

WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

SPECIAL TELEPHONIC COUNCIL MEETING

WINDHAM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

Tuesday, May 7, 2013 - 7:00 P.M.



1. **Call to Order**

Mayor Eldridge called the Town of Windham Regular Town Council Special Telephonic 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, Kevin Donohue, Arnaldo Rivera, Mark Doyle and Dawn Niles.

Christel Donahue was present via teleconference.

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**

a. **Proclamation for the Children at the North Windham Elementary School.**

Mayor Eldridge stated the North Windham Elementary School children were unable to attend tonight's meeting and noted he would be sending the Proclamation to the school for them to display in the classroom.

Joe Marsalisi, Gifford Avenue, Willimantic, noted although it had passed, April 14 thru April 20 was National Tele-communicators Appreciation Week and he commended Lt. Evans and all our dispatchers for doing a great job. He also provided the Council with a letter that Lt. Evans had sent to The Chronicle with regards to National Tele-communicators Appreciation Week. In addition, Mr. Marsalisi noted special classes were now available for dispatchers to better prepare them for emergency responses to school shootings, disasters and active shooter responses.

James Flores, Willimantic, reported he was a candidate for the Town Council and he thanked the Council for putting item 15b on the agenda. He noted he was in favor of the agenda item and shared his reasons why. Mr. Flores also praised Council member Dawn Niles for all the work she has done for our community and stated she was a true pioneer.

4. **Town Council Comment**

Dawn Niles reported on the North Windham School 5th grade students visit to the State Capital. She noted herself and State Representative Johnson's aide had given the students



a tour and the students were then recognized on the house floor where Mayor Eldridge was able to join them. She also noted the students had met the Majority Leader and Senator Williams. Ms. Niles thanked those who gave donations for the bus and pizza (Tony Fantoli is covering the remaining cost for the pizza) and noted the students had a great time. She stated it was nice to promote Windham in a positive way.

Tom DeVivo asked if the Council could at some point discuss our tax collection. He mentioned the stories circulating about the Country Club and noted the Club is a large piece of property and has been a thriving business in Town for decades. He stated the town may be having a tax sale on the property and he believes it is prudent for the Council to discuss any of the Towns tax sales.

Town Manager Beets explained he had been informed by the Tax Collector that the taxes and water for the Country Club had been paid.

5. Adoption of Minutes

a. Discussion and possible action to adopt the minutes for the April 16, 2013, and April 23, 2013, Council meetings.

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adopt the minutes for the April 16, 2013, and April 23, 2013, Town Council meetings. 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.** Alex Girshick as a regular member of the Energy Commission, with a term ending April 20, 2015.
- b.** Christopher Vials as a regular member of the Energy Commission, with a term ending April 20, 2018.
- c.** Joan Light as a regular member of the Senior Center Advisory Board, with a term ending October 1, 2017.
- d.** Eugene Light as a regular member of the Senior Center Advisory Board, with a term ending October 1, 2014.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to take Items 7a through 7d as one item. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Underwood MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to appoint Alex Girshick as a regular member of the Energy Commission, with a term ending April 20, 2015, Joan Light as a regular member of the Senior Center Advisory Board, with a term ending October 1, 2017 and Eugene Light as a regular member of the Senior Center Advisory Board, with a term ending October 1, 2014 and to reappoint Christopher Vials as a regular member of the Energy Commission, with a term ending April 20, 2018. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. Presentations & Special Reports

a. Presentation by Lockton and Associates regarding the Town's Self-Insurance Program. (No action.)

Dan Escajeda from Lockton Insurance gave a brief presentation regarding the Town's Self-Insurance Program. He provided the Council with a report showing the comparisons of the Plan Year Medical and Rx Claims and the Actual Paid Claims vs. Expected Claims for the Town and the Board of Education. He explained the report and answered questions from the Council.

b. Presentation by Chris Henderson, Americorps VISTA/Access to Assets Program Coordinator from the ACCESS Agency, regarding the Hour Exchange. (No action.)

Chris Henderson, an Americorp Vista, serving at the Access Agency, gave a brief presentation regarding the Hour Exchange Program. He provided the Council with an informational packet and application for the program. He also explained the program and the benefits it could have on the residents of our community.

c. Presentation by Emergency Management Director Mike Licata and BOE Director of Facilities Wayne Donaldson about a Micro-Grid Project at the Windham Middle School and Sweeney Elementary School. (Action item = 15.a.)

Emergency Management Director Mike Licata and BOE Director of Facilities Wayne Donaldson gave a brief presentation regarding a Micro-Grid Project at the Windham Middle School and Sweeney Elementary School. Mr. Licata and Mr. Donaldson provided the Council with a copy of the Public Act and other information defining micro-grids. They also explained the background of the project and the reasons for choosing the location of the micro-grid at the schools and the benefits it could have for the community. Mr. Licata and Mr. Donaldson answered questions from the Council.

9. Mayor's Report

Mayor Eldridge reported he had attended the following events and he gave a brief overview of each event: Cedarwoods ribbon cutting ceremony, the ECSU poster contest, Earth Day at QVCC, the visit to the State Capital with the 5th graders from North Windham School companions program, the retirement party for Town Building Inspector Don Schultz, the Chamber banquet and awards ceremony, the Cinco de Mayo parade and the grand opening of the BMX Park.

Mayor Eldridge also thanked the following people; Tom DeVivo for his role in the progress of the Cedarwoods housing project, Dawn Niles for making the North Windham 5th grade students visit to the Capital a great event, Kim Sullivan for organizing the retirement party for Don Schultz, Rey Soto and Charlie Olbrias for their work on the BMX Park and Scott's Cyclery and Burns BMX for their donations and support of the BMX Park.

10. Town Manager's Report

a. Finance Office update.

Town Manager Beets reported briefly on the status of the work being done with regards to the Finance Department. He provided the Council with a summary of

the finance department's work program outlining the budget issues, the goals of the Town Council and the needs of the Town. He also provided a copy of a proposal from O'Neil Accounting & Consulting LLC outlining the services they could assist the Town in. Town Manager Beets explained both documents and noted there had been some progress however there was a long way to go.

11. Discussion and Review of Communications

12. Resolutions and Ordinances

- a. None.

13. Reports of Committees, Boards and Commissions

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

K. Donohue reported the Committee had heard about the School Readiness Grant which he explained and noted will be a future agenda item that he believes would be very beneficial for the Town.

Donohue also reported there may be minor changes in the future relating to the Housing Code. He explained that over the past two years, at no cost to the taxpayer, the department has been able to hire additional housing inspectors and target more areas than they could have otherwise.

In addition, Donohue noted tonight's agenda item pertaining to the consolidation of the finance departments which he stated he would speak to at that time.

Donohue also answered questions from the Council.

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

Krich reported the Committee had met and spoke at length about the Dispatch Center. He noted they are moving toward an Ordinance in a multi-step process however he stated there were still some unanswered questions regarding licensing issues, representation on the board and leases on the towers.

Krich also reported the RFP for Animal Control not been received in time for the Committee to review therefore they weren't able to act on it. He stated they would try to have it for the Council's June meeting.

Krich reported the Committee had spoken briefly about the farmers market. He explained the farmers market was reluctant to move to Jillson Square however they would consider having the market there a couple of times a year.

In addition, Krich reported the Committee had discussed the water situation involving Mansfield and noted an interested person from the public was asking questions concerning the matter. He stated Jim and Victor from the Water Authority was there to answer questions and reminded them that there was only a proposal and there has been no notification from the State or Mansfield that they wanted our water.

Update on the Magnet School

DeVivo gave a brief update on the status of the Magnet School. He stated the Committee had their neighborhood meeting at the First Taxing District meeting last night where they had talked with many of the neighbors and explained where they were with the schedule of the school. He also stated the Fire Departments would be given tours in the upcoming weeks and proudly announced that as of tomorrow morning the school was 100 days from completion. Mr. DeVivo also answered questions from the Council.

14. Old Business

- a. None.

15. New Business

- a. **Discuss and possibly move to approve a contract with Distributed Electric Renewable Power to create a proposal on behalf of the Town and the BOE for state funding for a micro-grid project at the Windham Middle School and Sweeney Elementary School.**

Niles MOVED, K. Donohue seconded, to approve a contract with Distributed Electric Renewable Power to create a proposal on behalf of the Town and the Board of Education for a micro-grid project not to exceed \$60,000.00 on the contingency that it is approved by the Board of Education and that there is funding at the State level. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- b. **Discuss and possibly move to approve a proposal about combining finance operations at the BOE and Town, as recommended by the Administration, Finance, Health, and Human Services Subcommittee.**

K. Donohue MOVED, Niles seconded, that the Town Council approve the creation of a town-wide consolidated finance department which would combine the Town Finance Department and the School District Finance Department and would encourage the Board of Education to do the same. All were in favor. MOTOION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

K. Donohue MOVED, DeVivo seconded, that the Town Council work with the Board of Education and the Board of Finance to purchase MUNIS software and hire a Finance Director and that the Board of Finance determine the ways and means to accomplish this as soon as possible. All were in favor except Eldridge who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

K. Donohue MOVED, Niles seconded, that except for temporary positions that there be a moratorium on hiring in the finance department in Town and that all spending on Phoenix software be stopped excepting any existing encumbrances until a new Finance Director is hired. All were in favor except McDevitt who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

16. Future Agenda Items

- a. None

17. Adjournment

DeVivo MOVED, Rivera seconded, to adjourn the Town of Windham Town Council Meeting at 8:33 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney

Clerk of the Town Council