

Minutes of the Windham Town Council Regular Meeting

**Windham Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium, 2nd Floor
Tuesday, July 7, 2015 7:00 P.M.**

1. Call to Order.

Mayor Eldridge called the Windham Town Council Regular Meeting to order at 7:01P.M.

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Charles Krich, Tony Fantoli (arrived @ 7:08 P.M.), Tom DeVivo, Lorraine McDevitt, Joseph Underwood, Mark Doyle, Michael Lessard and James Flores (arrived @ 7:13 P.M.).

Christel Donahue and Charlotte Patros were absent.

Town Manager Neal Beets was also in attendance.

A moment of silence was observed for the passing of Mary Lou DeVivo.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Eldridge led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment.

Gilbert Teixeira, 158 South Street, Willimantic, shared his concerns with vehicles speeding on South Street. He suggested possibly installing a stop sign.

Jeff Viens, 36 Rte 66, Columbia, referred to Item #8d on the agenda, the proposal from George Hernandez to purchase and develop the former Tin Tsin lot. He spoke against the idea of micro apartments in that location and doesn't believe it would meet the current housing regulations and questioned the available parking as well.

Charlie Kratt, Monticello Street, Willimantic, noted he is not in favor of compact apartments and agreed with the comments of Mr. Viens.

4. Town Council Comment.

Mayor Eldridge stated the proposal from George Hernandez is being postponed at the request of Mr. Hernandez. He also stated no application had been received for the appointment of Mr. Benham to the North Central District Health Board therefore that too will be postponed.

5. Adoption of Town Council Minutes.

a. Meeting of June 2, 2015.

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to approve the Town Council meeting minutes of June 2, 2015. All were in favor except Krich and Underwood who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

6. Resignations.

None

7. Appointments, Reappointments.

- a. Appoint Roger Benham as a regular member of the North Central District Health Department, with a term to expire on April 15, 2016.**

Postponed

8. Presentations & Special Reports.

- a. Hear a Presentation from Dr. Gail Gelburd of Eastern Connecticut State University about the “My Windham” public art project and the Whitewater Park grant application, and possible action.**

Dr. Gail Gelburd of Eastern Connecticut State University gave a presentation on the success of the “My Windham” public art project and the Whitewater Park grant application. She provided the Town Council with the brochure that outlined the events of the project and the selected Press Clippings from the project. Dr. Gelburd explained the “My Windham” project, the financial breakdown, the many artists involved and the problems with some vandalism. She also stated the interest in having this project as a biannual event. In addition, Dr. Gelburd thanked the Town Council and the community for their support.

- b. Hear a Presentation from Julie Kessler about the “Relay for Life” fundraising event on Saturday, October 17, 2015, at the Eastern Connecticut State University Sports Complex on Mansfield Road, and possible action.**

Julie Kessler from the American Cancer Society gave a brief background of her work with the American Cancer Society and Relay for Life. She provided “Save the Date” information for the fundraising event and encouraged the Town Council to form a team. Ms. Kessler also noted she would like to designate a Relay Day in Willimantic which would involve painting the Town purple with purple bows and ribbons around Town.

- c. Hear a Presentation from the Windham Textile and History Museum about a proposed modification to the Town owned Duggan Building, and possible action approving the building modification subject to compliance with all State and Town Codes as well as Health Department and Building Official approval, as required in their Lease.**

Bob Hackemack, Representative from the Windham Textile and History Museum requested permission from the Town Council to change a storage room in the Duggan Building to a staff lounge.

DeVivo MOVED, Lessard seconded, to authorize the Windham Textile and History Museum to make the requested alterations to the property. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- d. **Hear a Presentation from George Hernandez about his Proposal to purchase and develop the Tin Tsin lot (a/k/a Chapman Block) at 804-806 Main Street , and possible action sending his Proposal to the PZC and EDC for a written recommendation by the next Town Council Study Session on Tuesday, September 8, 2015.**

- **George Hernandez's Supplement to his Proposal, 20150617**

- **Staff Memorandum evaluating Mr. Hernandez's Proposal, 20150617**

The presentation from George Hernandez about his Proposal to purchase and develop the Tin Tsin lot (a/k/a Chapman Block) at 804-806 Main Street Economic is postponed.

Economic Development Director Jim Bellano gave a brief update on the status of Mr. Hernandez's proposal. A short discussion followed.

Flores MOVED, DeVivo seconded, to move the proposal of George Hernandez to the Economic Development Commission and request the Commission bring back a recommendation to the Town Council at the second meeting in September. Flores and Lessard were in favor with all others opposed. MOTION FAILED.

9. Mayor's Report.

Mayor Eldridge expressed his condolences to Councilman DeVivo.

Mayor Eldridge reported the Boom Box parade was a great success.

10. Town Manager's Report.

Town Manager Beets reported a UCONN Professor studying air pollution will be making a presentation and requesting permission at a later date to install monitoring devices throughout the Town in an effort to monitor air pollution. He stated the Professor is waiting for funding of the study and there is no defined proposal on the specific locations for the monitoring devices at this time.

Town Manager Beets gave a brief update of the status of the Senior Center. He noted the issues on control and governance of the site has been resolved and they are currently working on completing the documents. Town Manager Beets stated the Town Attorney is scheduled to brief the Town Council at their September 8th meeting, present the Resolution for their approval at their September 15th meeting and then move to a Town Meeting for approval. Grant money could then be used.

Town Manager Beets also reported the Ethics Commission will be attending the September 8th Work Study Session. He stated the Commission has some opinions and observations regarding the Ethics Code and would like to share them with the Town Council.

In addition, Town Manager Beets reported Representatives from WRTD will be attending the September 8th Work Study Session to share their report and request additional funding from the Town to continue service in Windham.

Town Manager Beets also addressed the Town Council's questions on the Micro-Grid project, the project on South Street and the lighting work on the Foot Bridge.

11. Discussion and Review of Communications

Mayor Eldridge noted there was a communication, which is included in the Town Council packet, regarding a problem with a language barrier when 911 was called for a choking child. He stated the gentleman suggested a bi-lingual person be available.

DeVivo stated he stands by his previous comments and strongly believes bi-lingual staff is needed at the Dispatch Center. He suggested we help Dispatch in their efforts to find bi-lingual staff and expressed the urgency for a response when calling 911.

12. Resolutions and Ordinances.

None

13. Reports, Agendas, Minutes, Reports from Committees, Boards and Commissions.

Mayor Eldridge pointed out in one of the WPCA correspondence they declined to hold another Public Hearing regarding rate hikes.

DeVivo asked the Town Council to remember the WPCA's actions when they are up for re-appointment.

14. Old Business.

a. Discuss and possibly approve a collective bargaining agreement with Local 2001 CSEA, SEIU (Water Department Employees).

DeVivo MOVED, Fantoli seconded, to approve a collective bargaining agreement with Local 2001 CSEA, SEIU. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

15. New Business.

a. Discuss and possibly take action to create a policy about memorials for Cupids. (Request of Councilmember Doyle.)

Doyle MOVED, Lessard seconded, that the policy be that any Cupid past or present who passes away, the Town Manager puts up a memorial portrait of the person in the area of the Town Clerk's/Town Manager's office. All were in favor except Krich and McDevitt who opposed and Flores and DeVivo who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

16. Future Agenda Itemsd

a. Tuesday, July 28, 2015: 7 PM - Willimantic Taxing District Meeting

17. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment.

Kevin Hoxie sends prayers to the DeVivo family. He commented on losing a Music Teacher at the High School despite the promises of the School Administration. He also thanked Mayor Eldridge and Councilman DeVivo for attending the CLICK event. Mr. Hoxie also commented on people asking for more money for projects.

Mike Lessard, South Windham Road, commented on an Art Teacher being cut. He stated he was assured by the Superintendent that no other positions will be cut but was not sure if that was only regarding the Middle School.

James Flores suggested the Town Council find out what the biggest problem is in Windham. He spoke about the budget and salaries of the Board of Education. He also spoke about the people running our Social Service Agencies. He is concerned that many of them live outside of Windham and believes it is time to fight back.

Lorraine McDevitt recognized Public Works for putting up Marie Elena's flower baskets on the light poles which provide great joy. She also spoke of her very good friend Mary Lou DeVivo who was a very big advocate for children being able to read and her desire to change the name of the library to the Windham Public Library. McDevitt has started a movement for the Willimantic Public Library or the Children's Room at the Library to bear the name of Mary Lou DeVivo. She encourages the support of the Town Council.

Charles Krich stated he had the same idea in mind as Lorraine McDevitt for recognizing Mary Lou DeVivo and feels it is more appropriate than a black ribbon. He is confident Ms. McDevitt will join him in having the renaming of the Library on the next agenda.

Doug Lary shared his thoughts on having bi-lingual staff at the Dispatch Center.

Joe Underwood reminded the Town Council to look up the policy for putting something on the agenda.

18. Adjournment

DeVivo MOVED, Doyle seconded, to adjourn the Windham Town Council Regular meeting at 8:25 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney
Clerk of the Town Council