

WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

WINDHAM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

Tuesday, February 16, 2010 - 7:00 P.M.



Teleconference Meeting

1. Call to Order

Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge called the Town of Windham Town Council meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Jerry Iazzetta, Teresa Santucci, Erika Haynes, N. Joseph Underwood, Kevin Donohue, Davie Howe Sr., Lorraine M. McDevitt, Mike Lessard and Christel Donahue.

Town Council members absent: Arnaldo Rivera

Staff present: Neal J. Beets, Town Manager

2. Citizens and Delegations

Harry Carboni, Willimantic, reported that several lights on Main Street are out and the ones that work are horrible. He also suggests that the traffic on Main Street should be re-routed. Mr. Carboni mentioned that the budget process is coming up and the Town should take a look again in privatizing the cafeteria workers and the Off Track Betting should get approval by the Town Council.

Ray Aramini, 223 High Street, Willimantic, apologized for his appearance and informed the Council that he is surprised to be in agreement with Mr. Harry Carboni in support of Off Track Betting. Mr. Aramini stated that the owner of Thirsty Frog is a life long friend of his and is a responsible individual.

Jeff Veins, Columbia, stated that the Town of Windham by far is the unfriendliest Town. Mr. Veins wanted the Council to know that they are the most difficult Town for businesses to deal with. He also has an issue with Council members abstaining with out giving a reason.

William, 70 Prospect Street, Willimantic, raised and born in New Haven, stated he came to the Town of Windham because it is known to help people in programs. He spoke in favor of Off Track Betting because it will help people like him get a job.

James Baron, 17 Prospect Street, Willimantic, Windham Performing Arts Alumni, passed out invitations to the Town Council regarding an upcoming documentary film titled "The Legacy of Windham Public Schools' Great Institution."

Damian Fox, Thirsty Frog owner, spoke regarding concerns that were raised by Erika Haynes at the last Town Council meeting. He stated that after researching he found that the Governor of Alabama had done a speech regarding casinos and in that speech was some of the information that Councilman Haynes reported, but it had to do with casinos. Mr. Fox also mentioned that if you do research the Council would find out that the largest gambling addiction is lottery.

Mark (Fochino or Metuzik), Thirsty Frog partner, stated he was from Manchester, Connecticut and can't believe how much trouble the Town of Windham gives businesses. He mentioned that they are trying to employ Windham residents because they know there is a need, but if the Off Track Betting does not get approved he will not spend another dime in this Town.

David Fenn, Windham Center, stated that we obviously need to do things to improve our downtown and there is a lot of funding out there. Mr. Fenn does not believe there is something wrong with betting and the proposed project might work at Thirsty Frog, but if it is not run properly than it might not be the best for the Town.

Mark (Fochino or Metuzik), Thirsty Frog partner, stated that he was sure other towns look at other towns to see how Off Track Betting works and suggests that the Town of Windham due the same. He mentioned that this is an opportunity for the Town of Windham and the Council should really look into it before a decision is made and they regret it afterwards.

Mary Lou DeVivo, Hill Top Drive, North Windham, spoke in favor of Off Track Betting. Mrs. DeVivo stated that residents and people who visit the Town of Windham should have more entertainment.

Beverly Rano, Cash Checking owner, which is located in the same building as Thirsty Frog, stated that she was upset at some of the comments made by the Council. She mentioned that people who cash checks at her location are not going to spend their money gambling and suggests that the Council stop making comments without some facts.

David Howe Sr. took leave of the chair to speak under citizens and delegations.

David Howe Sr., stated he supports the Off Track Betting and it has been put on the back burden for a long time. Mr. Howe informed the Council that these facilities are monitored by the State and that the Town Council is making a big mistake if they do not move forward.

Lorraine M. McDevitt took leave of the chair to speak under citizens and delegations.

Lorraine M. McDevitt, Willimantic, informed the Town Council that she has been a resident since 1971 and is disappointed because they have opportunity and some of the members are making decisions based on their personal feelings. Mrs. McDevitt feels that the Town Council should be making a decision for the betterment of the Town. She also stated that she is not a gambler or a drinker and is in favor of the proposed Off Track Betting.

Manager of the Thirsty Frog informed the Town Council that ever since complaints have been forwarded to him from residents of the town he has implemented a walk through the grounds of the property 2 times during the night. The individuals that walk the grounds are in charge of listening to the noise level coming from the building and they make adjustments to the noise level if needed.

Erika Haynes took leave of the chair to speak under citizens and delegations.

Erika Haynes, Willimantic, stated that on January 18th a terrible tragedy struck her family and wanted the Town Council to know the great response that was given to her by the Willimantic Police Department. She mentioned that the professionalism and support she received was remarkable and they should be commended for their action.

Charlie Kratt, Monticello Street, Willimantic, spoke in favor of Off Track Betting and requested that the Town Council approve the project. Mr. Kratt mentioned that the Town might receive more funds from Off Track Betting than the State of Connecticut. He also concurred with several residents in regards to the Town of Windham not being business friendly.

3. Adoption of Minutes

a. Discussion and possible action to adopt the February 2, 2010 Town Council regular meeting minutes.

Santucci MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to postpone the approval of the February 2nd special and regular meeting minutes until the meeting in March. MOTION PASSED with all in favor except Howe who opposed.

4. Resignations

None.

5. Appointments

None.

6. Presentations & Special Reports

a. Presentation about the history of Willimantic by UCONN History Professor Jamie Eves.

Mr. Jamie Eves gave a power point presentation on the history of Willimantic and Windham. He informed the Council that he is looking for feedback and additional Town of Windham historical information.

7. Mayor's Report

Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge reported that the Chocolate Festival was a great event. He mentioned that the 2010 Cupid was Linda Sypher. Mayor Eldridge mentioned that we were named a HeartSafe Community.

8. Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Neal J. Beets informed the Town Council that the Thread City Development Corporation presented an award to Caffemantic and owner of building Dean Roy.

a. Budget Process.

Mr. Beets explained the budget process to the Town Council and reported that he is scheduling a special meeting for Wednesday, February 24th at 7:00 p.m. He also informed the Council that he is trying to get to a zero mill increase, but reminded them that their are contractual agreements that have been adopted with several unions, which need to be honored.

9. Discussion and Review of Communications

None.

10. Resolutions and Ordinances

a. Discussion and possible action to adopt a resolution authorizing Town Manager Neal J. Beets to sign agreements for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act road projects.

Donahue MOVED, Iazzetta seconded, to adopt resolution # 2477.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council THAT

Neal J. Beets, Town Manager, be, and hereby authorized to sign the agreement entitled:

Agreement between the State of Connecticut and the Town of Windham for the Construction, Inspection, and Maintenance of Resurfacing of High Street, Jackson Street, and Valley Street utilizing Federal Funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Public Law 111-5 (hereinafter "Act")

State Project # 163-197

Federal Aid Project #1163 (102)

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Discussion and possible action to adopt a resolution authorizing Town Manager Neal J. Beets to sign the Housing for Economic Growth Program grant application.

Iazzetta MOVED, Underwood seconded, to adopt resolution # 2478.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council THAT

The former Board of Selectmen had previously authorized submission of a grant application under the Housing for Economic Growth program referenced in section 8-13 (m-x) of CGS at its duly held meeting on August 5th, 2008 (resolution no. 2380). At that time, the First Selectman was named as authorized to execute documents or agreements as may be required in connection with the said application.

The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) approved this application (HEGTA-08-163) for \$50,000.

The Town of Windham has now changed its form of government pursuant to its new Town Charter and under that Charter the Town Manager now is the chief executive officer for the Town of Windham.

Therefore, the Windham Town Council now identifies Town Manager Neal J. Beets as the individual authorized to sign and execute any contract and/or agreement on behalf of the Town, including but not limited to all documents necessary or appropriate for OPM application HEGTA-08-163.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

11. Reports of Committees, Boards and Commissions

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

Chairman Kevin Donohue reported that the committee met and reviewed strategic goals and identified a few and they hope to move forward with them. They discussed the Town's website and discussed how to make it better.

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

Chairman Jerry Iazzetta reported that the committee would be meeting on Wednesday, February 24th immediately following the special Town Council meeting.

c. Board of Education.

i. Update by Diane Rayhall.

Diane Rayhall, Board of Education member gave an update on the Windham Middle School movie night and Applebee's breakfast in April. She mentioned that Windham Center School is also having a breakfast. The North Windham silent auction is in May. Mrs. Rayhall mentioned that there are 6 4th graders participating in a leadership conference.

12. Old Business

a. Discussion and possible action to approved the proposed settlement on UBS lawsuit.

Iazzetta MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to approve the proposed settlement amount on UBS lawsuit. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Town Manager Neal J. Beets informed the council that the settlement was in the amount of \$105,000.00 but the attorneys are working out the details of the agreement.

13. New Business

Iazzetta MOVED, McDevitt seconded, approved items b, d and e listed below. MOTION PASSED with all in favor except Santucci who opposed.

a. Discussion and possible action regarding the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of Town Council meetings.

Iazzetta MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to bring forward a resolution amending the Town Council Standing Rules to add the Pledge of Allegiance as # 2 on the agenda.

Donohue MOVED, Santucci seconded, to amend the motion and add the singing of God Bless America. MOTION ON AMENDMENT FAILED with all against except Donohue who was in favor.

ORIGINAL MOTION PASSED with all in favor except Haynes and Donahue who opposed.

b. Discussion and possible action to award a contract in the amount of \$27,400.00 for the installation of an oil water separator at the Fire/Police Complex to satisfy a DEP mandate.

This item was approved please see above motion.

c. Discussion and possible action to set a public hearing on Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. in the Windham Town Hall Auditorium regarding a possible Off Track Betting location at the Thirsty Frog.

McDevitt MOVED, Howe seconded, to set a public hearing on Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. in the Windham Town Hall Auditorium regarding a possible Off Track Betting location at the Thirsty Frog. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

d. Discussion and possible action to set a public hearing as part of the Town Council's Regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 2, 2010, regarding the Noise Ordinance recommended by the Administration,

Finance, Health, and Human Services Sub-Committee at their meeting on February 3, 2010.

This item was approved please see above motion.

- e. **Discussion and possible action to set a public hearing as part of the Town Council's Regular meeting at 7:00p.m. on Tuesday, March 2, 2010, regarding the Energy Commission Ordinance recommended by the Administration, Finance, Health, and Human Services Sub-Committee at their meeting on February 3, 2010.**

This item was approved please see above motion.

14. Future Agenda Items

None.

15. Citizens and Delegations

Diane Rayhall, North Windham, informed the Town Council that item 13b should have been discussed and approved by the Willimantic Service District Council. She also stated that she was in favor of Off Track Betting.

Jerry Iazzetta took leave of the chair to speak under citizens and delegations.

Jerry Iazzetta, South Windham, read part of a letter that Damian Fox wrote to the Council and he spoke about statements that were made by Mr. Fox blaming the Town of Windham for the closing of RAC. Mr. Iazzetta asked the Town Council to listen to facts.

16. Adjournment

McDevitt MOVED, Haynes seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 p.m. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Neida I. Rosado
Clerk of the Town Council