

**Minutes of the
Windham Town Council Work Study Session
Windham Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium, 2nd Floor
Tuesday, September 8, 2015 7:00 P.M.**

Note: Study Sessions are primarily for the purpose of discussing certain topics important to the community and Council Members. The Town Council will not approve any contracts, ordinances, or resolutions in Study Session, but Council Members may, as a result of the discussion at a Study Session, give policy direction to the Town Manager about agenda items.

1. Call to Order

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

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Charles Krich, Tony Fantoli, Tom DeVivo, Joseph Underwood, Mark Doyle, Michael Lessard and James Flores

Lorraine McDevitt, Charlotte Patros and Christel Donahue were absent.

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

Bill Powers, Scotland Road, Windham, provided the Town Council a copy of a statement he read. (See Attachment A).

Dennis O'Brien, 120 Bolivia Street, Willimantic, spoke about naming a portion of Lauter Park for Cora Moore.

Doug Lary, 183 Summit Street, Willimantic, spoke about Item #8b and the first Item in #9a on tonight's agenda.

Susan Johnson, 120 Bolivia Street, Willimantic, spoke about naming a portion of Lauter Park for Cora Moore.

4. Town Council Comment

Mayor Eldridge explained why the Police Collective Bargaining Agreement has to go to the full Town Council.

Tom DeVivo stated every Town employee is a Windham employee. He also spoke about amending meeting minutes that have been approved.

Charles Krich spoke about the requirements of FOIA in regards to meeting minutes.

James Flores asked for a clarification on speaking about an employee at a public meeting.

Charles Krich responded to the previous question asked by Mr. Flores.

Mayor Eldridge spoke on the question of speaking about an employee at a public meeting.

Tony Fantoli clarified he was questioning the authority of the position and not the person.

Joe Underwood spoke about meeting minutes.

5. Presentation about naming the pavilion, the green area, and the waterpark at Lauter Park after Cora Moore. (Request of Councilmember Flores.)

Councilmember Flores gave a presentation on naming the pavilion, the green area, and the waterpark at Lauter Park after Cora Moore. Recreation Director Tara Calixto also spoke on the matter.

Flores MOVED, Underwood seconded, to give direction to the Town Manager to include on the next agenda, discussion and possible action on naming the pavilion, the green area, and the waterpark at Lauter Park after Cora Moore, subject to receiving a completed application as required by the Town Property Naming Policy and Process. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Presentation from and discussion with members of the Windham Ethics Commission about the Town of Windham Ethics Code .

Mr. McGrath introduced the Commission members. He and Commissioner Mike Sikoski gave a presentation on the Windham Ethics Code. They provided the Town Council with a handout and a short discussion followed. Commissioner McGrath asked the Town Council to review the Windham Ethics Code and notify the Commission if they wanted any changes made to the Code.

7. Presentation from and discussion with the Windham Region Transit District about their operations and finances, including a request for additional funding.

Ellen Grant, Administrator for WRTD, accompanied by WRTD Finance Director Lisa Seymour and Transportation Director Rose Kurcinik, gave a presentation about the operations and finances of WRTD and requested additional Town match funding for FY 2016. Ms. Grant explained why there is a need for additional funding. Discussion ensued. Mr. Flores noted for the record, the meeting appropriating funds took place on March 10, 2015.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to recommend the Town Manager prepare documents for the next agenda to include discussion and possible action regarding the request from WRD for additional funding. All were in favor except Flores who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

8. **Presentation from and discussion with Unified Finance Director Chris Johnson about the operation of the Finance Department. Discussion topics will also include:**
- a. **the BOF Request that Council investigate the Finance Department; and**
 - b. **the BOF Request that Council create an Ad hoc Committee to make recommendations about the allocation of costs incurred at the Dispatch Center.**

Unified Finance Director Chris Johnson introduced Windham Public Schools Building & Grounds Director Wayne Donaldson to answer any questions the Town Council may have on the Micro Grid or Wells projects.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to add Item 8-1 to the agenda, discussion with Town Staff regarding any school building projects. All were in favor except Flores who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

8. 1. **Discussion with Town Staff regarding any school building projects.**
Windham Public Schools Building & Grounds Director Wayne Donaldson gave a brief update on the status of the Wells project. He also answered questions from the Town Council.
- a. **the BOF Request that Council investigate the Finance Department**
Unified Finance Director Chris Johnson gave a recap of the occurrences in the Finance Department. He reviewed the background of the department prior to his employment and explained the status of the department since he has been on board including the implementation of the new financial system. He also answered questions from the Town Council.
 - b. **the BOF Request that Council create an Ad hoc Committee to make recommendations about the allocation of costs incurred at the Dispatch Center.**
A brief discussion took place. No Action Taken.

MOTION: Flores MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to move Public Comment up on the agenda to follow Item 8b. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. **Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment**
Bill Powers, Chair of the Ad-Hoc Wells Committee, spoke about the Wells Project. Mr. Powers also spoke about the meeting minutes and the Ethics Ordinance.

Bev York, South Windham, part time Educator at the Textile Museum, spoke about the lease agreement between the Town & the Museum.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, spoke about the Dispatch Center & bilingual translators.

Doug Lary, 183 Summit Street, Willimantic, spoke about the Ethics Ordinance.

James Flores spoke about recording meeting minutes.

Tom DeVivo spoke about parking at ArtSpace and Windham Mills.

Barbara McKinney, Clerk of the Town Council, spoke about meeting minutes.

NOTE: The Town Council may discuss and approve a motion to convene an executive session with the Unified Finance Director, the Personnel Director, the Executive Administrator, and the Town Manager to discuss personnel matters and documents confidential under the law.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to go into executive session at 8:25 P.M. with the Unified Finance Director, the Personnel Director, the Executive Administrator, and the Town Manager to discuss personnel matters and documents confidential under the law. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to come out of executive session at 9:58 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. Future Agenda Items

None

10. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment

Moved up on the agenda to follow Item #8b

11. Adjournment

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to adjourn the Windham Town Council Work Study Session at 10:00 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney
Clerk of the Town Council

Attachment A

Windham Town Council

September 5, 2015

Willimantic, CT.

Greetings to the Council members:

I am addressing the Council for its consideration about the following in the interest of improving communication between the Council and the people you serve and also to help to ensure every citizen's right to know.

If a summary contained in "Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment" portion of the Council's meeting minutes is deemed to be incorrect or incomplete by the speaker, the speaker should be given the opportunity to make a correction, which subsequently becomes an official correction. For example, the reason I spoke at the June 2, 2015 Council meeting was to ask the Council **to take action** regarding what appears to be an "unwritten Town policy". Both the Board of Education and I were advised that I could not hold up a sign reading "VOTE ON TUESDAY" on town property at Windham Center School and North Windham School sites. When the Town Attorney was consulted, eventually I was advised by the Town Manager that no such policy exists. I have not been given the opportunity to have a correction made to the minutes. I have met with the Mayor and Town Clerk. The Mayor indicated that concerns presented here would be brought to the Council, for which I am thankful. I would like to see the Council develop a written policy which specifically allows for holding a sign on town property, when it is not disruptive to the function being carried out (in this case education at a school). Being told that I am not allowed to hold a sign on town property, in my opinion at this time, may violate my first amendment rights. Also, when the Council Minutes inaccurately represent a citizen's words and/or meaning, this too may interfere with one's freedom of speech. Anyone reading the minutes of June 2nd would have no idea of the concerns brought forth or that there was a request for action by the Council.

People who read the final version of the minutes should have an accurate account of needs, concerns, issues and problems brought forth by the public.



Bill Powers

Scotland Road

Windham, CT