

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Town Council Chambers

October 27, 2015, 2015

6:30 p.m.

RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES

The Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Town Council was called to order at 6: 33 p.m. The Opening Prayer was given Pastor Douglas Valentine, 1st Baptist Church of Wallingford. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were: Chairman Vincent Cervoni; Vice-Chair Tom Laffin; Councilors John LeTourneau; Christine Mansfield; Larry Russo; Craig Fishbein Vincent Testa and Bob Parisi.

Councilor John Sullivan was not in attendance. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr., and Town Attorney G.E. Farrell, Sr. were also at the meeting.

3. Consent Agenda

- 3a. Consider and Approve Tax Refunds totaling \$6,942.67 (#311-366) Acct# 1001001-41020/Tax Collector
- 3b. Consider and Approve a Transfer of funds in the amount of \$16,200 to Maintenance of Equipment, Acct. #10020050-54325 from Regular Salaries & Wages, Acct #10020050-51000/Police Department
- 3c. Consider and Approve Acceptance of Federal/State Highway Grant, "2014-2015 Comprehensive DUI Enforcement Program" and Consider and Approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$2,895 to Revenue Highway Safety Acct. #1002001-45208 and to Police Overtime Acct. #10020050-51400/ Police Department
- 3d. Consider and Approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$650 to Revenue Acct. #2264002-47152 and to Expenditure Acct. #22640150-58830/Youth and Social Services
- 3e. Consider and Approve Town Council Minutes of October 13, 2015

Vice-Chair Laffin noted that on page 3, paragraph 4, line 2, should read "\$1 million" not "\$1".

Motion to approve and accept Consent Agenda Items 3a to 3e as amended.

Motion by: Laffin
Seconded by: Parisi
Vote: 8 ayes

4. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – None

5. PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked Mayor Dickinson what was meant when quoted in an October 24, 2015 article in the local paper regarding the Mayoral Candidates debate in which the Mayor said that over 60% of the Town's budget goes towards the school system and feels there needs to be some restraint on education spending.

Mayor Dickinson responded that he didn't believe he used that exact terminology. He said the discussion was about having a zero tax increase. He said his response to part of this question was given that over 60% of the budget is for education, the budget can't be balanced on 40% of the budget, education would have to be included in this equation of coming up with a no tax increase.

Mr. Gross asked the Mayor if he was looking at ways to keep taxes in tow. Mayor Dickinson responded by stating that he and the Council were very familiar with the process every year when the education budget is reviewed, and recommendations and changes are made. He said this has been the process for many years.

Mr. Gross noted that one thing which has been mentioned over the past years is the possibility of having one high school which he said would potentially save a large amount of money. He said a study needs to be done, which has been discussed. He asked Mayor Dickinson if he was planning on funding this study to potentially save dollars down the road.

Mayor Dickinson said the responsibility for providing public education by State law belongs to the Board of Education. He said they have the responsibility to plan for providing education, and ultimately explain the cost. He said whatever measures there are in regards to the future of education and what form it should take, is the responsibility of the Board of Education and would expect them to be making those recommendations. Mr. Gross asked if the Board of Education came with these recommendations, would this one high school study be funded. Mayor Dickinson said he couldn't answer this question because he didn't know all of the factual material surrounding a hypothetical situation. He said if the Board of Education chooses to do this (study), it should be part of their budget request.

Larry Morgenstein, S. Main Street, commented on the Council wearing the Red Ribbon buttons in observance of Red Ribbon week and said he hoped to see Council members attend Wednesday's and Friday's events for Red Ribbon week. Mr. Morgenstein also thanked Mayor Dickinson for attending the Red Ribbon week kickoff last Friday.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked Mayor Dickinson about access to email which was discussed at the Town Hall candidate's forum. He asked the Mayor what was meant when he was quoted in the paper as stating, "just about every department has access to email".

Mayor Dickinson said the statement is exactly what he means and noted that if they want email they have access to email. Mr. Gross asked what "access" meant, i.e., does staff have the email at their desks. Mayor Dickinson responded by stating the access to email may not be at staffs desks, but if they need email for some purpose, it is available. He said the email is in the building, in an office which provides that access. Mr. Gross pointed out if he had a desk in the building and needed email, he would have to go that particular desk to access the email. Mayor Dickinson said this was correct.

Mr. Gross asked how many terminals were at this desk. Mayor Dickinson responded that he wasn't going to go by memory. He said if one had a daily need to email, its one answer; if there is not daily need of email, it's another answer. He said it's an evaluation of all the facts surrounding ones needs for email or activity sites on the Internet and that is the way it is handled. He said one has to show their need and it is evaluated and supplied in a measure that is necessary.

Mr. Gross responded by asking the Mayor if a need had to be shown to access email in 2015; that people would have to show an actual need for email. He said he didn't believe there was one Town Councilor that wouldn't have access to email in their pockets currently. Mayor Dickinson said this was fine if that is what people like to do, but (email) is not the only way to communicate. He pointed out there are a lot of other ways to communicate and as a society all we do is duplicate and basically all of this comes back to the telephone which he said provides communication as do all these other mechanisms. He said the more mechanisms, the more complicated the workplace becomes and the more dependent one is which costs more money.

Mr. Gross wondered how more emails would cost more money and noted that if one has to leave a desk and move to another office, this is time away from their desks. He said he didn't know if the Mayor had ever done a study, but said he didn't know of any corporation or town in the State that didn't widely use email in this society. Mayor Dickinson wanted to know if the argument was that just because everyone else does it, we should do it.

Mr. Gross said in this case, yes. Mayor Dickinson said he would never agree with an argument that just because everyone else does something, that is appropriate for you. He said leadership is not necessarily doing what everyone else does; its evaluating what is essential and acting upon what is essential and keeping costs low. Mayor Dickinson said he would rather have people in contact with other departments in a face-to-face conversation which provides a far more work friendly atmosphere around the Town Hall. He stressed that people are comfortable in dealing with other departments on a face-to-face basis. Mr. Gross said he thought it was crazy that in 2015 there was not email at everyone's desk, especially department heads and asked if the Town Council had any comment.

Chairman Cervoni said he understood Mr. Gross's position, but noted this was not an agenda item and would not necessarily encourage Council comment.

Don Kennedy, Bull Avenue, asked if there was a list of printed emails which he could access because he said he had no access to emails except for one or two specific departments. Mayor Dickinson reiterated that general conduct of business was not encouraged through email because it would cost the Town more money. Mr. Kennedy said he wasn't questioning the cost, just requesting a list of departments which had email. Mayor Dickinson said where departments are encouraging public access through emails, this would be available. He said often it is an email contact because the State won't do business any other way so there is an email contact, but not the case where we are encouraging everyone to use email. He said now there are two and three places to look for messages and that is not efficient. He said he has departments complaining about what happens when there are two or three places to have to go to look to see if someone contacted staff.

Mr. Kennedy asked again if there was an obtainable email list. Mayor Dickinson said he is certain a list is obtainable where a department encourages contact by email. Mr. Kennedy said he was curious on how he would be able to obtain this list. He said the Mayor made a statement and he was trying to follow up on this statement. Mayor Dickinson said the real question is can Mr. Kennedy contact a department. Mr. Kennedy said no and noted this week there were people who called the Town Hall and there was no answer. Mayor Dickinson wanted to know if Mr. Kennedy himself called or some other person.

He said if a person can't contact a department he is concerned; but if they want to choose one mechanism versus another to contact a department, he is not as sympathetic because there are telephones and the ability to contact a department directly and speak to someone in that manner. He said everything is structured that when business is conducted, where a person can speak to someone and have the question or problem answered. Mr. Kennedy said he would encourage this person to contact the Mayor directly because this person reportedly stated they could not get access to staff through the telephone. He asked Mayor Dickinson if he would have to go from department to department to access staff. Mayor Dickinson said if Mr. Kennedy wanted to contact a particular department, there is a published list of phones and if he still couldn't get through, he could contact the Mayor's office.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, said there are forms which require going to the Town Hall to access. He said these forms could be emailed to a person or having the forms available on the internet which would save time. He asked Mayor Dickinson if he was aware of this, but noted email would save his constituents time to come to Town Hall, if all departments had email. Mayor Dickinson said he is familiar with this and do not do this for some very good reasons, part of which is additional cost. Mr. Gross asked what the additional costs would be to email a form. Mayor Dickinson said he has heard from other towns, who have provided on-line forms, (building permits), and have told us don't go there if you don't have to, because it is nothing that is going to create efficiency, instead it creates a nightmare because a person can't fill out

these forms; the person has to speak to someone because there are too many variables or too many issues surround a building permit. He said everyone has a story, but we are doing things that seem to work very well. Mr. Gross said he understands the Mayor doesn't like technology, but noted we are in 2015 and just because another town doesn't like it or doesn't do it, doesn't mean you should follow the same pattern as was said to me.

Larry Morgenstein, S. Main Street, followed-up on the email question by stating there are departments which have email and there is no list. He asked what he said was a "simple request" that this email list be posted on the Town' website. He said he has spoken to Public Works, the Water and Electric Divisions and noted they would give him their emails. He said it would cost nothing for the departments which have existing email addresses, to be published on the Town site to allow people to have access. He asked if this were possible.

Mayor Dickinson responded by stating that by a general rule, we do not want to encourage additional ways of contacting Town Departments. He gave an example of a person noticing a defect on a sidewalk or highway, now someone has to monitor at least two places to see if the Town has been given notice which will cost money, because that becomes an official notice of a defect which would have to be repaired over a certain period of time. He said if there is one place, someone is answering the phone and this is the place to do it. The Mayor noted that if there was a real emergency, the Town can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week and every day of the year for emergency purposes and all other issues can be handled in the office during a regular work day. He said he knows Fortune 500 companies whose employees have to spend several hours responding to emails before they even start working. He said this is not efficient and noted there is evidence where this (emails) are not a good thing. Mayor Dickinson said emails may be efficient for a small business, but a large business, one is asking for complication, added expenses and possible legal difficulties where we have to find out if we were given notice of something, because someone didn't look at the email or the text. He said it should be simplified by calling on the telephone.

Mr. Morgenstein noted that this was a simple request and pointed out he could email each and every one of the Town Council members. He said he could call every Town Council members and asked wouldn't it be easy enough with existing technology, and existing email addresses, not adding new mails to post this as another option. Mayor Dickinson said where a department is going to do business this way, it is fine but where it is used for another purpose, there is no need for that to be a regular means of contact to the department. Mr. Morgenstein said he didn't understand this.

Brad May, S. Richland Drive, said Vice-Chair Laffin was accommodating in providing all the Town Council email addresses. He said this is the only place to get an email address. He told the Mayor on Thursday morning at 9 a.m., he phoned the Building Department and could not get through. He said he tried again 15 minutes later and still could not get through. Mr. May asked the Mayor if it was efficient to have contacted Public Works about an issue, and having to wait five business days for the Public Works Director to get back in touch with him. He said if

the Public Works Director had an email, he could have looked at and addressed a very simple yes or no answer. He said he heavily disagreed with the Mayor and noted that businesses nowadays thrive and depend on email. He asked the Mayor what specific towns he spoke to which told him emails are not a good idea. Mr. May said he deals with towns almost on a daily basis and they have no problems with emails.

Mayor Dickinson said the response he made was to a building department and building permits. He said it isn't emails in general and noted we have a luxury in society to argue about what means a person uses to contact an office. He said if we were really arguing about not being able to contact offices, he could understand the debate, but to say it's not good enough to speak to someone, that a pre-civil war mechanism of sending a telegram has to be used to contact someone is incredible to him. He said we go through an entire process of upgrading all of our communications, so one can hear a voice and understand what the meaning is behind the words, and now we essentially are back to telegramming back and forth. He asked Mr. May to try to contact State or Federal offices using email and see how successful he is.

Mr. May responded by saying he contacted two State offices today and had no problems whatsoever. He asked the Mayor if he was saying Wallingford was running on telegrams. He said the Mayor was talking about ancient technology. He said the Town Council runs on modern technology and noted when he emailed a Councilor, they were quick to respond. He asked the Mayor if he had a Town email address. The Mayor said he and his secretary did not have a town email address.

Chairman Cervoni closed the Public Question and Answer Period.

6. Consider and Approve a Transfer of funds in the amount of \$10,000 to Radio Room Project & Equipment Acct. #10020150-57000-00420 from CAD Software-Dispatch Acct. #10020150-57000-00419/Fire Department

MOTION MADE TO APPROVE A TRANSFER OF FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10,000 TO RADIO ROOM PROJECT & EQUIPMENT ACCT. FROM THE CAD SOFTWARE DISPATCH ACCOUNT/ FIRE DEPT.

**Motion made by: Laffin
Seconded by: Parisi**

Appearing in front of the Council was Fire Chief Richard Heidgerd and Joseph Czentnar, Deputy Fire Chief of Operations.

Chief Heidgerd explained that the Department in this year's budget, supported by the Mayor and the Council is \$25,000 for CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) not design. He said this program would push information out in the Dispatch Center, which would be utilized for resource management. Chief Heidgerd said the terminals and different systems in the fire house and vehicles would have access to where the other resources are for different emergencies. He said the idea is still sound, but noted the Department got ahead of itself in that they are not ready for this equipment. He said the program in the Dispatch Center will be looked at for upgrading

in the near future. Chief Heidgerd said the rest of the project became a lot of unknowns as the Department began moving forward with this, and noted it would be irresponsible of the Department to spend the \$25,000 at this time, knowing it won't be more than two years before the system is upgraded. He said although the need still exists, the Department decided not to spend the money for this purpose.

The Chief said there is a project in the radio room which was an old generator room in Fire Headquarters. He said the room has been repurposed to put all of the infrastructure, i.e., radios, computers, and that type infrastructure into this room. Chief Heidgerd said the Department was funded an additional \$25,000 for this purpose. He said the generator was removed and the room disinfected from the generator which was run on diesel, painted and HVAC equipment installed to control moisture and temperature.

The Chief said the room can now accommodate IT. He said the radio equipment will now be moved into this room and noted the original \$25,000 budget has been overspent, and with the bids that are out and expected cost to move the radio and computer network, the cost is approximately \$35,000. He said by moving \$10,000 out of the CAD program which is not needed, and into the radio room, it sets up the Department for what is wanted for the future, still working on the CAD technology, but this gives the Department a platform where the electrical is sound and the grounding of equipment protects from lightning strikes. He said the Department is moving more cautiously than was originally planned.

Councilor Fishbein said at the last meeting, one of the items on the agenda was the discussion with the Mayor involving items not being expended this year, and one of those items was the CAD program. He asked if it was decided this money was not to be spent, how was this money able to be transferred. Chief Heidgerd said it is actually funded at \$25,000 and what he offered in this process was \$15,000. He said he only needed \$10,000 to complete the radio room and will have \$15,000 which is unnecessary for the Department's needs.

Councilor Fishbein asked about the centralized dispatch center where he said he thought this equipment would be located at and asked why the Department didn't wait.

Chief Heidgerd said most of this infrastructure is the radio portion which would be inside the Fire Department. He pointed out that even if there was a centralized dispatch center, the Department would still require a radio network on the Fire Department side so this would not be redundant, it is another system. He said the internal server for the computers would be located in this room, and the radio backup equipment in the event the center has to be evacuated, both police and fire have a backup terminal and also have the CAD running for local needs. He explained that while the parent program lives in the dispatch center, the Department's need is a smaller version of this.

He said they will have monitors which will enable the Department to look at the same screens as in the dispatch center so scenes can be controlled and managed from the firehouse. Chief Heidgerd said the Department would never be going to the dispatch center to do this. He said this gives the Department the connectivity and the ability to move forward with this larger project.

Councilor Fishbein said it was his understanding that all of this monitoring would take place in central dispatch instead of fire headquarters. Chief Heidgerd said while the software which handles dispatch, lives in the dispatch center, the Department has a need in the firehouse for a smaller portion of this.

Deputy Chief Czentnar explained this was basically for resource management. He said the radio system is the backup for the primary system at the Police Department but we wanted to get a resource management tool because when there are three or four calls at the same time, the Department is whiteboarding where all the apparatus is and it gets a bit difficult because we are using sticky notes. Councilor Fishbein said he was worried about redundancy with the Central Dispatch and is hearing there is no redundancy with the Central Dispatch.

Chairman Cervoni entertained public comments. There were no public comments. He then called for a Roll Call Vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE

**FISHBEIN-YES; LAFFIN-YES; LETOURNEAU-YES; MANSFIELD-YES; PARISI-YES;
RUSSO-YES; TESTA-YES; CHAIRMAN CERVONI-YES**

MOTION PASSES

ADDENDUM

9. Conduct a Public Hearing on October 27, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. to Consider and Act Upon Amendment to Chapter 203, Taxation, Articles III and X, Tax Deferral Programs for Seniors and Disabled Persons.

Chairman Cervoni asked Councilor Fishbein, Chairman of the Ordinance Committee, to provide an introduction. Councilor Fishbein said over the past few years, from time to time, there have been cleanup of ordinances suggested by Council members or asserted by department heads. He said this was a situation where the department head of the tax department had suggested some cleanup to the ordinance and noted five or six meetings of the Ordinance Committee took place cleaning up this ordinance with the Law Department. He said the Statute has to do with deferrals for senior citizens and disabled persons from real estate property taxes.

Chairman Cervoni opened up the Public Hearing at 7:06 p.m. There were no public comments thus Chairman Cervoni closed the Public Hearing at 7:06 p.m.

Chairman Cervoni entertained discussion and a motion from Council members at this time.

Motion to amend Chapter 203, Taxation, specifically Articles 3 and 10, Tax Deferral programs for Senior Citizens and disabled persons as presented in the packet.

**Motion made by: Fishbein
Seconded by: LeTourneau**

Roll Call Vote

**Fishbein-yes; Laffin-yes; LeTourneau-yes; Mansfield-yes; Parisi-yes;
Russo-yes; Testa-yes; Chairman Cervoni-yes.**

Amendment Ordinance passes.

7. Executive Session pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(A), Section 1-200(6)(E) and Section 1-210(b)(2) of the Connecticut General Statutes with respect to the employment, performance, evaluation, health and/or dismissal of a Town Council employee/ Councilor Craig Fishbein.

**Motion to move to Executive Session pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(A),
Section 1-200(6) and Section 1-210(b)(2) of the Connecticut General
Statutes with respect to the employment, performance, evaluation, health
and/or dismissal of a Town Council employee**

**Motion made by: Laffin
Seconded by: Parisi
Vote: 8 ayes**

Council went into Executive Session at 7:08 p.m.

Chairman Cervoni entertained a motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:31 p.m.

**Motion made by: Laffin
Seconded by: Parisi
Vote: 8 ayes**

8. Executive Session pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(D) of the Connecticut General Statutes with Respect to the purchase, sale and or leasing of property/Mayor

NO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Adjournment

Councilor Parisi made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 7:31 p.m. Councilor Fishbein seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Kleist
Acting Recording Secretary

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 10-29-15
AT 3:00 AND RECORDED BY
Dolan TOWN CLERK