

WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

WINDHAM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

Tuesday, January 15, 2013 - 7:00 P.M.



1. **Call to Order**

Mayor Eldridge called the Town of Windham Council meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Charles Krich, Tony Fantoli, Tom DeVivo, Lorraine McDevitt, N. Joseph Underwood, Arnaldo Rivera, and Christel Donahue

Kevin Donohue, Mark Doyle and Jerry Iazzetta were excused.

Town Manager Neal Beets was also in attendance.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Eldridge led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Eldridge presented awards for the Holiday Home Decoration Contest to the following:

Chris Bay - Windham Center Home Decoration Award
Pamela Kearns – North Windham Home Decoration Award
Covenant Soup Kitchen - Willimantic Home Decoration Award
Sally Clitz – South Windham Home Decoration Award
Oriental Café – Willimantic Business Decoration Award

3. **Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment**

Kim Switchenko, resident of Willimantic and Physical Education Teacher at Sweeney School supports installing a playscape at Sweeney School and explained where a portion of the funds is coming from for the project.

Andrew Martin, Willimantic, shared his concerns regarding public safety. Mr. Martin believes speed bumps and speed limits should be placed on certain streets and would like stricter enforcement on this as well as on cell phone use while driving. He would also like a payment center set up for people to pay their utility bills.

Michael Graf, resident of Willimantic since 2009 and local realtor, introduced himself to the Council and asked for their support on his appointment as an alternate member of the Planning & Zoning Commission.



Mike Altshul, resident of Willimantic for 15 years, shared his reasons for wanting to become a member of the Energy Commission.

Dawn Niles, North Windham, noted the Democratic Town Committee had voted to replace former Board of Finance member Jeff Smith with Paula Haney and asked for the Council's support. She also noted this would require Paula Haney to resign from the Charter Review Commission and asked the Council to support the appointment of James Flores as Ms. Haney's replacement. In addition, Ms. Niles noted Windham had achieved the re-designation as a HeartSafe Community and explained how that achievement is acquired. She also noted free CPR and AED training classes would be held on the following dates:

2/26/2013 from 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM - North Windham Fire Department

2/28/2013 from 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Willimantic Fire Department

3/1/2013 from 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM & 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Windham Center Fire Department

3/2/2013 from 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM at the South Windham Fire Department

James Flores spoke in support of all the people who were on the agenda for appointments or re-appointments, especially the appointment of Paula Haney. Mr. Flores also spoke in support of Kim Switchenko and the proposed playscape at Sweeney School and Druscilla Carter, Library Director, on the proposed renovations to the Willimantic Public Library. Mr. Flores also shared his concerns on Natchaug School.

Mike Sikoski, Bass Road, Windham, and Acting Chair and sole member of the Ethics Commission asked for the Council's help in recruiting people to serve on the Ethics Commission. Mr. Sikoski noted the current Town Charter requires the Town to have an Ethics Commission.

Paula Haney, South Windham, expressed her regret for her resignation from the Charter Review Commission; however, she believes she can better serve the community as a member of the Board of Finance.

Gilberto Jimenez, Ann Street, Willimantic, shared his concerns for the lack of times the streets are being swept and asked that sweeping be done more often.

Dennis O'Brien, Willimantic, spoke in support of the appointments of James Flores, Paula Haney and Mike Altshul. He also spoke briefly of his recent trip to Bad Soden Germany with his wife, State Representative Susan Johnson and Council member Christel Donahue and her husband. In addition, Mr. O'Brien shared a few photos from the trip.

4. Town Council Comment

Mayor Eldridge stated he does not want to recruit members for the Ethics Commission because he feels people could view that as a conflict of interest. He asked that anyone who would like to serve should notify him directly.

Christel Donahue, noted the Sister City was not a done deal and stated first you meet and then you get married.

Lorraine McDevitt, asked for clarification on the timeline to have the Sweeney School playscape up and running. (John French, member of the Board of Education, explained January 20th was the deadline to secure funding and installation would be in early spring).

5. Adoption of Minutes

a. Discussion and possible action to adopt the minutes for the December 18, 2012, Town Council Meeting.

DeVivo MOVED, Rivera seconded, to adopt the minutes for the December 18, 2012, Town Council Meeting. All were in favor except C. Donahue who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

6. Resignations. Receive the resignation of:

a. None.

7. Appointments. Discussion and possible action to appoint or reappoint, as appropriate:

a. Judd Ayer as a regular member of the Library Board. [term ending 12/2/2014]

b. Axel Oschmann as a regular member of the Conservation, Open Space, and Agriculture Commission. [term ending 1/1/2017]

c. Paula Haney as a regular member of the Board of Finance to complete the term of Jeff Smith, who has resigned. This nomination comes from the Democratic Town Committee pursuant to the Town Charter. [term ending 11/19/2013] (Appointment of Ms. Haney is contingent upon the resignation of Ms. Haney from the Charter Review Commission.)

d. James Flores as a regular member of the Charter Review Commission to complete the term of Paula Haney, who is resigning. [term ending 4/3/2013] (Appointment of Mr. Flores is contingent upon the resignation of Ms. Haney from the Charter Review Commission.)

e. Michael Graf as an alternate member of the Planning and Zoning Commission. [term ending 12/28/2013]

f. John McCommas as a regular member of the Economic Development Commission. [term ending 12/15/2017] (Appointment of Mr. McCommas as a regular member is contingent on his resignation as an alternate member.)

g. Michael Altshul as an alternate member of the Energy Commission. [term ending 4/20/2015]

h. Corey Krohn as a regular member of the Energy Commission. [term ending 4/20/2015]

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to take Items 7a through 7h as one Item. All were in favor except Fantoli who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to appoint or reappoint the above members to each respected Board or Commission. All were in favor except Fantoli who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

8. Presentations & Special Reports

a. Drusilla Carter, Willimantic Public Library Director, regarding a draft plan to reconfigure and refurbish the interior of the existing library at 905 Main Street.

Drusilla Carter, Willimantic Public Library Director, gave a brief presentation regarding a draft plan to reconfigure and refurbish the interior of the existing library at 905 Main Street. Ms. Carter noted the only renovation to the Library has been the addition of an elevator in 1994 to meet ADA requirements. She also explained the need for the renovations and the process that was used to come to the plan being presented. In addition Ms. Carter believes the Town will be eligible for grants to help fund the project; however, she noted there is no existing funds today. Ms. Carter also answered questions from the Council.

9. Mayor's Report

Mayor Eldridge reported on attending the Three Kings Day celebration and thanked those who participated in the celebration.

Mayor Eldridge also thanked the people who served on the Sister City Committee and the people who took the trip to Germany and represented Windham.

In addition, Mayor Eldridge reported on the legislative meeting and noted he was pleased all three boards came together to discuss their views and listen to the public's concerns. He feels it is very important to hear the concerns of the people and is looking forward to the next meeting.

10. Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Beets reported a Town laptop had been stolen in September 2012 and shared the Town's concern regarding possible data that may have been on the laptop. Mr. Beets stated the Town has made arrangements to contract with a company by the name of ALL CLEAR for the protection of its employees. Mr. Beets noted the Town will cover the cost of the service for one year and apologizes for the inconvenience.

a. Collective bargaining status.

Town Manager Beets briefly reviewed the status of the Collective Bargaining Units and noted the changes in the GWI, the HD Health Plan option, the ethics language being added to contracts and the changes made in sick leave.

Town Manager Beets also noted the Town has not reached an agreement with Police and Fire but believes they are relatively close. He noted however if no agreement is reached they may be going to arbitration.

b. Budget process and initial outlook.

Town Manager Beets reported on the dates for the budget meetings. He also gave a brief history of the past 4 years of the budget and the mill rates for those years.

Town Manager Beets reported on the mandatory increases in the budget as well as the discretionary increases he sees being implemented in this year's budget. He also shared the total increase in the mill rate to both the Town and the Willimantic Service District.

11. Discussion and Review of Communications

None

12. Resolutions and Ordinances

a. None.

13. Reports of Committees, Boards and Commissions

a. Administration, Finance, Health, and Human Services Committee

No Report

b. Public Safety, Public Works, Culture, and Recreation Committee

McDevitt reported the Committee had discussed and recommends the Sweeney School playscape project.

She also reported the Committee had spoken to Town Engineer Joe Gardner regarding the roads and submitting plans for the completion of some roads.

In addition, McDevitt reported the Committee had discussed the Dispatch Center; however, until the next report was available there was no solution to bring to the Council.

c. Magnet School Building Committee

DeVivo reported the Magnet School now has an official telephone number which he will provide to the Town Manager's Office. He noted Principal Jeff Wihbey has a full time office and is now hiring staff for the school and is making presentations at some of the other schools to staff that may want to move to the new Magnet School.

Mr. DeVivo also reported the school is on schedule and they will be having a dedication ceremony on September 20th. He also reported the lottery would probably begin at the beginning of March, the school is working on a mascot for the school and the last neighborhood meeting will be in the middle of March.

DeVivo noted a change in the blinking light from 24 hours a day to only when school is in session; however, the light at the entrance of the school will be on at all times. He also stated an executive session will be held to discuss security, however he noted State of the Art Security is being used at the school.

Mr. DeVivo also answered questions of the Council.

14. Old Business

a. None.

15. New Business

a. Discussion and possible action approving the contribution of Town funds to purchase a playscape for the Sweeney Elementary School playground, as recommended by the Town Council's Public Safety, Public Works, Culture, and Recreation Committee, and contingent upon approval of the Board of Finance.

Underwood MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to approve the contribution of Town funds to purchase a playscape for the Sweeney Elementary School playground, as recommended by the Town Council's Public Safety, Public Works, Culture, and Recreation Committee, and contingent upon approval of the Board of Finance.

16. Future Agenda Items

- Second Legislative Agenda Meeting

17. Adjournment

DeVivo MOVED, Rivera seconded, to adjourn the Town of Windham Town Council Meeting at 8:26 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney

Clerk of the Town Council