

# Minutes of the Windham Town Council Regular Meeting,

Windham Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium, 2nd Floor  
Tuesday, September 6, 2016 - 7:00 P.M.

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## 1. **Call to Order.**

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

Members Present: Mayor Eldridge, Charles Krich, Tony Fantoli, Nectalis Martinez, Tom DeVivo, Lorraine McDevitt, Mike Lessard, Dawn Niles, Dennis O'Brien, James Flores and Lynne Ide

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.**

Melissa Lessard, South Windham, introduced herself and gave a brief background of herself. She also expressed her interest in serving on the Board of Education.

Tracy Lambert, Willimantic resident and member of the Board of Education, spoke in support of the appointment of Melissa Lessard to the Board of Education. She also thanked the Police for warning the schools about the incident today.

James Flores spoke in support of the appointment of Melissa Lessard as a member of the Board of Education.

Jean de Smet, Windham Resident and Chair of the Energy Commission spoke about the lighting improvements for downtown and asked the Town Council to direct Town Staff to hold off on the sidewalk contract on Main Street. She also stated she hopes the Council will support the Oktoberfest and the appointment of Melissa Lessard.

Kevin Hoxie, Willimantic, thanked those involved in putting a crosswalk in at the High School. He also spoke about the Board of Education's request for \$45,000 and staffing problems at the schools.

Bernie D'Auteuil, 168 Walnut Street, Willimantic, thanked those involved in putting a crosswalk in at the High School. He also spoke about the \$45,000 request from the Board of Education.

## 4. **Town Council Comment.**

Dawn Niles spoke about adding 2 items to the agenda; appointing a Town Council member as a liaison to CCM and appointing Melissa Lessard to the Board of Education.

She also noted she and the Mayor will be Co-Chairs on the 325<sup>th</sup> birthday of Windham Committee.

Dennis O'Brien spoke about the CCJEF vs. Rell case and noted the decision will be announced tomorrow in Hartford at 11:00 A.M.

Mike Lessard spoke in support of the appointment of Melissa Lessard to the Board of Education. He also asked that the Energy Commission provide pricing for the lighting improvements for downtown and that the item be placed on a future agenda. In addition, Lessard thanked the Police for the quick response to today's incident.

James Flores spoke about what the American Flag symbolizes to the Puerto Rican people. He also spoke about the United States Government oppression to Puerto Rico.

Lorraine McDevitt spoke in support of the appointment of Melissa Lessard to the Board of Education.

Tom DeVivo spoke about the time allowed for Town Council members to speak.

**5. Adoption of Town Council Minutes.**

**a. Public Hearing of August 2, 2016.**

**b. Regular Council Meeting of August 2, 2016.**

**c. Regular Council Meeting of August 16, 2016.**

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to approve the Public Hearing Minutes of August 2, 2015. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to approve the Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes of August 2, 2016. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to approve the Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes of August 16, 2016. All were in favor except McDevitt who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

**6. Resignations.**

Zachary Quamme resigned as a member of the Board of Education.

**MOTION:**DeVivo MOVED, Fantoli seconded, to add to the agenda under Item #7 the appointment of Melissa Lessard to the Board of Education. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**7. Appointments, Reappointments, as recommended by the Nominating Commission.**

- **Appointment of Melissa Lessard as a regular member of the Board of Education**

DeVivo MOVED, Fantoli seconded, to appoint Melissa Lessard as a regular member of the Board of Education. All were in favor except Krich and Ide who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

**MOTION:** DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to move Item #15b up on the agenda to follow Item #7. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**MOTION:**Niles MOVED, Flores seconded, to add Item 15e; Discussion and possible action to appoint a liaison to CCM (Connecticut Conference of Municipalities). All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

15. **b. Discuss and possibly approve an application from Willimantic Renaissance for an OctoberFest event on Main Street, on Thursday, October 20, 2016, from approximately 6 pm to 9 pm, subject to compliance with all state and town requirements.**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to approve an application from Willimantic Renaissance for an OctoberFest event on Main Street, on Thursday, October 20, 2016, from approximately 6 pm to 9 pm, subject to compliance with all state and town requirements. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. **Presentations & Special Reports.**

- a. **Hear a Presentation from Leigh Duffy, Executive Director of the No Freeze Shelter, about the status of the No Freeze program and about initiatives to reduce or eliminate homelessness.**

Leigh Duffy, Executive Director of the No Freeze Shelter, gave an update on the status of the Shelter. She also explained the goals and challenges facing Homeless Shelters Statewide and provided statistical information regarding demographic changes in the community. In addition, she answered questions from the Town Council.

9. **Mayor's Report.**

Mayor Eldridge reported that the Jazz in the Garden event to benefit the Windham Free Library will be held on Sunday and tickets are still available. He also noted he had attended the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Farmers Market. In addition, he noted he had participated in the Labor Day event on the Coal Strike in 1902.

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

Town Manager Beets reported on the burglary/home invasion in the hill section.

Town Manager Beets also reported that the Board of Finance was holding a Special Meeting tomorrow at 7:00 P.M. to discuss the timing of the next budget referendum.

Town Manager Beets answered questions from the Town Council.

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

None

12. **Discussion and Review of Agendas, Minutes, Reports of Town Boards, Committees, and Commissions.**

Dennis O'Brien stated he was pleased that Jim Wright was seated on the WRTD Board. He also asked who the members of the Health District were.

Tom DeVivo noted the NRZ hasn't had a quorum in a year and stated people are needed to serve on the Board.

**13. Resolutions and Ordinances.**

None

**14. Old Business.**

None

**15. New Business.**

- a. **Discuss and possibly approve a contract with Sarazin General Contractors for \$876,668 to renovate the Willimantic Public Library, using state grant funds supplemented by town funds appropriated in the voter-approved Town budget, as recommended by the Town Engineer.**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to approve a contract with Sarazin General Contractors for \$876,668 to renovate the Willimantic Public Library, using state grant funds supplemented by town funds appropriated in the voter-approved Town budget, as recommended by the Town Engineer. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- b. **Discuss and possibly approve an application from Willimantic Renaissance for an OctoberFest event on Main Street, on Thursday, October 20, 2016, from approximately 6 pm to 9 pm, subject to compliance with all state and town requirements.**

Moved up on the agenda to follow Item #7.

- c. **Discuss and possibly approve a grant application to the State of Connecticut for their CT Next/Innovation Places Grant Program, as recommended by the Economic Development Director.**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to approve a grant application to the State of Connecticut for their CT Next/Innovation Places Grant Program, as recommended by the Economic Development Director. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- d. **Discuss and possibly approve a request from BOE Superintendent Garcia and the Windham Board of Finance to spend \$45,000 from the Town's undesignated fund balance for certain items.**

DeVivo MOVED, Niles seconded, to send the request from BOE Superintendent Garcia and the Windham Board of Finance to spend \$45,000 from the Town's undesignated fund balance for certain items to the Administration and Finance Committee for further review. All were in favor except Ide and Flores who abstained. MOTION PASSED.

- e. **Discussion and possible action to appoint a liaison to CCM (Connecticut Conference of Municipalities).**

O'Brien MOVED, Niles seconded, to appoint the President of the Town Council, Tom DeVivo, as the liaison to CCM (Connecticut Conference of Municipalities). All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**16. Future Agenda Items**

None

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

Tracy Lambert explained the reasons for the \$45,000 request from the Board of Education. She also spoke about ethics and conflicts of interest when serving on a Board/Commission.

Kevin Hoxie, Willimantic resident, spoke about the appointment of Councilman DeVivo as a liaison for CCM. He also spoke about the issues with the Board of Education administration.

Melissa Lessard thanked the Town Council for appointing her as a member of the Board of Education and noted she will take the position very seriously especially when there may be a conflict of interest.

Bernie D'Auteuil, 168 Walnut Street, Willimantic, spoke about the Board of Education and questioned the confidence the voters have in the Board of Education. He also spoke about the Town Council creating an ordinance regarding panhandling.

James Flores congratulated Melissa Lessard for her appointment to the Board of Education. He also spoke of the United States Government's oppression to the Puerto Rican people.

Mike Lessard thanked the Town Council for giving the appointment of Melissa Lessard to the Board of Education so much thought.

**18. Adjournment**

DeVivo MOVED, McDevitt seconded, to adjourn the Windham Town Council Regular Meeting at 9:00 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Submitted by**

**Barbara J. McKinney  
Clerk of the Council**