

Minutes of the Windham Town Council Regular Meeting

Windham Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium, 2nd Floor
Tuesday, February 16, 2016 - 7:00 P.M.



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, Nectalis Martinez, Tom DeVivo, Michael Lessard, Dennis O'Brien, Lynne Ide and James Flores

Lorraine McDevitt and Charlotte Patros were excused.

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.**

Doug Lary, 183 Summit Street, Willimantic, spoke against fracking and suggested an ordinance be drafted by the Energy Commission.

Ellen Grant, Administrator of WTRD, corrected the inaccuracy that was reported for Windham's population in a presentation to the Administration, Finance, Development, Health, and Human Services Committee. She also provided additional information to justify the need for WRTD's funding request.

Grace Adams, Willimantic, spoke against fracking and stated the Town needs to get going with renewable energy.

Jean de Smet, Willimantic, spoke against fracking and suggested the Town pass a strong ordinance against fracking. She also spoke against relocating the men's bathroom.

Pat Bresnahan, resident of ArtSpace and former Associate Director of the CT Institute of Water Resources at UCONN, spoke against fracking and the dangers of fracking. She also stated she agrees with the comments of Mr. Lary's.

Barbara McGrath requested the Town Council table the Item #14a regarding the Dispatch Agreement.

Virginia Fulton, 156 Windham Center Road, Windham, spoke against fracking and agrees the Town should have an ordinance against it.

James Flores, spoke in support of Item #13 on the agenda.

4. Town Council Comment.

James Flores spoke about the financial crisis in Puerto Rico.

Mike Lessard explained why he wasn't at the last Town Council meeting. He spoke of his grandmothers passing and the challenges she faced as an immigrant of Germany. He also spoke about the budget cuts to the Windham High School girls and boys swim program.

Tom DeVivo provided information on the two CPR classes that will be held in Windham/Willimantic. He also spoke in support of the Resolution regarding Puerto Rico.

5. Adoption of Town Council Minutes.

a. Special Legislative Meeting of February 2, 2016

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to approve the Town Council minutes of February 2, 2016. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Resignations.

None

7. Appointments, Reappointments.

None

8. Presentations & Special Reports.

None

9. Mayor's Report.

Mayor Eldridge reported on the Valentine's Day Cupid Ceremony and the Chocolate Festival and noted both were a great success.

10. Town Manager's Report.

Town Manager Beets referenced the email that was sent to the Town Council regarding a letter he received from the Access Agency and spoke briefly on the matter.

MOTION: DeVivo MOVED, Krich seconded, to add to the agenda Item #14c, Discussion and possible action concerning a fracking ordinance and Item #14d, Discussion and possible action concerning the review of the correspondence from Access Agency. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

11. Discussion and Review of Communications to Council.

Letter from the Access Agency

12. Discussion and Review of Agendas, Minutes, Reports of Town Boards, Committees, and Commissions.

Chairman Krich of the Administration, Finance, Development, Health, and Human Services Committee reported the Committee had discussed the following:

- Resolution in Item #13
- Outside Agency proposals
- Committee meeting March 1st to further review the funding requests from outside agencies and make recommendations to the full Town Council.

Chairman DeVivo of the Public Safety, Public Works, Environment, Culture and Recreation Committee reported the Committee had discussed the following:

- A warming center
- LoCIP projects: replacing fuel pumps and management software at Public Works, Town Hall renovations – men’s bathroom, storm windows in auditorium, replacing the fence along Riverside Drive-including a survey, Recreation Park hardball field renovation and connecting the Public Works lower garage to sewer.
- Contract with the Willimantic Switchboard Fire Chiefs Association
- Grand Opening for the regional trail
- Street light purchasing
- Tin Tsin Lot complaint

13. Resolutions and Ordinances.

- a. Discuss and possibly adopt a Resolution Urging Congress and the President to Develop a Comprehensive Plan to Address the Humanitarian and Fiscal Crisis in Puerto Rico, as recommended by the Admin Finance Committee.**

DeVivo read the Resolution and moved for its adoption.

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to adopt Resolution #2677 Urging Congress and the President to Develop a Comprehensive Plan to Address the Humanitarian and Fiscal Crisis in Puerto Rico, as recommended by the Admin Finance Committee.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council THAT

WHEREAS, in June 2015 Puerto Rico’s Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla declared the Commonwealth’s \$72,000,000,000 debt “not payable”, with the island effectively running out of cash for the government to continue operating; and

WHEREAS, this economic crisis has forced a second “Great Migration” much like after World War II, with more than 250,000 Puerto Ricans leaving the island since

WHEREAS, Puerto Rico has taken extraordinary measures to address the shortfall, including shuttering more than 100 public schools, delaying people’s tax refunds, increasing the retirement age, borrowing from the workers’ compensation fund, withholding holiday bonuses, and increasing the local sales tax to a national high of

WHEREAS, the U.S. government needs to take strong action to stabilize Puerto Rico and help restructure the debt by incorporating debt restructuring protections, by granting Puerto Rico the right to declare Chapter 9 bankruptcy, by providing health care equity by eliminating the annual Medicaid/ Mi Salud funding cap, and by instituting tax reform policies

that foster economically diverse and living wage job creation, which will create sustainable growth on the island; and

WHEREAS, although the Earned Income Tax Credit is the nation's largest anti-poverty cash assistance program as it increases the ability of workers in low-paying jobs to support themselves and their families, it does not apply to Puerto Rico; and

WHEREAS, the Child Tax Credit provides substantial tax relief to families with children yet only applies in an unfairly limited fashion in Puerto Rico, where only families with three or more children are eligible for the credit refund; and

WHEREAS, Puerto Rico had the ability to file for bankruptcy Chapter 9 prior to 1985, which was later taken from the territory, which has since limited its ability to restructure the island's debt on its own; and

WHEREAS, we need to act now to extend equal treatment to Puerto Rico and its American citizens, 3.5 million of whom reside on the island and 5 million in the Diaspora in the United States and abroad. Connecticut has the 6th largest Puerto Rican population in the United States, after New York, New Jersey and Florida who are united in a call for action:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of Windham, Connecticut call upon the United States Congress and the President to develop a comprehensive, balanced and just plan to address the humanitarian and fiscal crisis in Puerto Rico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of Windham, Connecticut request that the State of Connecticut stand in unity with the national call to have the United States Congress and President Obama provide Puerto Rico with the tools to create a lasting pathway to economic recovery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be delivered to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate, and members of Connecticut's congressional delegation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be delivered to the Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives, the President of the Connecticut Senate, Senator Mae Flexer, Representative Susan Johnson and Representative Linda Orange.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

14. Old Business.

- a. Discuss and possibly act on the recommendation of the Public Safety, Public Works Committee to delay implementation of the Dispatch Agreement for six months.**
 - **Switchboard letter asking for a year delay**
 - **Highlighted page from Dispatch Agreement re extensions**

- **Complete Dispatch Agreement**

DeVivo MOVED, Krich seconded, to postpone Item #14a. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Discuss and possibly act on the recommendation of the Public Safety, Public Works Committee to include certain LoCIP Projects in the Town General Government budget.

DeVivo MOVED, Lessard seconded, to approve the recommendations regarding the LOCIP projects. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. Discussion and possible action on a fracking ordinance.

DeVivo MOVED, Krich seconded, to request that the Administration and Finance Committee create an anti-fracking waste ordinance. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

d. Discussion and possible action concerning the review of the correspondence from Access Agency.

Krich MOVED, DeVivo seconded, that the Town Council, appoint Dennis O'Brien as the Town Council's Representative in the negotiations regarding the Senior Center and that the Town contact Access immediately to discuss proposals for the Senior Center. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

15. New Business.

a. Discuss and possibly set a public hearing date for March 15, 2016, at 6:30 pm in the Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium to receive public comment about the Town's proposed CDBG Small Cities application, as recommended by staff.

DeVivo MOVED, Ide seconded, to set a public hearing date for March 15, 2016, at 6:30 pm in the Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium to receive public comment about the Town's proposed CDBG Small Cities application, as recommended by staff. All were in favor except Flores who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

b. Discuss and possibly award a contract for \$11,000 to Peter Webster Painters to remove lead paint, repair cracks, and to re-paint the ceiling of the Dugan Building at the Windham Textile Museum using LoCIP funds, as recommended by staff.

DeVivo MOVED, Ide seconded, to award a contract for \$11,000 to Peter Webster Painters to remove lead paint, repair cracks, and to re-paint the ceiling of the Dugan Building at the Windham Textile Museum using LoCIP funds, as recommended by staff. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

16. Future Agenda Items

None

17. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment.

James Flores thanked the Chronicle for the newspaper article on Puerto Rico. He also thanked the Town Council for their support of the Resolution regarding Puerto Rico.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, thanked the Town Council for supporting the Resolution for Puerto Rico.

18. Adjournment

DeVivo MOVED, O'Brien seconded, to adjourn the Windham Town Council Regular meeting at 8:27 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney

Clerk of the Town Council