

# WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Windham Town Hall, Meeting Room

Tuesday, May 20, 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, Tony Fantoli, Tom DeVivo, Lorraine McDevitt, Joseph Underwood, Mark Doyle, Michael Lessard, James Flores, Charlotte Patros (arrived at 7:05), 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

Peter Leeds, 9 Robin Road, Willimantic, questioned why the Town is buying a new park when we can't maintain the parks we have, why soccer is being played in Columbia and why we still have no dog park.

Kathleen Kolajian, South Park Street, Willimantic, and employee of Windham Public Schools. Ms. Kolajian expressed her disappointment about comments made by Mr. Flores regarding the Board of Education budget. She believes he is misinformed and is damaging the community with his negativity.

Henry Crane, Windham Street, Willimantic, spoke about the Ethics Commission and suggested the board be a four member board rather than a three member board. He believes this will insure business be conducted if a member has a conflict of interest with an issue brought before the Commission. .

Dennis O'Brien, 120 Bolivia Street, Willimantic, spoke in support of the two appointments to the WRTD board. He also spoke in support of the Immigration Reform Act.

Shoshana Caya, resident of Storrs and employee of St. Joseph Living Center, spoke in support of the Immigration Reform Act.

Bob O'Connell, Patriot Road, Windham, spoke in support of the Immigration Reform Act.

Juan Gonzalez, Willimantic, spoke in support of the Immigration Reform Act and shared a recent personnel experience as to why the Immigration Reform Act is so important. (The son of Mr. Gonzalez translated).

Lizbeth Marquez, Holbrook Avenue, Willimantic, spoke in favor of the Immigration Reform Act.

## 4. Town Council Comment

Mike Lessard noted that after the Windham High School visit to Town Hall Career Day some students took an interest in the dog park and raised \$154 to help with the shelter.



Lorraine McDevitt stated she had met with High School Principal Ms. Potter. McDevitt noted Ms. Potter was very happy with the welcoming and cooperation the students received from the Dept Heads and staff on career day. Ms. Potter conveyed to McDevitt she has been in touch with some Dept Heads and will be placing students in areas of interest next year through a program they are instituting. She also conveyed to McDevitt that the Town of Windham Dept Heads had been the most willing in her experience to help students.

**5. Adoption of Minutes**

- a. Discuss and possibly move to adopt the minutes for the May 6, 2014, regular Town Council meeting.**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adopt the minutes for the May 6, 2014, regular Town Council meeting. All were in favor except Lessard who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

**6. Resignations.**

None

**7. Appointments.**

- a. Michael Callahan as a regular member of the Sweeney Elementary and Windham Middle School Micro-Grid Building Committee, with a term ending upon final acceptance of the project.**
- b. Michael DeSaulniers as a regular member of the Sweeney Elementary and Windham Middle School Micro-Grid Building Committee, with a term ending upon final acceptance of the project.**
- c. Tracy Lambert as a regular member of the Windham High School Roof Replacement Building Committee, with a term ending upon final acceptance of the project.**
- d. Terry Coonradt as a regular member of the Windham Region Transit District, with a term ending May 19, 2018.**
- e. Tom McNally, as a regular member of the Windham Region Transit District, with a term ending May 19, 2016.**

DeVivo MOVED, Krich seconded, to vote on Items 7a-7e as one Item. All were in favor except Flores and Donahue who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

McDevitt MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to appoint Michael Callahan as a regular member of the Sweeney Elementary and Windham Middle School, Michael DeSaulniers as a regular member of the Sweeney Elementary and Windham Middle School Micro-Grid Building Committee, with a term ending upon final acceptance of the project, Tracy Lambert as a regular member of the Windham High School Roof Replacement Building Committee, with a term ending upon final acceptance of the project, Terry Coonradt as a regular member of the Windham Region Transit District, with a term ending May 19, 2018 and Tom McNally, as a regular member of the Windham Region Transit District, with a term ending May 19, 2016. All were in favor except Flores and Donahue who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

**8. Presentations & Special Reports.**

- a. Presentation from Jim Hooper about the budget for the Windham Water Commission. (Briefing, no action.)**

Jim Hooper, Superintendent of the Water Department, gave a brief summary of the 2014-2015 Operational and Capital budget for the Water Dept. He explained the contractual obligations and the need for additional employees. He also provided a breakdown of the capital improvement projects. In addition, Mr. Hooper noted there would be no water rate increase this year. He answered questions from the Council.

- b. **Presentation from Superintendent Dave Garand about the budget for the Windham Wastewater Pollution Control Authority. (Briefing, no action.)**  
 Dave Garand, Superintendent of the Water Pollution Control Authority, reviewed the 2014-2015 WPCA budget. He also explained the revenues and expenditures for the department. In addition, Mr. Garand noted the Sludge Storage Project would be a one-time expense with an estimated project amount of \$1.5 million having an estimated completion in the 2015-2016 budget. Mr. Garand also answered questions from the Council.
- c. **Presentation from Bill Hettinger, Chair of the Economic Development Commission, about a signage program for downtown Willimantic. (Action item under agenda item 14.a.)**  
 Bill Hettinger, Chair of the Economic Development Commission, gave a brief presentation regarding a signage program for downtown Willimantic. Mr. Hettinger explained the concept and noted the Commission has been talking to neighboring Towns currently using a signage program. He shared some ideas the Commission had and asked for the support of the Council. Mr. Hettinger also answered questions from the Council.
- d. **Presentation from Bill Hettinger, Chair of the Economic Development Commission, about a Town of Windham grant application for the Main Street Investment Fund and Grant Program. (Action item under agenda item 12.b.)**  
 Bill Hettinger, Chair of the Economic Development Commission, gave a brief presentation regarding a grant application for the Main Street Investment Fund and Grant Program. He provided the Council with some background and stated the Commission is recommending that the Town apply for the grant to construct the Airline & Hop River Trail Extension. He noted this project will connect to the CT Airline Greenway Pedestrian and Bikeway Trail and will help in promoting Windham's revitalization. In addition, Mr. Hettinger answered questions from the Council.

**MOTION:** DeVivo MOVED, Doyle seconded, to move Item #12c up on the agenda to follow Item #8e. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- e. **Presentation regarding Immigration Reform. (Action item under agenda item 12c.)**  
 Sr. Mary Jude, resident of Willimantic, member of Sagrado Corazon Church and member of the organization "Embracing the Same Dream". She gave a presentation regarding the Immigration Reform Act and noted the many reasons for the need for the reform. She explained the goals the organization "Embracing the Same Dream" is striving for and she provided some background on the status of the Immigration Reform Act. Sr. Mary Jude also introduced Attorney Kara Hart from the Greater Hartford Legal Aid Office who spoke about the challenges and issues illegal immigrants face. Attorney Hart also asked that the Town of Windham go on record as being an Immigration Friendly Town.

## 12. Resolutions and Ordinances.

- c. **Discuss and possibly move to adopt a Resolution urging Congress to adopt a new Immigration Reform Act.**  
 McDevitt MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to adopt Resolution #2637 urging Congress to adopt a new Immigration Reform Act and to include signatures of the full Town Council. All were in favor.

**BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council THAT**

**WHEREAS**, the United States of America has a proud history of welcoming immigrants to its shores; and

**WHEREAS**, immigrants from all over the globe have strengthened America's economy, enriched our culture and fought our wars; and

**WHEREAS**, undocumented residents are forced to live underground, often unable to get drivers' licenses or car insurance, unlikely to obtain health insurance, and unwilling to report crimes to local law enforcement for fear of deportation; and

**WHEREAS**, large numbers of undocumented residents live in the Town of Windham, CT; and

**WHEREAS**, many undocumented residents have lived in Windham for years, are our friends and neighbors, work and raise families here, and contribute to our economy and cultural life, all without the benefit of citizenship; and

**WHEREAS**, immigration reform is an urgent federal responsibility needed to keep families together, promote economic growth, respect the human rights of all persons and uphold our nation's values of freedom and decency; and

**WHEREAS**, the failure of the U.S. Congress to enact meaningful immigration reform places an undue economic, political and public safety burden on communities like Windham; and

**WHEREAS**, H.R. 2278, the Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement Act, commonly known as the S.A.F.E. Act, would take aggressively punitive measures against the undocumented and anyone who might help, transport or shelter undocumented persons, and would remove the ability of immigration authorities to make fact-based decisions on individual cases; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. government has spent 187 billion dollars on immigration enforcement since 1986, yet the undocumented population in this country has tripled to 11 million, proving that punitive enforcement measures alone cannot address the many flaws in our immigration system:

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Council of the Town of Windham, CT hereby urges the U.S. Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform to establish a clear, swift, and responsible pathway to citizenship for undocumented persons and secure our nation's borders; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town Council of the Town of Windham, CT opposes enactment of the S.A.F.E. Act and urges Connecticut's congressional delegation to oppose H.R. 2278; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that local personnel, such as police officers, fire inspectors, educators, health personnel and social service workers, should not be conscripted into federal service to enforce U.S. immigration laws by making undocumented status a criminal offence, because the federal government has not adequately funded and staffed its immigration enforcement agencies; and

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

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

- f. **Presentation from Chairman Dennis O'Brien and Vice-Chairman Doug Lary about the report of the Charter Revision Commission. (Briefing, no action at this time.)**

Dennis O'Brien, Chairman of the Charter Revision Commission and Vice-Chairman Doug Lary gave a presentation on the status of the Charter Revision. Chairman O'Brien provided a timeline for the completion of the Charter Revision and noted there will be a Public Hearing on Thursday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Windham High School Media Center to hear public comment on the proposed changes to the Charter. Chairman O'Brien and Vice-Chairman Lary reviewed the proposed changes with the Council and also answered questions.

**9. Mayor's Report.**

Mayor Eldridge reported he, Tom DeVivo and Charlotte Patros attended a meeting regarding the TIGER Grants and noted Mr. Blumenthal committed to support the TIGER Grant for Windham.

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

No Report

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

None

**12. Resolutions and Ordinances.**

**a. Discuss and possibly move to adopt a Resolution pertaining to the Neighborhood Assistance Act.**

Krich gave a summary of the Resolution and moved for its adoption.

Krich MOVED, Doyle seconded, to adopt Resolution #2638. All were in favor.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council THAT

**The Windham Town Council approve the following agencies submitting to the Town of Windham for inclusion in the Neighborhood Assistance Act for Program Year 2014:**

<u>AGENCY NAME</u>	<u>PROGRAM TITLE</u>	<u>NAA FUNDING REQUESTED</u>	<u>PROGRAM DURATION</u>
Access Community Action Agency, Inc.	Meeting Basic Human Needs	\$ 20,000	7/1/14 –6/30/15
Windham Regional Community Council, Inc.	Energy Conservation - Convert to gas system	\$150,000	6/30/14 - 6/30/15

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

- b. **Discuss and possibly move to adopt a Resolution endorsing a Town of Windham application for Main Street Investment Program grant funds.**

DeVivo read the Resolution and moved for its adoption.

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adopt Resolution #2639. All were in favor.

## **BE IT RESOLVED by the Windham Town Council that**

- (1) *Authorizes the Windham Town Manager to submit the completed application for funding to the CT Department of Housing for the 'Main Street Investment Fund' program as referenced in Section 78 & 79 of Public Act 11-1, to construct the Airline & Hop River Trail Extension-Willimantic link to the CT Airline Greenway Pedestrian and Bikeway trail as an enhancement to the Town's Commercial Center; and to*
- (2) *Identify and authorize Neal J. Beets, Windham Town Manager, as an individual authorized to sign the Main Street Investment fund application, and any other contractual document for the Town to administer the project. Such application and plan shall be attached to, and made a part of this record.*

### **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

- c. **Discuss and possibly move to adopt a Resolution urging Congress to adopt a new Immigration Reform Act.**

Moved up on the agenda to follow Item #8e.

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

- a. **Administration, Finance, Economic Development, Health, and Human Service Committee. (Councilmember DeVivo)**

DeVivo reported the Committee had met and unveiled the proposed housing code ordinance. He stated there had been some discussion regarding the funding to conduct a survey through Survey Monkey and he explained the survey would help to receive feedback from residents. He noted there were some good changes to the ordinance however the process from the landlords was challenging because of the format used in Public Hearings.

DeVivo also reported the Committee will be taking a tour of the Jonathan Trumbull property on June 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 A.M. He encouraged the full Council to attend the meeting and noted the challenges our community is facing regarding public housing.

- b. **Public Works, Public Safety, Environment, Recreation, and Culture Committee (Councilmember Krich)**

Krich reported the Committees next meeting will be May 28, 2014.

- c. **Building Committee for the High School Roof (Councilmember DeVivo)**

No Report

- d. **Capital Action Tri-Board (Councilmember Doyle)**

No Report

**14. Old Business.**

- a. **Discuss and possibly move to adopt a signage program for downtown Willimantic, as recommended by the Windham Economic Development Commission.**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adopt a signage program for downtown Willimantic, as recommended by the Windham Economic Development Commission. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- b. **Discuss and possibly set a public hearing on Tuesday, June 3, 2014, at 6 PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room pertaining to the amendments to the Windham Housing Code, as recommended by the Administration, Finance, Economic Development, Health, and Human Service Committee.**

No Action Taken

**15. New Business.**

- a. **Discuss and possibly move to establish a mechanism for handling ethics questions and complaints in light of the absence of a quorum of members on the Windham Ethics Commission.**

Krich MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to postpone establishing a mechanism for handling ethics questions and complaints in light of the absence of a quorum of members on the Windham Ethics Commission. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- b. **Discuss and possibly move to authorize the Revenue Collector to issue a July property tax bill based on the current mill rate.**

No Action Taken

**16. Future Agenda Items**

None

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

Henry Crane, Windham Street, Willimantic, thanked the Council for supporting the Immigration Reform Act. He also shared his thoughts on the Board of Education budget and noted his support of the Town of the Windham and Willimantic Service District budgets.

James Flores thanked the Council for supporting the Immigration Reform Act. He also spoke about the emails circulating regarding the Board of Education budget and he takes full responsibility for his comments. He asked people to encourage the Board of Finance to cut a half a million dollars from all budgets and stated it is about compromise and he gave examples on how to do this. He also acknowledged the name calling and personnel attacks being said and does not believe this will not benefit the Town.

**18. Adjournment**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adjourn the Town of Windham Town Council regular meeting at 10:08 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Submitted By:**

Barbara J. McKinney

Clerk of the Town Council