

WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

WINDHAM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM



Tuesday, November 19, 2013 - 7:00 P.M

1. Call to Order

Mayor Eldridge called the Town of Windham Regular Town 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, Mark Doyle, James Flores, Charlotte Patros, Michael Lessard and Christel Donahue.

Town Manager Neal Beets was also in attendance.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Eldridge led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment

April Burke, North Windham, stated she was here tonight to support James and all the members of the Council. She believes there are many issues that need improvement and is especially interested in ADA. She noted she serves on the Access Agency board and wants to serve.

Andrew Martin, Willimantic, would like to see the vacant building at Jillson Square that was formerly a cinema sold and have a Wendy's restaurant there. He also spoke of the need to replace the showers at the Kramer building and people driving without lights on.

Ginger Fern, Willimantic, stated she is aware of the programs for ADA however she would like help with her transportation cost to medical appointments. She also congratulated the Council and noted she is attending QVCC.

Chris ? originally from Orange CT, asked the Council for a formal endorsement for the bottle bill. He explained the benefits of the bill and provided the Council with an endorsement sheet.

Humberto Marquez, shared his concerns regarding the need for bathrooms at the parks.

Joel Meyers, spoke about the parking ban and suggested it only be used when there is a storm. He would like the Town to think of landlords as a business.

Kevin Hoxie, Ridgewood Road, Willimantic, spoke about the continued problems with ECSU students in the hill section and is concerned with the safety of our Police Officers. He suggested the Town talk to the Board of Trustees at ECSU regarding this matter. Mr. Hoxie also would like to see Citizens and Delegations at both the beginning and end of every meeting to insure taxpayers have a right to speak.



Henry Crane, Windham Street, Willimantic, stated he was glad James was elected to the Council and was happy to see others had also been elected as well.

Charles Kratt, Willimantic, spoke about the parking ban and suggested it be made friendlier by trying alternating sides of the street and implementing that for a year. He also suggested bringing back the parking monitor and working closer with ECSU. He feels ECSU is the only thing the Town has going for it.

4. Town Council Comment

James Flores thanked April Burke, Ginger Fern and Humberto Marquez for attending tonight's meeting and stated he would work to address each of their needs. He also stated he is working with ADA and noted he was hearing impaired. Mr. Flores also believes people have the right to speak and wants Citizens and Delegations on the agenda both at the beginning and end of each meeting.

Mayor Eldridge noted the Council will address Citizens and Delegations at the December 1st meeting in the Standing Rules. He also addressed the concerns with the bathrooms at the parks and noted they have had to be closed because of all the vandalism that occurred when they were left open.

Tom DeVivo questioned whether the Christmas parade was going to take place this year and reminded the Council of the lighting decorating contest. Mr. DeVivo also shared his concerns regarding the boiler at WAIM and suggested the Council hold a special meeting if necessary to provide help to them. He also addressed the parking ban issue and noted the ban was in effect after passing the Willimantic Service District Council and the Traffic Authority. He assured residents that no one person or property had been discussed regarding the ban and it was strictly based on the needs of the community.

Lorraine McDevitt stated she has lived in the hill section for 41 years and is very familiar with the problems with parking. She noted she had brought up this issue and stated nothing was ever discussed regarding any particular property or person however something must be done to alleviate the problems with parking.

5. Adoption of Minutes

a. Discuss and possibly move to adopt the minutes for the October 1, 2013, Town Council Meeting.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to adopt the minutes for the October 1, 2013, Town Council Meeting. All were in favor except Flores, Patros and Lessard who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

6. Resignations.

None

7. Appointments.

None

8. Presentations & Special Reports.

None

9. Mayor's Report

Mayor Eldridge thanked Dawn for a great race and noted she was a wonderful opponent. He also congratulated everyone who ran regardless of the outcome.

Mayor Eldridge reported he had attended the 100th anniversary of the Elks Club and the retirement party for Lt. Ray Evans of the Willimantic Police Department. He also thanked the staff at Town Hall for decorating and participating in the Halloween festivities at Town Hall and noted it was a great success enjoyed by all.

Mayor Eldridge asked Lorraine McDevitt to report on the Soroptimist stand against domestic violence. McDevitt explained she is a proud member of Soroptimist which is an International philanthropic professional women's organization. She stated the organization has a very strong stand against domestic violence and noted informational forms were available and with a small donation people could sign up to be an advocate against domestic violence as well. She noted a large ad will be placed in The Chronicle with the Soroptimist statement and a list of people who stood up against domestic violence. McDevitt shared her experience of attending a meeting on domestic violence and was shocked that out of the 125 people who were in attendance 110 were men and 6 of them had been victims of domestic violence. She also noted 3 young children had been victims. She encouraged everyone to sign on to help fight this disease. Mayor Eldridge noted he was honored to be Co-Chair with Wayne Norman from WILI, of that program.

In addition, Mayor Eldridge thanked the before and after school children for the mock election that was held at Windham Heights. He stated it was a fun event and said it was a little scary waiting for the call to hear the outcome of the event. He also noted the children would be coming to Town Hall on Thursday for a visit.

10. Town Manager's Report

No Report

11. Discussion and Review of Communications.

None

12. Resolutions and Ordinances.

- a. **Discuss and possibly move to approve a Resolution expressing to the state Office of Policy and Management (OPM) the Town Council's preference regarding which COG – Council of Government – Windham wishes to be a part of.**

McDevitt read the Resolution and moved for its adoption.

McDevitt MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to adopt Resolution #2609. All were in favor.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council THAT

WHEREAS, the Town of Windham has been a member of WINCOG since its inception, and

WHEREAS, the Office of Policy and Management at the State of Connecticut (OPM) is making recommendations for new boundaries for councils of government throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, it appears that OPM will recommend that WINCOG disband and that its member Towns join another council of government;

Now, therefore, the Town Council of Windham, Connecticut, HEREBY RESOLVES that:

1. The Town of Windham wishes to become a member of the Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments
2. The Town of Windham authorizes and directs its Town Manager, Neal J. Beets, to send this Resolution to OPM forthwith, and to keep the Council informed of OPM's actions.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

13. Reports of Committees, Boards and Commissions

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

Fantoli reported the Committee had discussed the naming of the Caisse Park gazebo for Richard A. Kelly and voted unanimously to recommend it to the Council.

He also reported the Committee had discussed the painting and maintenance at the Textile Museum and feels it was the responsibility of the Museum to take care of the building.

In addition Fantoli reported the Committee had discussed using tablets for meetings as does the Board of Education. He noted the Committee had voted unanimously to recommend this to the Council and they believe there would be a cost savings of approximately \$4,000 over a 4 year term.

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

Krich congratulated those that were successful in the Election and stated it has been a pleasure working with others that were no longer here for whatever reason or hadn't been elected.

Krich reported the Committee had discussed two matters that are on tonight's agenda; the letter from the Town Council to ECSU regarding student conduct in the Hill Section and a proposed ordinance amending the Town Code and the bidder's preference for local vendors.

Krich also reported the RFP for animal control was discussed and the Committee had voted unanimously to have all three individuals/groups that submitted proposals come before the Committee to discuss their proposals in more detail.

Krich reported the Committee had discussed a truck parking ordinance and the question of signs at Windham Center Elementary School. Krich noted the Committee had decided to ask the Town Manager to evaluate having signs installed at all of the schools and noted they are aware there may be a cost involved.

Krich reported the Committee had also discussed sidewalks on Rte 195 from Ash Street to Lauter Park and noted the Town Engineer will review the funds available through bonding.

In addition, Krich reported the Committee had discussed speeding on Memorial Drive and noted a unanimous motion was passed to ask the Town Manager to meet with the Director of the Housing Authority about installing temporary speed bumps in the spring.

c. Capital Planning Action Group

Doyle reported the group had met yesterday and will be requesting at the next meeting of the Council to have their deadline be extended until February.

d. Magnet School & Natchaug Roof Building Committee

Mayor Eldridge noted the STEM School will be holding an open house for residents of Windham on December 4th from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM. He stated people who wanted to attend should call Town Hall and let them know so groups can be formed based on the number of people attending.

DeVivo thanked the Mayor for announcing the open house and reminded people the STEM School was a public building and could and should be used by the community.

DeVivo gave a brief update on the progress of the Magnet School and noted the punch list should be 100% complete by December. He also stated the EDO 49F, which is the final report, will be ready to be sent in shortly and that will begin the audit process. DeVivo also reported tomorrow night the 1st and 2nd graders will be having a music concert in the cafetorium at 6:00 PM and noted everyone is invited.

DeVivo reported the Natchaug School will be ready for students to return after the Christmas recess. He noted the project will not be at 100% however it will be near completion and safe for the students to return. DeVivo explained the progress and some of the changes being made regarding the roof project. He also thanked Town Manager Beets for his leadership in the project and Finance Director Chris Johnson for his help in the financial aspect of the project. DeVivo also thanked parents and volunteers, including Troop 34, who have helped with painting some rooms and noted the parents are very anxious to have the school back for the children.

In addition, DeVivo reported the Windham High School roof project was going out to bid and he explained what will be included in the project. He noted a different approach was being used and a construction assistant/project manager would be hired to represent the Town due to the scope of the project, He also stated there are limited firms that will be eligible to bid on a project this large. DeVivo also reported some changes may be needed for the EDO 49 due to some other issues that have been found with the roof.

14. Old Business:

- a. Discuss and possibly move to approve naming the Caisse Park gazebo for Richard A. Kelly, as recommended by the Administration, Finance, Health, and Human Services Committee.**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to approve naming the Caisse Park gazebo for Richard A. Kelly, as recommended by the Administration, Finance, Health, and Human Services Committee. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- b. Discuss and possibly move to approve a letter from the Town Council to ECSU regarding student conduct in the Hill Section, as recommended by the Willimantic Service District and Town Council's Public Safety Committee.**

McDevitt MOVED, Krich seconded, to approve a letter from the Town Council to ECSU regarding student conduct in the Hill Section, as recommended by the Willimantic Service District and Town Council's Public Safety Committee. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

15. New Business

- a. Discuss and possibly move to expand the Building Official position from part-time to full-time effective January 1, 2014, to be paid for out of the Town's contingency account.**

McDevitt MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to expand the Building Official position from part-time to full-time effective January 1, 2014, to be paid for out of the Town's contingency account. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- b. Discuss and possibly move to set a Public Hearing on Tuesday, December 3, 2013, at 6:30 PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room regarding a proposed ordinance amending the Town Code and the bidder's preference for local vendors.**

McDevitt MOVED, Krich seconded, to set a Public Hearing on Tuesday, December 3, 2013, at 6:30 PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room regarding a proposed ordinance amending the Town Code and the bidder's preference for local vendors. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

16. Future Agenda Items

None

17. Adjournment

McDevitt MOVED, Krich seconded, to adjourn the Town of Windham Regular Town Council meeting at 8:18 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney
Clerk of the Town Council