

WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Windham Town Hall, Meeting Room

Tuesday, June 17, 2014 - 7:00 P.M.



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 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.

Tom White, 40 Mullen Hill Road, Windham, shared his thoughts on a Councilman's actions that took place at another meeting and asked the Council to let members know they should not be making threats to people when attending Committee meetings. He also suggested the Councilman in question apologize for his actions. Mr. White also spoke as Vice Chair of the Board of Finance regarding money being spent that was not in the budget without Board of Finance approval. In addition, he stated Councilmen who own buildings or have multi-family homes should not discuss or be on any committee that is discussing the policy for housing.

Bill Powers, Scotland Road, Windham, is concerned that the website is not up to date with meeting minutes. He is also concerned that Beaver Brook Pond has several names and thinks it may be a public safety issue if emergency responders are called and don't know where they should go.

Jeff Viens, Rte 66, Columbia, spoke about Section 6-24f of the housing code. He also provided the Council with a handout.

Joel Meyers, property owner and resident, expressed his thoughts on how he feels area landlords have been treated throughout the process of changing the housing code ordinance.

Dennis O'Brien, 120 Bolivia Street, Willimantic, and Chair of the Charter Revision Commission reviewed the timeline for the Charter Revision and stated he would stay for the meeting tonight if the Council requested.



Joe Marsalisi, Gifford Avenue, Willimantic, asked for clarification on the advantages of changing the Willimantic Service District to the Willimantic Taxing District as recommended by the Charter Revision Commission.

Heather Meehan, from Meehan and Daughters Real Estate, read a letter from John Walker regarding the Housing Code regulations in which he requested the Council not move forward with it. She noted she agrees with Mr. Walker and believes the Town could be setting themselves up for serious legal issues.

Pam Viens, Columbia resident, spoke about the information and comments that took place at last night's sub-committee meeting. She also believes that four Council members should abstain from voting tonight.

Kathy Dubay, Investors Management and Real Estate Broker, 1125 Main Street, Willimantic, agrees with John Walker's letter that Heather Meehan read. Ms. Dubay also noted she is all about safety for our residents however she would like to see consistency and asked the Council to rethink the draft ordinance for the Housing Code. She also questioned the decision to give the small cities grant to the Housing Authority. In addition, Ms. Dubay noted she was upset by a comment made at last night's sub-committee meeting that referred to "poor folk".

4. Town Council Comment.

Tom DeVivo stated he was asked by the School Board to announce that there will be a special meeting at 6:00 PM tomorrow night at the Barrows School to appoint the new Superintendent.

MOTION: DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to add under Item #8 a short presentation from Mark Fenton and the North Central Health District concerning increasing physical activity and walk ability in Windham. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Krich MOVED, Underwood seconded, to amend the agenda to add Item #13d a School Building Committee report by Council member DeVivo. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Adoption of Minutes.

a. Discuss and possibly move to adopt the minutes for the June 3, 2014, regular Town Council meeting.

Underwood MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adopt the minutes for the June 3, 2014, regular Town Council meeting. All were in favor except Donahue who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

6. Resignations.

None

7. Appointments.

a. Discuss and possibly move to appoint John McGrath as a regular member of the Ethics Commission, with a term to expire on December 15, 2015.

Underwood MOVED, Patros seconded, to appoint John McGrath as a regular member of the Ethics Commission, with a term to expire on December 15, 2015. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. Presentations & Special Reports.

a. Presentation from Mark Fenton and the North Central Health District concerning increasing physical activity and walk ability in Windham.

Mike Pirro, Director of the North Central Health District, gave a brief introduction and explained that Windham is one of five communities where the Livable/Walkable program is being offered at no cost to the Town.

Mark Fenton from the Center for Disease Control in Boston, gave a brief presentation regarding the Livable/Walkable program being offered to Windham through the North Central Health District. He explained the benefits of the program and gave examples of how Windham can develop our community to become more physically active.

9. Mayor's Report.

Mayor Eldridge reported he had visited the new Charter School and had been informed that the School will be ready to open as scheduled.

10. Town Manager's Report.

No Report

11. Discussion and Review of Communications.

None

12. Resolutions and Ordinances.

See Item #15a

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 last night and discussed the Housing Code Ordinance. He noted a vote had been taken to send the issue to the full Town Council.

DeVivo also reported the Committee had discussed the small cities grant. He explained how the grant has been used in the past and apologized for his choice of words with regards to poor folks or poor people. He also explained the need for the small cities grant to be used for public housing. DeVivo noted the Committee had voted to recommend to the full Town Council that the grant be given to the Housing Authority for 2015.

In addition, DeVivo reported the Committee had discussed the Town Managers evaluation with regards to the timeline and format that will be used.

DeVivo also reported the Committee had reviewed the Town budget expenses and revenues. He noted Mr. Pesce will be providing a report on a monthly basis for their review.

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

Krich reported the next meeting of the Committee will be June 25th, the 4th Wednesday of the month.

c. Capital Action Tri-Board. (Councilmember Doyle)

Doyle reported the Board was waiting for the official action of the Board of Education. He did note however that Town Manager Beets is tentatively scheduling them to come back to the Council on July 1st.

d. School Building Committee (Councilmember DeVivo)

DeVivo reported the Windham High School Building Committee met and awarded two contracts; the flooring contract to A. Secondino & Son Flooring and the roofing contract to Greenwich Roofing. DeVivo noted the High School will be closed for a period of time for environmental abatement.

DeVivo also reported on the Magnet School and stated the next meeting will be July 9th. He also noted there is more work to be done at the school and he wanted to inform the neighbors of a canopy that would be going up. In addition, he noted the Committee has received two major awards; a Blue Ribbon Award from CT Real Estate and an Award of Merit for team building. DeVivo explained the significance of both awards.

14. Old Business.

a. Discuss and possibly move to send written comments from the Town Council to the Charter Revision Commission regarding the Report that the Charter Revision Commission provided to the Town Council. (Please bring the most recent version of the proposed changes to the Charter that you received at your last Council meeting.)

Mayor Eldridge requested written comments be brought to the Town Council meeting on July 15th for discussion.

Town Manager Beets clarified the steps the Town Council must take regarding the proposed changes to the Town Charter.

No Action was taken

b. Discuss and possibly set a Public Hearing regarding the proposed changes to the Town Charter for Tuesday, July 1, 2014, at 6:00 PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

Krich MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to set a Public Hearing regarding the proposed changes to the Town Charter for Tuesday, July 1, 2014, at 6:00 PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- c. **Discuss and possibly set a Public Hearing on Tuesday, July 15, 2014, at 6:00 PM to hear public comment about proposed changes to the Housing and Blight Codes.**

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to set a Public Hearing on Tuesday, August 5, 2014, at 6:00 PM to hear public comment about proposed changes to the Housing and Blight Codes. All were in favor except Krich, Fantoli, Lessard and McDevitt who opposed and Underwood who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

MOTION: Krich MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to take a 10 minute recess at 8:20 PM or recess until the results of the polls come in. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mayor Eldridge reconvened the Town Council meeting at 8:28 PM.

15. New Business.

- a. **If the FY 14-15 Budget is not approved at today's Referendum, discuss and possibly move to authorize Town General Government expenditures for the first quarter of the new fiscal year.**

DeVivo MOVED, Patros seconded, to waive the reading of the Resolution. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, Patros seconded, to approve Resolution #2642 to authorize Town General Government expenditures for the first quarter of the new fiscal year.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council THAT

A Resolution of the Town Council for Windham, Connecticut, Authorizing the Expenditure of Funds.

Whereas, the Voters have not approved the Board of Education budget before the commencement of fiscal year 2014-2015;

Whereas, Section X-7 of the Town Charter provides the Town Council with the authority, in this circumstance, to approve necessary expenditures as provided in the General Statutes;

Whereas, Section 7-405 of the Connecticut General Statutes provides the Town Council with the authority to approve such necessary expenditures for a period of 90 days commencing July 1, 2014.

Whereas, the Town has a strong need to expend funds for employees, programs, education, contract obligations, debt service payments, public building maintenance, equipment, utilities, insurance, environmental control system, care of public resources such as street and parks, and garbage collection;

Whereas, the Town's disbursing officers may expend funds legally upon approval by the Town Council of such expenditures;

Now, therefore, the Town Council adopts the following resolution:

1. The Town's disbursing officers are hereby authorized to expend funds as necessary, for a period of time up to and including September 30, 2014, but to expend no more than \$3,725,120 within General Government line items; and to expend no more than an aggregate of \$10,750,000 for the Board of Education, prior to September 30, 2014.
2. Expenditures under this resolution shall be measured by the Town Manger and Superintendent of Schools to be kept to amounts which would aggregate, should an annual budget not be adopted this fiscal year, to no more than the expenditures approved under the Board of Education and Town General Government annual budget for fiscal year 2013-2014; except that expenditures shall be made to be consistent with and meet statutory obligations.
3. The Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools shall prepare a report on the disbursements authorized by these resolutions for the Town Council and the Board of Education on a monthly basis.
4. This authorization shall expire, automatically, upon the date the Voters approve an annual budget for the Board of Education for fiscal year 2014-2015.
5. Should an annual budget not be approved by September 15, 2014; the Town Manager shall obtain from the Town Council further authorization to expend funds for the period of October 1, 2014 forward.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

16. Future Agenda Items

None

17. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment.

Henry Crane, Windham Street, Willimantic, thanked the Board of Finance for cutting the budget and encouraged people to let them know why they don't support the budget.

Joe Marsalisi, Gifford Avenue, Willimantic, stated he was confused and thought the Charter Revision Commission was done with the Charter. He asked for clarification.

Bonita Calkins, Hebron resident and Windham property owner, was happy to be able to vote on the budget and noted she voted yes because she thought it was a fair budget. She also noted her disappointment and questioned why a group of adults could not sit down and come to a resolution regarding a document that would be beneficial to all those involved.

18. Adjournment

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt 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