

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL & WILLIMANTIC SERVICE DISTRICT MINUTES



WINDHAM TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM

Thursday, February 24, 2011 - 7:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Eldridge called the Special Joint Meeting of the Town of Windham Council & Willimantic Service District meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

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

Town Council members excused: Charles Krich

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

Doug Lary, 183 Summit Street, explained he had recently spoken in front of the Administration & Finance Sub-Committee and was asked to bring his concerns to the Council. He stated his concerns with the time frames and lack of available space in holding meetings and wanted to bring it to the attention of the Council to be resolved.

Lori Jeffers, Willimantic, believes the Town needs its Police and Fire however other than that the Council needs to make cuts. She feels people cannot afford more tax increases.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, spoke in support of the Silverback Wrestling Club. He believes the school is very territorial and feels this is our community and we need to take it back.

Peter Quercia, 300 Walnut Street, Willimantic, stated he was not opposed to wrestling however he doesn't think Gregory LaFlam formerly of Stratilus Realty is a role model for our kids. He also feels the Town must do the inevitable and layoff a couple of people to balance the healthcare insurance and benefits.

Leo Santucci, 74 Windham Street, Willimantic, spoke in favor of the Silverback Wrestling Club. He stated he is not familiar with Mr. LaFlam however he is familiar with the Silverbacks and believes wrestling is an excellent sport. He feels it builds pride in

both the community and our children. He also explained he had visited the space in question at the Kramer building and thinks there is plenty of space available.

Ilona Stone, Willimantic, expressed her concerns with co-locating the Town staff and Board of Education staff. She also does not believe there is room on the 3rd floor of Kramer to do this.

4 Town Manager's Report

a. Town of Windham budget presentation for FY 11-12

Town Manager Neal J. Beets presented the Town of Windham budget for FY 11-12 to the Town Council. Mr. Beets gave a power point presentation and explained his recommendations of additions and proposed cuts to the budget.

b. Town General Government budget questions

A brief question and answer period followed.

c. Willimantic Service District budget questions

A brief question and answer period followed.

5. Citizens and Delegations

Bernie D'Auteuil, 168 Walnut Street, Willimantic, does not agree with the Town Manager regarding the leaves from ESCU. He stated Public Works had spent most of their day picking up leaves that ECSU had dumped on High Street. He also noted it was good Water and Sewer did not increase their rates however he stated we can't touch that money because of the way they are set up. He also suggested we try to fill the open positions at the Police Department with the New Haven Police who were recently laid off and asked if the Fire Marshall's could do inspections rather than increasing the staff in the Housing Code Office.

Larry Kellogg, Willimantic, feels by renovating the Kramer building it will give the seniors a place and will cost the Town a lot less money. He thinks it is a very good investment.

Dennis Cronin, 247 North Street, appreciates the Town Managers budget. He believes Mr. Beets' two suggestions for reinvesting in the Kramer building and the Town Hall is a reasonable and rationale approach and hopes the Council will consider it. He also applauds him for the investment he is requesting in the Housing Code Office. In addition, he looks forward to a productive discussion about consolidating the Town under one taxing district.

Peter Quercia, 300 Walnut Street, Willimantic, stated he was rather surprised by the presentation tonight and thought overall it was outstanding and broken down for everyone to understand. He also stated he agreed with Mr. Cronin on consolidation. He also feels it is a good investment to reinvest in the space the Town has and believes it should be utilized. He also noted that after hearing the presentation tonight Mr. Beets' salary should not be cut by 75%.

John McGrath, Windham, commended Mr. Beets for a great presentation. He feels Mr. Beets proposal with regards to the 3rd floor is right on target and noted the Town has been very receptive to the Probate Court. He stated we are the HUB of the region and want to

portray ourselves as such. He encouraged people to take a look at the space and looks forward to continued discussions on it.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, stated he is glad Mr. Beets is not afraid of a budget fight and looks forward to the budget fight to bring this to a referendum to get the money needed to renovate the space to take care of both Kramer and Town Hall.

Leo Santucci, 74 Windham Street, Willimantic, reminded people the ballroom had been neglected for many years until a group of citizens saw the value in the building to create the space the ballroom is now. He is happy to see us reutilizing our buildings and feels that is what good conservation and good economy is about. He also believes we are seeing the first light of what Charter Revision has done with bringing a Town Manager on board. He thinks it is evident in the way the budget has been presented and thanks Mr. Beets for a fine job tonight.

James Flores, Willimantic, spoke about the incident that took place on Election Day with regards to the police being called. He also believes 2 polling places are not enough for the Town and feels we need to educate our election workers.

Lori Jeffers, Willimantic, noted tonight's meeting was an important meeting however it was unfortunate it was held on a Thursday night when parking is not available and it was held in the ballroom where it was hard to hear people and there was no TV coverage. She feels Kramer is a sore topic and also thinks our PILOT funds should stay in the Service District that they are collected in and any extra should go in the general fund. In addition, she spoke of the tax abatement given to the Windham Volunteer Fire Departments.

Ilona Stone, Willimantic, thanked Mr. Beets for a very informative presentation and thanked him for answering her question regarding co-locating of the Town and Board of Education staff.

Doug Lary, 183 Summit Street, stated he was impressed with the presentation given by Mr. Beets. He noted he was glad to see the possibility for a larger staff in the Housing Code Department, which would enable more buildings to be inspected. He gave an example of homes on either side of him that are in need of inspections.

6. Adjournment

Donohue MOVED, Santucci seconded, to adjourn the Special Joint Meeting of the Windham Town Council & Willimantic Service District meeting at 8:58 p.m.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney

Clerk of the Town Council