but noted there are substantial savings to keep the position in-house.

Councilor Sullivan asked about benefits to the job or if it was straight wage. Ms. Lavalette said there would be benefits and would not be part of the bargaining unit. She said these employees would be paying into the Town pension and current rate of pay at step 1 is \$13.82 per hour and

at step 2, \$14.03 an hour. Councilor Sullivan asked if these people were uniformed. Ms. Lavalette said it depends and noted that the person during the day sitting behind the desk would be the greeter, not the security guard, which would be patrolling the campus and parking lots. She said in the evening, there is no greeter, so the security person would check the desk and patrol the campus. Councilor Sullivan wanted to know how the person could be identified. Ms. McKay noted they are undercover, plain clothes. Councilor Sullivan wanted to know how long there have been security guards at the high school. Ms. Lavalette said the position started in 2001.

Councilor Fishbein asked if the job description was supposed to be interchangeable for the day or night individual. Ms. Lavalette said it is not interchangeable for the greeter position, which is a separate position. She said this is a security position and there is someone on during the day and someone during the evening. Councilor Fishbein pointed out the job description makes reference to assisting the greeter. Ms. Lavalette said this is correct and said currently the position only exists at the high school, but the job description was kept generic in the event times change and it turns out this position is required at different schools and at different levels.

Councilor Fishbein asked what happened when this was attempted to be done by an outside service, i.e. wages. Ms. Lavalette said the wage would have been \$23 an hour which was the best she could find. Councilor Fishbein asked if experience was required including military service. Ms. Lavalette said if the person has credentials and talks about having military service this is preferred but not required. Councilor Fishbein asked about the monitoring security cameras at night in the office. Ms. Lavalette said the security person doesn't just sit in the office, they patrol. She said someone needs to man the desk in the evening during an event and then patrol. She said the Board of Education has discussed and approved this.

Councilor Parisi said he was confused, noting the job has been in existence for 14 years and asked if it had been filled all those years. Ms. Lavalette said it had been filled for the entire 14 year period. Councilor Parisi said they are well hidden. He asked where their authority comes from. Ms. Lavalette said they are patrolling the campus and if see anything of concern, they alert the appropriate parties, i.e., police or others in command. Councilor Parisi said these guards should have identification which designates their authority. He said this should be a requirement. Councilor Parisi asked if a car was required. Ms. Lavalette said this was not a requirement to which Councilor Parisi noted that the security guard would be walking at Lyman Hall around the entire grounds. Ms.,. Lavalette said a car is not required, but they could use their car if desired. She said they patrol this area on foot. Councilor Parisi asked how many times the guards go outside during the evening. Ms. Lavalette said she wasn't sure. Councilor Parisi asked if the guards are moving around or take it for granted they will do what they are told. Ms. Lavalette said the times she has been on campus, she has seen the guards patrolling. Councilor Parisi said there aren't any check-in stations and is a slip-shod setup in his opinion because someone could sit in the library and read books.

Councilor Parisi said this needs to be tightened up and said he is not satisfied with the job description because it is loose, there is not much control of the individual. He noted that if someone else came into the building, they would not know who the security person is and should be identified with a badge. Ms. Lavalette said she didn't know if a badge or a uniform would be in the job description, but is something she would relay back.

Chairman Cervoni asked if this job description came about as a result of the course of having employees in the position or by consulting with a professional. Ms. Lavalette said this description came about by melding the two together. She said this came about by consulting a school security specialist and noted that Jim Hutt, Personnel Director, looked over this description as well. She said the people in the job didn't look at it, but the high school administrators also looked at this.

Councilor Fishbein noted that every other place, at malls and large business, the security scans something at one side of the campus and go back and forth and are able to be monitored. He said good points were made as far as someone just sit there or make process. Ms. Lavalette said there are times where the security guard has to sit at the desk to buzz people in.

No public comments.

Roll Call Vote:

Fishbein-yes; Laffin –yes; LeTourneau-yes; Mansfield-yes; Parisi-no; Russo-yes; Sullivan-yes; Testa-yes; Chairman Cervoni-yes

Motion passes.

8. Discussion and Action regarding Appointment of Fire Marshal for the Town of Wallingford/Vincent Cervoni, Chairman

Chairman Cervoni thanked the Fire Chief who began the process of replacing the Fire Marshal and candidates were encouraged to apply. He said a test was given which was monitored by three Fire Chiefs and after the top three candidates were identified, Councilors were given an opportunity to meet and interview them. He said all of the candidates interviewed were impressive and brought tremendous history and experience. He said an internal candidate was the highest scorer in the interview process.

Chairman Cervoni entertained a motion to appoint the Fire Marshal.

Motion to appoint the Fire Marshal Michael Gudelski at a salary of \$97,461.

Made by: Fishbein

Seconded by: Sullivan

Councilor Sullivan noted there were some good candidates who applied for this job but is pleased there is an internal candidate, a Wallingford firefighter and this says a lot about our fire department. He noted that well qualified people can move along in the chain of command and fill a position of leadership. He wished Mr. Gudelski well in his new assignment. Councilor Fishbein shared the comments of Chairman Cervoni and Councilor Sullivan and said he enjoyed the process of meeting the individuals and is impressed with Mr. Gudelski and his service to our country and the fact he is already in the department and doing a lot of these functions has already been a litmus test. He said he is fully assured this is the right choice.

Chairman Cervoni said Mr. Gudelski has been a firefighter for several years, and before that, was an inspector in the Fire Marshal's office and is very-well qualified.

Public comments –none.

Roll Call Vote:

Fishbein-yes; Laffin-yes; LeTourneau-yes; Mansfield-yes; Parisi-yes; Russo-yes; Sullivan-yes; Testa-yes; Chairman Cervoni-yes

Motion passes

9. Executive Session pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(D) of the Connecticut General Statutes with Respect to the purchase, sale and or leasing of property/Mayor

NO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Cervoni gave the floor to Councilor Parisi who wanted to note for the record the fine job the Town Clerk has done filling in for the Council Secretary who is away. He said he takes pride in this because it was he and Ms. Thompson who set this up so she would be able to fill in and was one of the best things that were done. He said she has done an excellent job in running two good jobs.

Adjournment

Councilor Parisi made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 7:30 p.m. Councilor Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Kleist
Recording Secretary

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 11-12-15
AT 9:30 AND RECORDED BY
Robert Testa TOWN CLERK