

# WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Windham Town Hall Meeting Room

Tuesday, April 1, 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 7:07), Tony Fantoli, Tom DeVivo (arrived at 7:03), Lorraine McDevitt, Joseph Underwood, Mark Doyle (arrived at 7:23), Michael Lessard, James Flores, Charlotte Patros and Christel Donahue

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

Bill Powers, Scotland Road, Windham, stated he was appalled by comments made by some Town Council members at the last meeting, the delay in addressing the street signs at Windham Center School and the delay for the appointment of the HeartSafe Coordinator.

Kathryn (Kit) Eves, 149 High Street, Willimantic, spoke in regards to submitting several applications to be appointed to various boards and has been denied appointment without any explanation. She provided the Council with a copy of her resume and noted she was again applying for a position on the Inland Wetland Commission.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, spoke in support of Dawn Niles for the position of HeartSafe Coordinator and noted he was one of approximately 42 others who were recently certified through the program.

Susan Johnson, 120 Bolivia Street, Willimantic, State Representative and Chair of the Inland Wetlands Commission spoke in support of Kit Eves to be appointed to the Commission and explained what the Commission is currently working on. She also spoke in support of Dawn Niles to be appointed as the HeartSafe Coordinator.

Dawn Niles, North Windham, thanked the Council for reinstating the 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Comment. She also reminded the Council to ask the Housing Authority to install speed bumps on Memorial Drive which had been previously voted on by the Public Safety Committee. In addition, Ms. Niles noted she had researched a speed sign waiver and asked for that to be addressed. She also asked that the hard feelings be put aside and that everyone work together to make the dog park happen. Ms. Niles also spoke about the



HeartSafe program, the participation from the workers from Windham Heights and the possibility of having a class done in Spanish. Ms. Niles also spoke in support of Kit Eves to be appointed to the Inland Wetland Commission.

**4. Town Council Comment**

Mayor Eldridge explained how the vacancy on the Board of Assessment Appeals had occurred and noted he does not explain or notify anyone regarding not being appointed. Mayor Eldridge also addressed the concerns of Bill Powers about the signs at the Windham Center School and the explained that the HeartSafe Committee had sun-setted which was why Dawn Niles had not been appointed to the Committee.

James Flores, noted he was going to abstain from voting on the position of an Economic Development Director and wanted the people to decide on the position. He also asked the Mayor or Mr. DeVivo to send a letter to those outside agencies who were denied funding. Mr. Flores also believes the Council should be embarrassed by the lack of support given to the Veterans and he noted most of their money is used for salaries, insurance, etc. In addition, Mr. Flores spoke about the dog park. Mr. Flores also spoke in support of Kit Eves to be appointed to the Inland Wetland Commission.

Joe Underwood refuted the comments made by Mr. Flores regarding the money spent on the Veterans in our community. He explained the help the Veterans Office provided to his brother who was a Vietnam Veteran and noted he is confident that the money is being used to provide services to our community.

Tom DeVivo stated the Council should feel no shame or embarrassment regarding the funding to the Veterans and he explained the amount had been increased from \$48,000 to \$50,000. He also expressed his disappointment in the Town of Mansfield for the lack of assistance they provide for Veterans. In addition, Mr. DeVivo spoke about the PILOT money and doesn't understand why the Town Manager did not contact our State Representatives immediately when we found the money had been cut. He thanked our State Representatives for getting the PILOT money reinstated.

Lorraine McDevitt clarified the confusion over the appointment of Dawn Niles to HeartSafe.

**5. Adoption of Minutes**

**a. Discuss and possibly move to adopt the minutes for the March 18, 2014, regular Town Council meeting.**

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

**b. Discuss and possibly move to adopt the minutes for the March 26, 2014, special Town Council meeting.**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adopt the minutes for the March 26, 2014, special Town Council meeting. All were in favor except Fantoli, Underwood and Doyle who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

**6. Resignations.**

None

**MOTION:** DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to add to the agenda under Appointments to appoint Kit Eves to the Inland, Wetlands & Watercourse Commission. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**7. Appointments.**

**a. Discuss and possibly move to appoint Kit Eves to the Inland, Wetlands & Watercourse Commission.**

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to appoint Kit Eves to the Inland, Wetlands & Watercourse Commission subject to the term ending date and minority representation of the Commission. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

**8. Presentations & Special Reports.**

None

**9. Mayor's Report.**

Mayor Eldridge reported he had talked to the Library Board prior to a Security Company coming on board and noted they were all in agreement on trying this approach. He stated he had also addressed the Council's concerns.

Mayor Eldridge also reported he and Neal had met with Annie Ortiz, Wayne Donaldson and Tracy Lambert regarding the consolidation of the Finance Departments and noted everything was moving forward.

He also thanked Brian Hathaway for fixing the microphones and asked that people not touch the sound system.

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

Town Manager Beets addressed the PILOT issue and explained the sequence of events including the meeting with Senator Williams and State Representatives Susan Johnson and Linda Orange with the Town Council as well as the restoration of the funding to the PILOT money.

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

None

**12. Resolutions and Ordinances.**

None

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

**a. Administration, Finance, Economic Development, Health, and Human Service Committee**

DeVivo reported the Committee had met on March 24<sup>th</sup> and had discussed the WRTD fuel balance and a draft agreement between the Town and WRTD regarding a payment schedule.

DeVivo also reported the Committee had briefly discussed the consolidation of the Finance Departments with Tom Pesce however he noted Chris Johnson was

not available to report on the issue. H noted the Committee has many concerns regarding the move.

In addition, DeVivo reported the Committee had voted on sending 2 people from the Economic Development Commission to the upcoming workshop on Tourism and they had also addressed the need to review the current ordinances as some were no longer necessary and needed to be updated.

DeVivo also reported the Committee discussed the position of the Economic Development Director and whether it should be an employee of the Town or a consultant.

DeVivo answered questions from the Council.

**b. Public Works, Public Safety, Environment, Recreation, and Culture Committee**

Krich reported at the Committee's last meeting and prior meeting they had discussed Items 15a,b,c & d which is on tonight's agenda and had made recommendations as indicated.

Krich also reported the Committee had discussed the dog park association which is a separate issue from the dog park. Krich noted there has been some confusion surrounding the dog park however he noted a dog park is currently part of the Town's Master Plan however a location has not yet been determined.

In addition, Krich noted the Committee had heard from Lloyd Niles on the Dispatch Association and he asked Lorraine McDevitt to report on this issue. McDevitt reported all parties were talking and she believes the outcome will have a positive conclusion. She noted the Board was meeting weekly and the goal was to have a contract in place by the 1<sup>st</sup> of July.

**c. Building Committee for the High School Roof**

DeVivo reported the Committee had met on Monday and had their first meeting with Kaestle Boos. He noted the Committee had nominated Nancy Tinker as Chairman and David Walencewicz as Vice Chairman. He also noted they had discussed hiring a clerk of the works as representation due to the fact the Town was not hiring a project manager, however they did not feel they were ready at this time. DeVivo reported the project would begin this summer and explained the scope of the project. He explained the Media Center would be unavailable and summer school was being held at the Middle School this year.

DeVivo also answered questions from the Council.

**d. Capital Action Tri-Board  
No Report**

**14. Old Business.**

- a. Discuss and possibly take action regarding the report from the Capital Action Tri-Board.**

Doyle reminded the Council who the members of the Capital Action Group were and what the Group was charged with. Doyle explained the process the Group followed and briefly reviewed the Group's final report. He also answered questions from the Council.

- b. As requested by the Board of Finance, discuss and possibly take action about the proposed Economic Development Director position in the Town Council's recommended budget for FY 14-15, clarifying whether the Town Council wants the position to be a full-time employee position or an independent contractor position.**

Underwood MOVED, Doyle seconded, to move forward and ask that the Economic Development position be a full time employee and prior to the hiring, either through the Administration and Finance Committee or the recommendation of the Town Manager, a job description be created outlining measureable standards for the position. All were in favor except Flores who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

**15. New Business.**

- a. Discuss and possibly move to designate Dawn Niles as a volunteer coordinator of the HeartSafe Program, as recommended by the Public Works, Public Safety, Environment, Recreation, and Culture Committee, with a term ending on December 31, 2015.**

Underwood MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to designate Dawn Niles as a volunteer coordinator of the HeartSafe Program, as recommended by the Public Works, Public Safety, Environment, Recreation, and Culture Committee, with a term ending on December 31, 2015. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- b. Discuss and possibly move to award a contract to install fencing at Recreation Park, as recommended by the Public Works, Public Safety, Environment, Recreation, and Culture Committee.**

Krich MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to award a contract to install fencing at Recreation Park, as recommended by the Public Works, Public Safety, Environment, Recreation, and Culture Committee. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- c. Discuss and possibly move to amend a paving schedule, as requested by the Water Department and as recommended by the Public Works, Public Safety, Environment, Recreation, and Culture Committee.**

Krich MOVED, Underwood seconded, to amend a paving schedule, as requested by the Water Department and as recommended by the Public Works, Public Safety, Environment, Recreation, and Culture Committee. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- d. Discuss and possibly move to approve a lighting plan for Memorial Park, as recommended by the Public Works, Public Safety, Environment, Recreation, and Culture Committee.**

Krich MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to approve a lighting plan for Memorial Park, as recommended by the Public Works, Public Safety, Environment,

Recreation, and Culture Committee. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**16. Future Agenda Items**

None

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

Kevin Hoxie, Willimantic, shared his concerns with money being spent without approval, issues at the schools and the need for Economic Development.

John Monahan, Willimantic, stated he has listened to Tom DeVivo for years and has never agreed with him however he felt Tom was eloquent tonight when he spoke of the children and the schools.

Dawn Niles thanked the Council for appointing her as the HeartSafe Coordinator. She also spoke about the PILOT issue. She feels a follow up letter should have been sent after the meeting with Senator Williams, State Representatives Johnson and Orange and the Council. Ms. Niles thanked Senator Williams, State Representative Susan Johnson and Linda Orange, Mae Flexer and Leslie O'Brien for getting the money reinstated. She also noted Neal had already thanked Judy Squier, Chris Perillow and Dan Dilworth.

James Flores, asked how he could explain to the people who have trouble paying for rent or food that we have no money to help them yet we have \$80,000 to hire a new person. He stated he answers to the community and was a community puppet and does not answer to any party.

**18. Adjournment**

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to adjourn the Town of Windham Town Council regular meeting at 8:35 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Submitted By:**

Barbara J. McKinney  
Clerk of the Town Council