

**TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Town Council Chambers**

March 22, 2016

RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES

The Special Meeting of the Wallingford Town Council on Tuesday, March 22, 2016 was called to order at 7:10 P.M. A moment of silence was observed, and Boy Scouts Troop 4 led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilors in attendance were: Craig Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, John LeTourneau, Joseph Marrone, III, Christopher K. Shortell, Vincent F. Testa, Jr., and Jason Zandri. Chairman Vincent Cervoni and Councilor John J. Sullivan were not at the meeting. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. and Town Attorney Gerald E. Farrell, Sr. were also present at the meeting.

3. Consent Agenda

- 3a. Consider and Approve Tax Refunds totaling \$4,298.08 (#595 -# 622)
Acct. #1001001-41020 – Tax Collector

- 3b. Consider and Approve Merit Review Committee Approval of Anniversary Step Increase -
Personnel

- 3c. Consider and Approve a transfer in the amount of \$4,567 from Contingency, Acct.
#10019000-58820 to PUC Regular Salaries and Wages, Acct. #10011150-51000 - PUC

- 3d. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$30,000 from Various Accounts (see
enclosed documents) to Outside Services Employed, Acct. #43100923 – Water Division

- 3e. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$28,400 from Various Accounts (see
enclosed documents) to Outside Services Employed, Acct. #46100923 – Sewer Division

- 3f. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$4,500 from Maintenance of Structures
and Improvements - Treatment, Acct. #46100651 to Misc. General Expenses, Acct.
#46100930 – Sewer Division

- 3g. Consider and Approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$630 to Misc. Revenue,
Acct #1009052-47040 and to Veterinarian, Acct. #10020100-56742 – Animal Control
Officer

- 3h. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$14,500 from Contingency General
Purpose, Acct #10019000-58820 to Traffic Cabinet Replacement, Acct. #TBT-
Engineering

- 3i. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$6,500 from Regular Salaries & Wages,
Acct. #50020155-51000 to Wage Differential, Acct. #50020155-51450 – Fire /EMS

- 3j. Consider and Approve Appropriation of Funds in the amount of \$13,250 to Revenue –
Insurance Recovery, Acct. #1009052-46240 and to Police Cruiser Capital, Acct.
#10020050-57000-00411 – Police Department

- 3k. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$500 from Promotional Expenses, Acct. #10011050-55405 to Transportation, Acct. #10011050-55110 – Economic Development Coordinator
- 3l. Consider and Approve a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the State of Connecticut for financial assistance to resurface the turf field at Lyman Hall High School (CPAP 2016-14) in the amount of \$250,000 – Grants Administrator
- 3m. Consider and Approve a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to file application needed to apply for 2016 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant for up to \$800,000 on behalf of the Wallingford Housing Authority for roof replacement, fire safety and alarm upgrades and sidewalk improvements at McGuire Court Elderly Housing Complex – Grants Administrator
- 3n. Consider and Approve Fair Housing Resolution for 2016 – Mayor
- 3o. Consider and Approve reappointment of the Public Celebrations Committee for a two year term effective immediately and expiring February 1, 2018 – Mayor
- 3p. Consider and Confirm the reappointment of Robert N. Beaumont to the Public Utilities Commission for a three year term effective immediately and expiring March 1, 2019 – Mayor
- 3q. Consider and Approve Establishment of a Wallingford 2020 Anniversary Committee – Mayor
- 3r. Approve Town Council Minutes, February 9, 2016, February 23, 2016 and March 8, 2016

MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ITEMS 3o and 3q

MADE BY: MARRONE
SECONDED BY: SHORTELL
VOTE: 6-AYE
1-NAY
MOTION: PASSED

4. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

- 3o. Motion to Approve reappointment of the Public Celebrations Committee for a two year term effective immediately and expiring February 1, 2018.

Appearing: Lorraine Devaney, Barbara Kapi, Carolyn Massoni

Councilor Fishbein stated the reason he took this item off is that this body has not filed any minutes since June, 2013. He also stated that it is not his responsibility to oversee or to direct them on how to do their job. Also, in reviewing the Agendas, there are no action

items on them. Reappointing the same Committee is an issue for him. This Board should clean house and get minutes filed with the Town Clerk and whatever Agendas get changed in the future should have actual action items on them.

Councilor LeTourneau asked if it would be proper to table this vote until next meeting and Councilor Fishbein stated that he would be supportive of that.

Councilor Testa asked what the concern was. He stated that they put on parties for the Town and the kids and he suggested the Committee come up. Barbara Kapi, Secretary, Public Celebrations Committee, stated that she will print out the minutes and file with the Town Clerk. As far as the budget, they presented it to Mayor Dickinson two weeks ago and laid out what we need this coming year for the children.

Ray Ross, spoke.

Councilor Fishbein asked Mayor Dickinson if we have guidance for Committees on what Minutes and Agendas should look like. He also asked if we have some sort of training for these bodies. Mayor Dickinson responded that there is no one template for it. This is a long standing Committee and he hasn't been aware of any issues.

No further Council questions.

MADE BY: MARRONE
SECONDE BY: SHORTELL
VOTE: 6-AYE
1-NAY
MOTION: PASSED

- 3q. Motion to Consider and Approve Establishment of a Wallingford 2020 Anniversary Committee.

Councilor Fishbein asked Mayor Dickinson why this is coming before us now and what our role is. Mayor Dickinson responded that they can become part of the budget and have receipt of the funds. The Committee has met and decided on a format as to types of celebrations and dates. They are applying for grant funding and we just need a formality of recognition.

Councilor Fishbein asked if the Committee is looking for donations and also asked about funding. Mayor Dickinson replied that there is no funding at this time from the Town but with the upcoming budget there will be. Councilor Zandri stated that he will be handling online communications for the group.

Councilor LeTourneau asked if this will dovetail with the Town's website and Councilor Zandri replied that it is not up and running just yet.

Lucille Cassagrande, 25 Turnberry Road, spoke
Christine Mansfield, Tommy Hill Road, spoke

Bob Devaney stated that on April 14th there will be a public announcement

MADE BY: MARRONE
SECONDED BY: LETOURNEAU
VOTE: 7-AYE
MOTION PASSED

5. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

Donald Kennedy, 2 Bull Avenue, spoke about letter Chairman Cervoni sent him regarding details in the budget that he was looking for. He also stated that he would like to know what the surplus is before the budget is presented.

Paul Ciardullo, 2 Bayberry Drive, spoke about surplus, tax increases and audit report timing. He implied that we should do audit right before the budget.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, spoke about many people going off line and asked if the minutes will be back online.

Ken Daly, 594 North Elm Street, spoke about AAA Bond Rating and what that has to do with surplus.

Rick Bergeron, 7 Ortense Drive, spoke

6. Consider and Approve UPSEU 424-17 (Town Managers) Tentative Agreement for two years from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2017.

In attendance: Jim Hutt, Personnel Director

Jim Hutt spoke about Management Agreement and reviewed summary.

Councilor Shortell inquired about the cost of the health plan. Jim Hutt stated that he projected a net cost of \$264,429.00 for two years. Councilor Shortell asked for clarification of the plan being eliminated. Jim Hutt responded that it is a point of service plan and most expensive plan to the Town. Councilor Shortell asked about HSA Plan. Jim Hutt responded that the Town will consider it but it would increase the cost to employees. Jim Hutt stated that keeping wages at 2% is better than 2.25% or 2.50%. He also stated that with HSA, the health benefits have a potential to go up. Councilor Shortell indicated that he doesn't think he can support this. Councilor Fishbein stated that he shares Councilor Shortell's thoughts and asked why we aren't offering HSA or HRA. He asked Jim Hutt if the exchange cost information came up during negotiations. Jim Hutt responded no. Jim Hutt stated that unions are asking for 2.5% – 3.0% wage increase so we like the 2.0%. Councilor Fishbein stated that he is asking about insurance and Jim Hutt responded for the Town to look into HSA, unions won't agree then we would have to go to arbitration. Jim Hutt stated that unless you give a significant pay raise, no HSA. If you go to arbitration, you have to be prepared to increase wages.

Councilor Fishbein asked where we are with this bargaining unit and the possibility of direct deposit. Jim Hutt replied that was proposed by the union and it was withdrawn after negotiations. Mayor Dickinson stated that the issue is not direct deposit. We will only do direct deposit if bi-weekly. Councilor Marrone stated that our benefits are an antique and that an HSA would be such a cost savings to the Town. He stated that he cannot support this.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, spoke

Councilor Zandri stated that with regard to direct deposit, we need to get to bi-weekly pay and asked if we approached the union with bi-weekly pay. Jim Hutt replied yes and explained that it was withdrawn once we had a tentative agreement. Councilor Zandri stated that we should take another look at direct deposit.

No Action Taken

7. Consider and Approve Local 1570, AFSCME Council 4 (Police) Wage Reopener Tentative Agreement for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 - Personnel

In attendance: Jim Hutt, Personnel Director

Police Union Contract was summarized from the memorandum. Councilor Fishbein asked if it was retroactive to July 1, 2015, what the cost was and how it is paid for. Jim Hutt responded that the cost is \$143,484.00 and that money is set aside in the Personnel budget.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, spoke

No Action Required

8. Discussion and Action regarding setting a date for a Workshop for interviewing candidates for the Historic Properties Commission – Chairman Cervoni

Administratively, a date was set for March 30th. This will be added to the Workshop Agenda which is already posted.

No Action Required

9. Discussion regarding how to achieve a zero tax increase in the upcoming 2016-2017 fiscal year budget – Councilor Jason Zandri

Councilor Zandri stated that he made this request after numerous inquiries from residents. Jim Bowes provided information. Councilor Zandri stated the Grand List will always go up and down and most likely will result in a tax increase. Re-valuation will affect taxes. No matter what you do, you will always have wage increases. We should use the \$2,000,000 in reserves in the undesignated fund in this year's budget to stabilize our budget. Councilor Laffin stated that he goes into every budget not wanting to raise taxes and he is not willing to consider a 0% tax increase without seeing the budget this year, philosophically. Councilor Fishbein stated that he shares the comments of Councilor Laffin. He also stated by the time we get the budget, it's pretty

well trimmed. He would do away with personal property business tax if possible. Councilor Marrone indicated that this is his first budget with the Council and that financial sustainability is his chief concern. Education costs need to be controlled. This conversation is pointless without considering cutting Board of Education costs. Councilor Shortell thanks Councilor Zandri for bringing it up and noted that surplus numbers should be more set and not thrown around. He indicated that we asked Jim Bowes for more information monthly going forward, and affirmed that we have to cut spending, not spend surplus.

Councilor LeTourneau thanks Councilor Zandri and states that this is his 9th budget. He said he thinks we will get into it deeper once we have the budget and it will meld together once we get our budget books. He stated that we can see what departments asked for and what they received or if they were cut. We are not sure where we stand with the State and their funds.

Councilor Fishbein indicated that the variable with the State is unknown. He also stated that the Board of Education is insulated from being affected. Councilor Zandri asked about the year we were cut and if we received some of it back. Councilor Fishbein replied yes, some of it.

Paul Ciardullo, 2 Bayberry Drive, thanked Councilor Zandri for putting this on the Agenda. Property values are down and the assets of the Town have been increasing and he feels this is from over taxing. He stated that we should be bonding more and that debt is not a bad thing.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, stated that it is not political. Everyone is concerned about money and that Council should have more input during budget process.

Don Kennedy, 2 Bull Avenue, stated that Mr. Gross said what he was thinking – 0% budgeting. He implied that nothing will change this year.

Councilor Shortell made some comments about the Board of Education. He said with regard to school consolidation, we need a lot less enrollment than we have now. No one goes to the Board of Education meetings and asks them to cut their budget. They only complain about the Mayor.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN
MADE BY: SHORTELL
SECONDED BY: LETOURNEAU
VOTE: ALL-AYE; 2-ABSENT
MOTION PASSED**

10. Executive Session pursuant to §1-200(6)(D) of the Connecticut General Statutes with respect to the purchase, sale and/or leasing of property – Mayor – Withdrawn

The Council adjourned the meeting at 9:56 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Moss
Council Staff
Meeting digitally recorded

Vincent Cervoni, Chairman Date

Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk Date