

WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

WINDHAM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

Tuesday, February 21, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.



1. Call to Order

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

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Charles Krich, Tony Fantoli, Tom DeVivo, Lorraine McDevitt, N. Joseph Underwood, Kevin Donohue, Mark Doyle, Christel Donahue and Jerry Iazzetta
Arnaldo Rivera was 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

Jeff Viens, taxpayer and Columbia resident, stated he does not support building a parking garage. He addressed his concerns with regards to who it will serve, what fees will be charged for using the garage and who will maintain it. He also gave examples of what other Towns charge for parking.

Pam Viens, taxpayer and Columbia resident, spoke on the importance of communications. She would like the Council to consider having open forums like Columbia has. Ms. Viens also spoke about property assessments as well as bringing down the value of property by condemning properties or changing properties from 4 family homes to 3 family homes.

Louis Gamache, Windham, spoke in support of a new Senior Center. He also commented on the condition of the current Senior Center and the many activities and services it provides to the seniors.

Dawn Niles, North Windham, handed out a flyer regarding the 7 Free Community CPR Classes. She reviewed the dates and times of the classes and noted donations could be made to the HeartSafe Town Fund. Ms. Niles also gave a brief update on the Charter Review Commission and noted the next meeting will be March 1st followed by a meeting on March 19th where Town Manager Beets will be the guest speaker. She also noted she supports the need for a new Senior Center.

Anna Crawford, 57 Ashland Street, Willimantic, and member of the Board of Finance, spoke about the dispatch center and the reimbursement rates of funds. She explained the \$125,000 cut and feels the money should go back in exactly as it was taken out.

Susan Johnson, State Representative, provided information to the Council on the Urban Act program. She also explained the differences between STEAP and the Urban Act Program. She suggested the Council put together a plan and contact Secretary Barnes with their request. She also recommended staying with the Urban Act Program.

Lori Jeffers, Willimantic, stated a handout had been given to the Board of Selectmen 10-12 yrs ago showing available money for development in Windham/Willimantic. She believes it is time questions are put on the ballot for people to decide what it is they want regarding Economic Development and the order in which they want it.

Bob Nye, Windham Center, shared his concerns on the Magnet School including possibly putting fire hydrants on Route 14 to give people some fire protection. He also expressed his concerns on the parking garage and the need for a new Senior Center.

Peter Quercia, 300 Walnut Street, Willimantic, stated he had previously handed out an email which was disregarded and noted he will leave another email tonight if anyone is interested.

4. Town Council Comment

Jerry Iazzetta stated he appreciated now having a figure of \$87,000 for the Dispatch Center. He believes it is wise to go over that amount and proportion it as it was taken out. He suggested the Council do this at the next meeting.

Tom DeVivo mentioned the Board of Education provides a table with a microphone for citizens during public comment and wondered if we should do the same. He also noted that long time plans from 20 years ago were if it is valued it shouldn't be free. He stated it was always thought people would pay to use the parking garage.

Lorraine McDevitt noted she had been part of the original group when the idea of a parking garage was brought up and it was never a thought that parking would be free.

Tony Fantoli thinks with the Budget Referendum coming up it is a good time to put a question on the ballot regarding the Senior Center and the Parking Garage to see what direction the Town would like to take.

5. Adoption of Minutes

a. Discussion and possible action to adopt the minutes for the February 7, 2012 Town Council Meeting.

Iazzetta MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to adopt the minutes for the February 7, 2012 Town Council Meeting. All were in favor except Krich who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

6. **Resignations**

NONE

7. **Appointments. Discussion and possible action to appoint:**

a. **Cheryl LeBeau to the Windham Historic District Commission as a regular member with term ending August 16, 2013.**

K. Donohue MOVED, Krich seconded, to appoint Cheryl LeBeau to the Windham Historic District Commission as a regular member with term ending August 16, 2013. All were in favor. MOVED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. **Theodore M. Colwell to the HeartSafe Committee**

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to appoint Theodore M. Colwell to the HeartSafe Committee. All were in favor. MOVED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. **Jennifer Martin to the North Central Health District as a voting member with term ending April 15, 2013.**

Doyle MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to appoint Jennifer Martin to the North Central Health District as a voting member with term ending April 15, 2013. All were in favor except McDevitt, Iazzetta and Krich who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

8. **Presentations & Special Reports**

a. **Presentation from Representative Susan Johnson about renovating the Third Floor of Town Hall for court-related purposes, and possible Council discussion and action.**

State Representative, Susan Johnson, gave a brief background on the work that has been done with regards to the possibilities of renovating the Third Floor of Town Hall for court-related purposes. She then introduced former Probate Judge Dennis O'Brien and current Probate Judge John McGrath.

Former Probate Judge O'Brien, spoke on the establishment of the Children's Court and on the history of the Windham Courthouse. Current Probate Judge McGrath spoke on the consolidation of the Probate Court which now encompasses Colchester, Lebanon, Scotland, Hampton, Chaplin and Windham.

State Representative, Susan Johnson, Judge O'Brien and Judge McGrath believe it would be a great asset to the Town and an honor to the Towns history to renovate the third floor of Town Hall and use it for the Court.

No Action was taken by the Council.

b. **Presentation from Representative Susan Johnson or Bankruptcy Trustee Lou Testa about the Mill #4 site, and possible Council discussion and action.**

State Representative, Susan Johnson, gave a brief overview on the status of Mill #4 site. She also provided the Council with handouts on the Opportunities for Brownfield Revitalization, Brownfield Programs and Brownfield Funding.

No Action was taken by the Council.

9. Mayor's Report

Mayor Eldridge reported he had attended the Town and Gown Committee meeting at ECSU and noted the next meeting will be March 13 in the Town Hall Auditorium. He also stated the committee was looking for more participation from the community.

Mayor Eldridge also reported on the Cupid Ceremony, the ribbon cutting at the new Salvation Army site, and the Snowball on March 3rd.

In addition, Mayor Eldridge addressed the name of the Charter Review Commission.

10. Town Manager's Report

No Report

11. Discussion and Review of Communications

NONE

12. Resolutions and Ordinances

NONE

13. Reports of Committees, Boards and Commissions

a. Administration, Finance, Health and Human Services Subcommittee

No Report

b. Public Safety, Public Works, Culture and Recreation Subcommittee

Iazzetta reported the Public Safety, Public Works, Culture and Recreation Subcommittee's next meeting will be tomorrow night.

c. Tri-Board

McDevitt reported the Tri-Board will be meeting next week.

d. Magnet/Natchaug School Building Committee

Mr. DeVivo reported the Committee had taken no action on the Natchaug School Roof and noted a response from Dr. Adamowski that stated any questions regarding the Natchaug School Roof should be directed to the Board of Education through the Superintendent.

Mr. DeVivo also reported the Magnet School Building Committee will be taking a trip to the Annie Fisher School, a STEM Magnet School in Hartford, on March 8th and will be holding a Neighborhood Meeting on March 17th on the construction of the Magnet School. He also noted no meeting will be held this Monday due to a lack of agenda items.

Mr. DeVivo addressed questions on the water issues and the expansion of the water service.

14. Old Business

- a. Discussion and possible action on the recommendations of the Finance, Administration, Health and Human Services Subcommittee regarding non-profit agency grant funds.**

K. Donohue explained the process used to determine how funding was granted to Non-Profit Agencies.

Mary DeMarco, Director of Human Services and a member of the Review Panel for Non-Profit Agencies explained the details of the process and answered questions from the Council.

K. Dononhue MOVED, Underwood seconded, that the Non-Profit Funding Review Panel recommendation in the amount of \$257,825.87 request be placed into this year's Town Budget. All were in favor except McDevitt who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

15. New Business

NONE

16. Future Agenda Items

- Executive Session to update the Council on the pending litigation on the appeal of the arbitration case

17. Adjournment

Iazzetta MOVED, Underwood seconded, to adjourn the Town of Windham Town Council meeting at 9:16 P.M. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

**Barbara J. McKinney
Clerk of the Town Council**