

WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

WINDHAM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

Tuesday, January 18, 2011 - 7:00 P.M.



1. Call to Order

Mayor Eldridge called the Town of Windham Council meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Kevin Donohue, Erika Haynes, Jerry Iazzetta, Teresa Santucci, Christel Donahue, Lorraine McDevitt, and Mike Lessard.

Town Council members excused: Arnaldo Rivera and N. Joseph Underwood

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

Lori Jeffers, Willimantic, spoke of the allegations made against her at the November Election and explained what the moderator told her had happened.

Rafael Calixto, Windham, stated he is a co-founder of the Silverback Wrestling Club as well as the Director of school counselors in a neighboring town. He noted the Silverback Club has kids from age 4 to adult participating in the program in addition to many volunteers. He explained the program would like to expand and he asked the Council to please let the wrestling club continue using the space at the Kramer Building.

Dawn Niles, North Windham, noted there were two people before the Council for appointment, Charles Krich and Anna Crawford. She also stated she is the Chair of the HEARTSafe Committee and gave the dates and times of the CPR/AED certification/re-certification classes. She explained the classes will be conducted by the Windham Hospital Paramedics and are open to people who work or reside in Windham. She noted donations to HEARTSafe would be accepted. In addition, she asked that Public Hearings be held after 6:00 p.m.

Brian Crudden, Columbia, Employee of the Town in Education. He supports the Silverbacks and is very proud of them. He noted all the coaches are great role models for our kids. He stated the club teaches much more than wrestling, it teaches the kids work ethic. He thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak about the Club.

Mike Lessard, South Windham, supports the Silverbacks. In addition, he explained the facts of the Teachers Contract. He also explained he is a teacher of 9 years with the second longest tenure for at least the last five years. He noted he makes \$48,000 a year with great benefits and loves his job. He stated he is not complaining but is concerned Windham might lose some teachers.

Greg LaFlam, stated he is a co-founder of the Silverback Wrestling Club. He explained the program had started in the room that is in question and they are not looking to take space away from the preschool but only shift it to another room. He noted the program provides tutoring to the kids and thinks it would benefit them to have a permanent home.

Peter DeCarli, Willimantic, feels kids don't have high expectations for themselves and the Silverbacks try to raise that level. He believes the program instills respect and discipline that is now lacking in kids. He noted they have also aligned with ECSU for free tutoring to help the kids. He stated the Club is not asking for money, they are just asking for space.

Nathan Fleming stated he is a senior at WHS. He explained the Silverbacks are another family outside your immediate family. He stated it's a place where you can go to forget about all your other problems; somewhere you can go to escape. He noted the coaches there were his role models and now he is a role model to the younger kids.

John Ware, Windham, stated he does a lot of the administrative work for the Silverback Club. He noted he has 3 children who are or have been involved with the Silverbacks and the sport has done amazing things for them. He explained towns from all over want to wrestle Windham and what the coaches do for the kids is tremendous.

Erika Haynes, Willimantic, noted there will be a special SIFT meeting on Thursday, January 20, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. with guest speaker Alex Johnston from ConnCAN, talking about Funding Inequities in CT's Funding Strategy for Education. She also stated on Tuesday, January 25th, the SIFT Committee was having a telephone meeting with Chris Barbic, founder of Houston's YES Prep Schools. She noted The Chronicle has opted not to cover the meetings. She encouraged people to attend. In addition, she stated she had requested discussion on the Teacher's Contract to be on the agenda and was disappointed that it was not. She read a Resolution she had drafted and had hoped to discuss it with the Council

Terry Santucci, Willimantic, shared a story involving her grandson and how wrestling helped him. She thinks it's a strange but incredibly wonderful sport. She gave a thumbs up to wrestling and the Silverbacks.

Dawn Perry, spoke in favor of the Silverback Wrestling Club.

Brandon Shrout, Windham, stated he was involved with the club and is now an educator at Windham Middle School. He noted there are no athletic programs at the Middle School. He explained recently Kurt Jenkins who is affiliated with the Silverback's came into the Middle School and started putting a small program together to expose them to the sport. He noted when kids are in sports they typically have better grades.

Eddie Torres, Willimantic, spoke in favor of the Silverbacks. He stated he has three children who are involved with the program. He believes the coaches motivate the kids to be a better person as well as a better athlete. He also stated he is a Sargent in the U.S. Army and he gets to see the end result of all the hard work when the kids are in the training field. He would like the Council to give the club the facility they need.

Dennis O'Brien, Willimantic, supports youth sports and education. In addition, Mr. O'Brien noted he was there on his wife's behalf to swear in the two people who are on the agenda for appointment. He stated he knew both of them very well and feels the Town could not do any better than Charlie Krich for the Town Council and Anna Crawford for the Board of Finance.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, thinks the program is well supported and feels the Town would benefit from it.

Tara Risley, Windham, believes the club should stay in the space. She feels there is already something positive happening there and doesn't see a need to look for something else. She also gave a shout out to her mother who was Cupid here in Town and has passed away. She noted her mom's life other than her family and the community was wrestling. She stated if her mom was here the Council would have to give her 3 minutes plus. In addition, Ms. Risley noted she supports Charlie Krich.

Baltazar Gonzalez stated he goes to the WHS wrestling tournaments and he supports the Silverbacks.

Lorraine McDevitt, Church Street, explained she was the mother and grandmother of two teachers at WHS who work very hard along with their fellow teachers. She stated she is hoping through Erika's program that the community will fight as hard to keep the good teachers we have by trying to find a solution to keep their salaries more equitable. She encouraged all the parents and children at tonight's meeting to go to the SIFT meetings and speak on behalf of the teachers.

Doug Lary, 183 Summit Street, stated he is the Vice Chair of the Ethics Commission and gave a brief summary of the Ethics Commission and the struggles the Commission has faced with respect to implementing the Ethics Ordinance and its membership. He also noted he supports the appointment of Charles Krich.

Mitchell LaFlam stated he has wrestled with the Silverback Wrestling Club for 5 or 6 years and remembers rolling up mats after practice every night with his dad. He supports the Silverbacks.

Brandon Koch stated he is a senior at WHS and captain of the wrestling team. He spoke in favor of the Silverbacks.

Rilan ? stated he has been wrestling for 4 years and every time he sees little kids wrestle he says good job.

Tyler Ware stated he really enjoys wrestling and when he sees other kids wrestling he joins in and has fun.

4. Adoption of Minutes

a. Discussion and possible action to adopt the January 4, 2011 Town Council Public Hearing minutes.

McDevitt MOVED, Haynes seconded, to adopt the January 4, 2011 Town Council Public Hearing minutes. All were in favor except Donahue and Iazzetta who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

b. Discussion and possible action to adopt the January 4, 2011 Town Council regular meeting minutes.

Haynes MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adopt the January 4, 2011 Town Council regular meeting minutes with the following corrections: Item 11B showed motion passed unanimously however Iazzetta had abstained therefore the motion was not unanimous. Item 11c showed all were in favor of the motion however Haynes voted to oppose the motion. All were in favor except Donahue who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

MOTION: McDevitt MOVED, Haynes seconded, to move Item 14a, discussion and give staff direction regarding space at the Kramer Building be moved up on the agenda. All were in favor except Iazzetta who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

14. New Business

a. Discuss and give staff direction regarding space at the Kramer Building

Tara Risley, Recreation Director gave a brief overview on the current use of the space at the Kramer Building and on the Silverback Wrestling Club. Ms. Risley also answered questions from the Council. Discussion followed.

Donohue MOVED, Haynes seconded, that the Public Safety, Recreation and Public Works Sub-Committee review the space at the Kramer Building and return with a recommended process that defines the issues relating to that space and produces a recommendation on how that public space should be allocated. All were in favor except McDevitt and Santucci who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

5. Resignations

NOTED.

6. Appointments

- a. Discussion and possible action to appoint Dr. Orland E. Donald to the North Central District Health Board of Directors as a voting member with term ending April 15, 2013.**

McDevitt MOVED, Haynes seconded, to appoint Dr. Orland E. Donald to the North Central District Health Board of Directors as a voting member with term ending April 15, 2013. All were in favor except Santucci and Donahue who opposed and Iazzetta who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

- b. Discussion and possible action to reappoint David Masopust to the Windham Historic District Commission with term ending August 16, 2015.**

Santucci MOVED, Iazzetta seconded, to reappoint David Masopust to the Windham Historic District Commission with term ending August 16, 2015. All were in favor except Haynes and McDevitt who opposed and Lessard who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

- c. Discussion and possible action to appoint Anna Crawford to the Board of Finance with term ending November 22, 2011 per Town Charter.**

Iazzetta MOVED, Haynes seconded, to appoint Anna Crawford to the Board of Finance with term ending November 22, 2011 per Town Charter. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- d. Discussion and possible action to appoint Charles Krich to the Town Council with term ending November 22, 2011 per Town Charter.**

Iazzetta MOVED, Donahue seconded, to appoint Charles Krich to the Town Council with term ending November 22, 2011 per Town Charter. Donohue, Santucci, Donahue and Iazzetta were in favor, Haynes and McDevitt opposed and Lessard & Eldridge abstained. MOTION PASSED.

- e. Swearing in of Anna Crawford.**

Dennis O'Brien swore in Anna Crawford to the Board of Finance with term ending November 22, 2011 per Town Charter.

7. Presentations & Special Reports

- a. Update by Thomas DeVivo regarding the Inter District Magnet School Building Committee.**

Tom DeVivo gave an update regarding the Inter District Magnet School Building Committee. Mr. DeVivo apologized to the Council for missing the last meeting and thanked them for their continued support. He noted the Committee was ready to go out to bid for the land clearing and grubbing, followed by pre-blast surveys. He also reported on the challenges, successes and financial status of the Committee.

8. Mayor's Report

Mayor Eldridge reported the Snowball Dance was a great success and he was happy to see the auditorium being used.

Mayor Eldridge thanked Dawn Niles and the Democratic Town Committee for organizing the fundraiser to benefit the Windham No Freeze Hospitality Center that was held at Fred's Brickhouse Café. He noted Senator Blumenthal and U.S. Representative Joe Courtney as well as many other State and Local Politicians attended the event. He also noted the event raised \$1500.

In addition, Mayor Eldridge stated he attended the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration at the Calvary Baptist Church. He noted it was a great event and the celebration takes place every year.

Mayor Eldridge also reported there would be another fundraiser to benefit the Windham No Freeze Shelter on Saturday, January 22, 2011, at the Elks Club. He stated Bruce John was organizing the event and it will be Bruce's 60th Birthday as well.

9. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Beets reported on the fire on 118 Carey Hill that took place on Sunday about 1:00 a.m. He thanked Firefighters from Willimantic, South Windham, North Windham and Windham Center. He explained there were very tough conditions to fight the fire however no injuries were reported. He noted the building was a total loss and would be demolished with insurance funds once an arson investigation had been completed.

Mr. Beets also reported on the 2011-2012 Town Budget. He noted there would be a Board of Finance meeting on Wednesday, January 19th. He stated the Board had asked him as well as Gay St. Louis, Tax Collector, to attend. He explained Gay St. Louis would be speaking on the current revenue side and he would be speaking to the 2011-2012 Budget. Mr. Beets gave the Council a handout showing the Goals, Timeline, and Drivers, both Positive and Negative, and Issues he would be sharing with the Board of Finance.

10. Discussion and Review of Communications

NONE.

11. Resolutions and Ordinances

- a. Discussion and possible action to adopt a resolution regarding CL&P easements and to move to a Town meeting on January 26, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall meeting room.**

Iazzetta read the Resolution and moved for its adoption.

Iazzetta MOVED, Haynes seconded, to adopt a resolution #2526 regarding CL&P easements with amendments to change the time of the meeting to 6:30 p.m. and include under stipulations in Item 6 the words "by CL&P" and to move to a Town meeting on January 26, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall meeting room.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council THAT

The Town of Windham grant easements to install underground conduit and aboveground equipment in the locations described as follows:

Site 1 is located off Walnut Street on Town owned property between 877 & 869 Main Street and the Walnut Street municipal parking lot as shown on a map entitled "Northeast Utilities Service Co. for The Connecticut Light and Power Company, Compilation Plan, Proposed Easement Across Property of the Town of Windham, Walnut Street, Windham, CT".

Site 2 is located on the Safety Complex Property at 13 Bank Street as shown on a map entitled "Northeast Utilities Service Co. for the Connecticut Light and Power Company, Easement to be Acquired from Town of Windham, Meadow Street and Bank Street, Windham, CT".

Site 3 is located off Church Street on Town owned property at 48 Church Street, Crosbie Municipal Parking Lot, as shown on a plan entitled "Northeast Utilities Service Co. for the Connecticut Light and Power Company, Easement to be Acquired from Town of Windham, 48 Church Street, Windham, CT".

The easements are granted with the following stipulations:

1. That should a parking garage be built at Walnut Street it would be at CL+P'S cost and responsibility to relocate conduit.
2. The transformers shall be landscaped
3. Should a transformer need to be relocated in the future it would be done so at CL+P'S cost
4. The metal grates on Main Street shall be replaced with manhole covers located outside of painted crosswalks
5. Landscaping around the transformers shall be maintained by CL+P
6. Any graffiti on transformers shall be removed within seven working days, by CL+P.

To move to a Town Meeting on January 26, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the Windham Town Hall meeting room.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- b. Discussion and possible action on the proposed amendments to the Ethics Ordinance and set a public hearing for February 15, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall meeting room.**

Haynes MOVED, Lessard seconded, to send the Ethics Ordinance to the Administration & Finance, Health and Human Services Sub Committee for review. All were in favor except Donahue who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

12. Reports of Committees, Boards and Commissions

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

No Report.

b. Public Safety, Recreation and Public Works Sub Committee

Councilman Iazzetta reported the next meeting is January 26, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

13. Old Business

NONE.

14. New Business

b. Discussion and possible action to go out to bid for a new ambulance

Acting Chief Scrivener gave a brief report and recommended to the Council the fleet be moved from 2 to 3 ambulances. He explained the benefits to having a third ambulance in addition to the new ambulance. He also answered questions from the Council. Haynes MOVED, Santucci seconded, to authorize Acting Chief Scrivener to go out to bid for a new ambulance. All were in favor.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

15. Future Agenda Items

NONE.

16. Citizens and Delegations

Tom DeVivo thanked the Council for what they have done for their school. He also stated he is very concerned with the way the Council handled our future Councilman Charlie. He feels there was an illegal meeting with regards to the email and asked to see the minutes of the meeting, how it was posted, how the emails were received and stated it was now a public record. He believes it was against FOI and he thinks the Council should consider how it chooses its members. He stated he would be contacting the Town Managers Office.

Dawn Niles echoed Tom's sentiments exactly. She stated the Windham Democratic Town Committee per Charter has the right to pick the person they are sending to the Council and said they are sending his name back to the Council tomorrow to put on the next agenda. She noted she is very upset with the emails that have gone out and she has already sent her email to Ernie expressing that displeasure. In addition, Mrs. Niles thanked everyone who came to the event at Fred's Brickhouse for the fundraiser to benefit the Windham No Freeze Shelter. She mentioned a number of state and local officials attended and the event raised \$1500.

Acting Chief Scrivener thanked the fire fighters from all departments who responded to the fire on 118 Carey Hill. He stated everyone worked together and no injuries were reported.

Peter DeCarli stated he was afraid that it's been turned into the Silverbacks against the Preschool and he said that is not the case. He explained they would never want to take space from the preschool but noted the preschool has an enormous amount of space. He noted a lot of people currently use the space and the Silverback's would like to make it their permanent home. He understands the concerns with respect to the cleanliness of the space and assures the Council that hygiene is extremely important to the club.

Rafael Calixto stated the Silverbacks had requested a meeting with the Board of Education to discuss the space and noted the Board was unaware they had a room in the cafeteria. He explained he was an educator himself and would not take a room away from the kids. He believes the issue is about money and staffing and stated the Silverbacks are not asking for either, they are simply asking for use of space. He stated the club is working towards tying education in with the tutoring that will be given through ECSU. He said the club is only trying to give back to the community.

Pat Risley, Columbia, stated he works at the High School and is wrestling coach there. He shared his experience of growing up and being part of the sport. He feels the space is an ideal location for the Silverbacks and hopes the Recreation sub-committee will see the importance of this.

Doug Lary, 183 Summit Street, Vice Chair of the Ethics Commission, stated the teachers contract was distributed as a PDF file and he explained the different types of PDF files.

Shirzad Ahmadi stated he was a Physics teacher at Windham Tech and noted he is involved both directly and indirectly with the Silverbacks. He noted he has coached several of the coaches over the years. He also spoke of a trip to the Soviet Union with Jaime Poulin who was a wrestler several years ago and who now has a son in the club. He hopes to be able to make the same trip with him. He supports the Silverbacks.

Mike Lessard, South Windham, stated he does not like to abstain from voting however he doesn't feel comfortable voting for someone he does not know. He also asked the Silverbacks to be patient through the process of the Council determining the best use of the space at the Kramer Building. In addition, he stated he had two goals when he came on the Town Council, economic development & education. He expressed his concerns regarding the teachers contract and feels it's important for the people to know the facts.

Lori Jeffers, Willimantic, continued her explanation of the November Election incident. She also stated the January 4th Public Hearing was illegal and had not been given sufficient notice. In addition, she stated the Charter says a person must be a resident of the town to sit on a board. She also spoke of her concerns with the Magnet School.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, spoke in favor of the Silverback Wrestling Club.

Jerry Iazzetta, South Windham explained the procedures that must be followed when taking on a project. He noted before a decision can be made to undertake any project estimates are needed. He stated he understands the Town Engineer is busy however he requested an estimate 3 months ago and has not received anything to this point. He feels the Town can't move forward with the project until all the information is available.

17. Adjournment

Donohue MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adjourn the Town of Windham Town Council meeting at 10:10 PM. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney

Clerk of the Town Council