

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING OF THE WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL



Windham Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium, 2nd Floor
979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT

Tuesday, March 10, 2015 - 7:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Eldridge called the Windham Town Council Special Budget Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Tony Fantoli, Tom DeVivo, Joseph Underwood, Mark Doyle (arrived at 7:10 P.M.), Michael Lessard, James Flores, Christel Donahue, Charlotte Patros and Charles Krich

Lorraine McDevitt was absent.

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

Joe Marsalisi, Willimantic, spoke about the need to keep the 3rd ambulance and he explained the reasons why.

Jean de Smet, resident of Willimantic and Chair of the Energy Commission stated she was disappointed that the Town Council did not include the Energy Commission's recommendation in the budget. She did however thank them for keeping the money in for street lighting and she explained the savings benefits it will bring to the Town.

4. Council Comment

James Flores noted he had no finance experience however he stated he compared the budget with 5 other Towns. He stated the budget does not show what was actually spent last year and questioned how departments transfer money from one line item to another.

5. Approve Minutes:

a. Council Meeting of February 10, 2015

b. Council Meeting of February 17, 2015

c. Council Meeting of February 24, 2015

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to approve the minutes of February 10, 2015. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to approve the minutes of February 17, 2015. All were in favor except Krich who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to approve the minutes of February 24, 2015. All were in favor except Krich who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

6. Hear a Presentation from Leadership Greater Hartford about a program to strengthen the volunteer leadership for the Town of Windham. Possible Council direction.

A presentation was given by Doe Hentschel, Vice President from Leadership Greater Hartford. Ms. Hentschel briefly reviewed the proposal before the Town Council and explained the program and benefits the program could bring to the Town. Ms. Hentschel also answered questions from the Town Council.

7. Discuss and possibly move to convene an Executive Session to discuss union negotiations with the Unified Finance Director, Executive Administrator, Personnel Director, and Town Manager.

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to convene an Executive Session at 7:32 P.M. to discuss union negotiations with the Unified Finance Director, Executive Administrator, Personnel Director, and Town Manager. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to come out of Executive Session at 8:16 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. Town Council discussion and decision making about the budgets the Town Council will recommend to the Board of Finance.

Town Manager Beets provided the Town Council with a copy of his proposed recommendations to the Capital and Operating Budgets for FY 2015-16 and he explained his recommendations.

Flores MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to accept the first page of the Town Managers recommendations. All were in favor except Krich who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

The Town Managers recommendations are as follows:

- Public Works Parks Maintenance - Increase Miscellaneous Supplies by \$7,200 to add three, additional handicap-accessible Porta-Potties: one at Recreation Park, one at Lauter Park and one at Memorial Park.
- Outside Agencies – Increase line item 58259 of the WRTD’s fixed route appropriation by \$5,100 to help fund bus service from Windham to UCONN, contingent on the WRTD obtaining the remaining funding from the State DOT, from riders and from other sources.
- Capital Budget – to add \$10,000 to pave two handicapped parking spaces at the French Club in return for free rent for five years to use the French Club rather than the Windham Center Fire House as a polling place in the Windham’s.

Flores MOVED, Underwood seconded, to increase line item 56900 by \$7,200, in the Public Works Parks Maintenance budget, to add three additional handicap-accessible porta-potties. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to increase line item 58259 by \$5,100 for the bus route contingent on WRTD obtaining the remaining funds from the State DOT, from riders and from other sources. All were in favor except Krich who opposed and Flores who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to decrease line item 52279 by \$2,500 for CLICK and to zero out that line item. All were in favor except Eldridge, Doyle, Fantoli, Lessard and Flores. MOTION FAILS.

DeVivo MOVED, Fantoli seconded, to increase the Capital Budget by \$10,000 to pave two handicapped parking spaces at the French Club contingent on State approval. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Krich MOVED, Fantoli seconded, to reduce line item 51510 by \$28,000 for the Finance Department regular payroll with corresponding reductions in benefits and to create a formal plan as soon as possible as to how the finance department is structured. All were in favor except Flores, Donahue and Underwood who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

DeVivo MOVED, Doyle seconded, to reduce line item 58605 from \$10,250 to \$1,250 in the Human Services Department budget. All were in favor except Lessard who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

Lessard MOVED, Krich seconded, to decrease line item 54302 by \$10,000 from \$40,000 to \$30,000, in the Building Department budget for demolition and security. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Krich MOVED, Underwood seconded, to reduce Contingency from \$150,000 to \$100,000. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to ask the Town Manager to create a new department with a new line item to include all of Dispatch in the General Government budget in the amount of \$571,000. All were in favor except Fantoli, Eldridge, Lessard and Patros who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

Flores MOVED, Underwood seconded, to reduce the Capital Improvement Plan from \$770,000 to \$500,000. Flores was in favor, Krich abstained and all others opposed. MOTION FAILED.

Underwood MOVED, Krich seconded, to reduce line item 57330 from \$3,500 to zero in the Assessor's budget. All were in favor except Lessard who opposed.

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to close discussion and have the Finance Department give the bottom line number. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to approve the budget in the amount of \$17,320,338 with a mill rate increase of approximately 0.88 and to send the budget to the Board of Finance. All were in favor except Doyle, Krich, Fantoli and Flores. MOTION PASSED.

9. Future Agenda Items:

None

10. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment

Bernie D'Auteuil, Willimantic, shared his concerns with the way the Town is moving forward with the current form of government.

Kevin Hoxie, Ridgewood Road, Willimantic, spoke in support of CLICK and noted the Town still does not have a Senior Center.

James Flores noted there is still no explanation on the \$1.5 million surplus and where the money has gone. He wants to stop over taxing people. He shared his comments in Spanish.

Tom DeVivo responded to Mr. Flores' question on the surplus and explained why he believes the Town has a surplus. He also noted he is following the Planning & Zoning Commission meetings and explained they are working with the Access Agency on the subdivision of property.

11. Adjournment

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to adjourn the Windham Town Council Special Budget meeting at 9:56 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney
Clerk of the Town Council