

# WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Windham Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Tuesday, December 2, 2014 - 7:00 P.M.

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**1. Call to Order.**

Mayor Eldridge called the Town of Windham Town Council regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Charles Krich (arrived at 7:09), Tony Fantoli, Tom DeVivo, Lorraine McDevitt, Joseph Underwood, Mark Doyle, Michael Lessard, James Flores, Christel Donahue and Charlotte Patros

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.**

Dawn Niles, North Windham, noted there is a new phase on the internet today – “The Day of Giving” and explained she, Mayor Eldridge, State Representative, Susan Johnson, Dennis O’Brien and Karen Gilbransen, are working together with SAMA, Willi Brew and WRCC to collect and distribute toys this holiday season. She presented the first gift and asked for the communities support. Ms. Niles also spoke about the Festival of Lights as well as the need to form a committee to review the current Affirmative Action Plan.

Kevin Hoxie, Ridgewood Road, Willimantic, requested a crosswalk be placed in front of the High School for safety purposes. He also noted David Foster will be performing a concert at Windham High School to raise funds for a student trip. Admission fee for the concert is \$15.00.

Susan Johnson, State Representative, thanked the Council for scheduling the legislative meeting for December 11<sup>th</sup>. She also gave an update on some of the projects listed in item 15e and was given clarification from Town Manager Beets on the status of the Micro-Grid Resolution and the wording of the Resolution. In addition, State Representative Johnson noted the announcement of the P-Tech program, which will allow 60 students to receive college funding up to an Associate’s Degree at no cost.

Dennis O’Brien, 120 Bolivia Street, Willimantic, noted the CCJEF case has been postponed indefinitely. He also noted an annual meeting will be held on Friday which he will be attending. Mr. O’Brien stated he will report back to the Council at a later date.

Charlie Kratt, Monticello Street, Willimantic, spoke against building a parking garage and does not see any benefits it will bring to the Town.

Mary Lou DeVivo, Ash Street, Willimantic, spoke in favor of building a parking garage and believes it will help the Town sell the former Tin Tsin lot and help with the economic growth of the community.

**4. Town Council Comment.**

James Flores commented on Morgan Stanley receiving \$128 billion and asked why they didn't admit they received money from the government and asked what they were hiding. He referred to the list from the Dept of Treasury regarding the bail-outs given and noted "bail-out" is the language used by the Federal Reserve. He believes if you ask the Federal Government for money it is a bail-out not a loan.

Tom DeVivo noted holiday concerts were being held at all the schools and encouraged everyone to attend. He stated by doing so it creates a sense of community.

Mike Lessard noted Windham High School activities calendar is on the website and encouraged everyone to check it out.

**5. Adoption of Minutes. Discuss and possibly move to adopt the minutes for:**

**a. the November 18, 2014, regular Council Meeting.**

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to adopt the minutes for the November 18, 2014, regular Town Council Meeting. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

**6. Resignations.**

**a. Patty Lein from the Water Pollution Control Authority.**

Noted

**7. Appointments.**

**a. Michele Nahas as a regular member of the Willimantic Housing Authority, with a term to expire on July 31, 2017.**

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to appoint Michele Nahas as a regular member of the Willimantic Housing Authority, with a term to expire on July 31, 2017. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**8. Presentations & Special Reports.**

**a. Hear from Probate Judge John McGrath about appropriations and reports regarding the Cemetery Trust Fund. (Action item 15.b.)**

Probate Judge John McGrath provided Council with a memo regarding the Cemetery Trust Fund and explained the history of the Trust Fund. He also suggested re-establishing a Cemetery Commission and requested the Commission file a report with the Probate Court by July 1 of each year for review.

DeVivo MOVED, Doyle seconded, to move Item 15b up on the agenda to follow Item 8a. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- 15 b. Discuss and possibly move to appoint a Cemetery Trust Fund Association consisting of former Probate Judge Dennis O'Brien, Public Works Director Brad Wojick, Deputy Public Works Director Scott Clairmont, Town Engineer Joe Gardner, Executive Administrator Neida Rosado, Treasurer Patty Spruance, and Revenue Collector Gay St. Louis, to appropriate funds from the Cemetery Trust Fund and to make an annual report to the Probate Court.**

McDevitt MOVED, Underwood seconded, to appoint a Cemetery Trust Fund Association consisting of former Probate Judge Dennis O'Brien, Public Works Director Brad Wojick, Deputy Public Works Director Scott Clairmont, Town Engineer Joe Gardner, Executive Administrator Neida Rosado, Treasurer Patty Spruance, and Revenue Collector Gay St. Louis, to appropriate funds from the Cemetery Trust Fund, to make an annual report to the Probate Court and to re-appoint members annually at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in July. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**9. Mayor's Report.**

Mayor Eldridge reported he attended the Fire Truck Parade and the Tree Lighting Ceremony which he noted, were both very well attended. He also encouraged people to participate in the toy drive.

Mayor Eldridge reported he had attended the ECSU – Day of Caring which fed 400 people. He also noted the Rotary Club will be holding their annual warm clothing drive tomorrow night.

Mayor Eldridge also stated he will be attending the CCJEF meeting on Friday and noted he will report back to Council on that meeting.

**10. Town Manager's Report.**

Town Manager Beets reported the legal documents for the Senior Center are not on the agenda due to the fact they are looking at an alternative way to create the Condominium agreement. He explained there are 6 parcels on the site and the Access Agency has begun the process to subdivide the property making the 3 parcels on Main Street a separate subdivision therefore leaving the other 3 parcels to be part of the Condominium Association. He noted the steps that must be taken to and expects there could be a delay of approximately 30 to 60 days before the documents can be completed.

Town Manager Beets also reported that the State Library Board has approved the application to renovate the Library. He explained the Town will be getting a grant (\$500,000) for the project and noted the renovations were included in the budget process. He also noted the positive response from the Library staff and library patrons and gave a brief overview of what the renovations will consist of.

**11. Discussion and Review of Communications.**

a. **Copies of minutes from various, boards, commissions, committees, per Council's request.**

**12. Resolutions and Ordinances.**

None

**13. Reports of Committees, Boards and Commissions.**

None

**14. Old Business.**

None

**15. New Business.**

- a. Discuss and possibly move to approve the transfer of investment responsibilities from Merrill Lynch to Morgan Stanley for the Cemetery Trust Fund and the William A. and Jennie S. King Library Trust Fund, to approve a proposed change in the investment portfolios for those Funds, and to authorize Unified Finance Director Chris Johnson to sign all appropriate paperwork.**

Councilmember Flores questioned the Representatives from Morgan Stanley regarding money given to their Company from the Federal Government. Senior Consultant Mr. Forma addressed Councilmember Flores' comments and questions. He apologized for speaking prematurely at a previous meeting and acknowledged after further research and reading the report Councilmember Flores was referring to, indeed Morgan Stanley had received loans from the Federal Government. He explained of the panic that was happening Nationwide, how loans were given to any financial institution in need and noted the FDIC insurance increased from \$250,000 to an unlimited amount. Mr. Forma also noted the loans to Morgan Stanley were paid off very rapidly.

Councilmember Underwood questioned the amount in the King Trust Fund. Controller Tom Pesce responded and noted there was \$384,172 as of 6/30/2014.

Krich MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to approve the transfer of investment responsibilities from Merrill Lynch to Morgan Stanley for the Cemetery Trust Fund and the William A. and Jennie S. King Library Trust Fund, to approve a proposed change in the investment portfolios for those Funds, and to authorize Unified Finance Director Chris Johnson to sign all appropriate paperwork. All were in favor except Flores who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

- b. Discuss and possibly move to appoint a Cemetery Trust Fund Association consisting of former Probate Judge Dennis O'Brien, Public Works Director Brad Wojick, Deputy Public Works Director Scott Clairmont, Town Engineer Joe Gardner, Executive Administrator Neida Rosado, Treasurer Patty Spruance, and Revenue Collector Gay St. Louis, to appropriate funds from the Cemetery Trust Fund and to make an annual report to the Probate Court.**

**Moved up on the agenda to follow Item 8a.**

- c. Discuss and possibly move to approve the purchase of two, solar-powered LED scoreboards from Varsity Scoreboards for the Willimantic Legion Fields in the total amount of \$12,089.57, as budgeted in the LOCIP Fund of the Capital Budget.**

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to approve the purchase of two, solar-powered LED scoreboards from Varsity Scoreboards for the Willimantic Legion Fields in the total amount of \$12,089.57, as budgeted in the LOCIP Fund of the Capital Budget. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- d. Discuss and possibly move to approve the installation of radiant heating systems by Fahrenheit Mechanical in the Public Works Mechanics' Garage**

**and the Animal Control Kennel in the total amount of \$45,950, as budgeted in the Energy Efficiency Fund of the Capital Budget.**

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to approve the installation of radiant heating systems by Fahrenheit Mechanical in the Public Works Mechanics' Garage and the Animal Control Kennel in the total amount of \$45,950, as budgeted in the Energy Efficiency Fund of the Capital Budget. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- e. **Discuss and possibly move to establish priorities for the joint meeting with our state legislators and for the FY 15-16 Town budget. Possible priorities include but are not limited to:**

- **Funding for the downtown parking garage at Walnut and Meadow;**
- **Funding for phase one of the proposed park on the Noznick site in Windham Center;**
- **Funding for the micro-grid at Windham Middle School and Sweeney Elementary; and**
- **Funding for the renovation of Windham High School.**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to hold a meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup> with our state legislators and appropriate officials at 7:00 P.M. in the Windham Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- f. **Discuss and possibly approve creating an ad hoc executive review committee consisting of Mayor Eldridge, Councilmember DeVivo, and Councilmember Krich to to meet with the Town Manager on a regular basis to review progress on the job targets as laid out by the Council's Annual Town Manager's Job Performance Review.**

Doyle MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to approve creating an ad hoc executive review committee consisting of three members to meet with the Town Manager on a regular basis to review progress on the job targets as laid out by the Council's Annual Town Manager's Job Performance Review. All were in favor with the exception of Flores who did not vote. MOTION PASSED.

**16. Future Agenda Items**

- a. Dispatch Center Agreement
- b. Appointments to the Wells Committee

**17. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment.**

John Lebiszcak, Volunteer and Board member on Willimantic Little League, thanked the Council for approving the purchase of the scoreboards for the league and for keeping the parks in excellent condition. He also explained a little bit about the program and the number of children that are involved.

Ray Pittman, President of Willimantic Little League and resident of North Windham, thanked the Council for their support and explained the benefits it has to the league and the community.

Dennis O'Brien, 120 Bolivia Street, Willimantic, noted he has coached with both John and Ray and thanked them for the great job they do. He also spoke about the need for the parking garage and the benefits it will have to the economic growth of the community. Mr. O'Brien gave an example of the Mansfield downtown revitalization.

James Flores commented on the Council's lack of questioning of Morgan Stanley and compared it to the questions asked at an earlier meeting of Human Services Director Mary DeMarco when \$10,000 was requested for the homeless.

Lorraine McDevitt invited all to attend the music competition of the extremely talented students in grades 7-12 at the Burton-Leavitt Theatre on Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00.

Charlie Krich noted he would not be available to attend the December 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. He also noted the Dispatch Center agreement was not ready and explained the Attorneys are continuing to work on the agreement. In addition, Mr. Krich stated he was standing in solidarity with Mr. Flores. He shared his thoughts on the Morgan Stanley issue and expressed his disapproval on how they handled the matter.

Susan Johnson, State Representative, thanked the Council for supporting the Willimantic Little League. She also reported there will be an Airport Meeting on December 9<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. in the Windham Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium.

**18. Adjournment**

McDevitt MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to adjourn the Windham Town Council Regular meeting at 8:40 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Submitted By:**

Barbara J. McKinney  
Clerk of the Town Council