

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

**SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

ROBERT F. PARISI COUNCIL CHAMBERS

TUESDAY

April 17, 2017

6:30 P.M.

FY 2017 – 2018 BUDGET WORKSHOP

MINUTES

The Special Meeting of the Wallingford Town Council on Monday April 17, 2017 was called to order at 6:33 P.M. There was a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were: Chairman Vincent Cervoni, Thomas Laffin, John LeTourneau, Joseph A. Marrone, Christopher K. Shortell, John J. Sullivan and Vincent F. Testa, Jr. (arrived at 6:48). Councilors Jason Zandri and Craig Fishbein were absent. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. and Comptroller, James Bowes were also present at the meeting

3. BUDGET WORKSHOP

POLICE DEPARTMENT

*In Attendance: William J. Wright, Chief of Police, Marc Mikulsky, Deputy Chief  
Beth Dighello, Executive Secretary*

Chief Wright indicated that there is a 2.1 increase in the budget and that there are no new positions in the budget. He then went on to explain that the capital improvement projects in the budget are a network storage device.

Councilor Shortell thanked Chief Wright for what he does and then asked, in an ideal world, how many officers would you like. Chief Wright responded that they have 71 officers and that he would love 80 to 85.

Councilor Shortell then stated that he liked Chief Wright's 5 year look back that he included in his presentation.

Councilor Laffin asked if there are any openings and Chief Wright responded that they will have three vacancies in the next two months. He then explained they need to interview to send them to the Academy which is in July and that he hopes to send two in July.

Councilor Laffin then asked what are your needs compared to wants and Chief Wright responded that he is going to add a second canine and that the boilers in the building will need to be replaced soon.

Councilor LeTourneau referred to Page 32 and some new accounts for cruisers and asked if it is replacing old ones or if this is for new ones. Chief Wright responded that they are replacing the cruisers.

Councilor Sullivan questioned the increase in the crossing guard line item and Chief Wright responded it is the accepted bid price for next year.

Councilor Sullivan asked if we are only going to purchase SUV's and Chief Wright responded yes and commented that they are phasing out cruisers.

Councilor Sullivan asked if there was any thought of purchasing body cameras and Chief Wright responded that it costs \$185,000 for year one and that the State will reimburse year one but they need replacing every five years so they decided not to get them.

Chairman Cervoni commented that he thinks the community policing is really a good thing and will create good will going forward and then he asked if it costs more. Chief Wright stated that it does not cost more but he thinks it is making them more efficient.

Chairman Cervoni asked if the canine program is working and Chief Wright responded that it is phenomenal and very successful and that they are seizing a lot more drugs.

Chairman Cervoni asked Chief if they are considering moving their headquarters and Chief stated that he likes their location and that they may need some expansion for female officers and locker rooms. He then commented that they have 13% female officers, one of the highest percentages in the state.

## **FIRE**

*In Attendance: Richard Heidgerd, Fire Chief and Stephen Alsup, Deputy Fire Chief*

Chief Heidgerd spoke about a decrease of 4.83% from last year's budget and noted with the ambulance moved out of the budget, it is a decrease of 7.3%. He then mentioned that Station 7 is nearing completion and the Fire Marshal's office is integrated into the Fire budget.

Chairman Cervoni asked if we have taken the ordinance as far as we could go and Stephen Alsup responded yes and then explained that over the past four years they haven't met the monetary requirement of the ordinance.

Mayor Dickinson explained the problem is that we do not expect to be reimbursed going forward and it's not keeping up with the cost. He then went on to state that it's a sobering look at the health care arena.

Councilor LeTourneau questioned the Capital Budget Request #8 and Chief Heidgerd responded that is the Fire Marshal's office.

Councilor Sullivan asked if they are getting a new ambulance and Chief Heidgerd answered yes and went on to explain it will be to replace the one from 2007. Councilor Sullivan then asked if they might use it for one of the volunteer stations and Chief responded yes and stated that they are going to use one at Station 7, the new fire station.

Councilor Sullivan asked if there is any way we can make money on the transport and Chief Heidgerd answered no and stated that he doesn't even know if we would break even.

Councilor Marrone inquired about ambulance services and also questioned if shifts and daytime services were added and Chief Heidgerd responded yes. He then confirmed with Councilor Marrone that we call outside services.

Councilor Marrone asked if there is a way to outsource the ambulance services and Chief Heidgerd answered that they don't find it to be cost effective. He went on to state that they use these folks as firefighters and paramedics so they find their staffing is reasonable.

Councilor Testa asked if we do transfers with our ambulance and Chief Heidgerd responded no, we only do emergency services. Councilor Testa stated he feels we need to keep that in mind that the outside companies do planned transfers for profit and we only do emergency calls. Councilor Testa asked the Chief why the budget is less than last year. Chief responded that the combining of the Enterprise fund into the Fire departments budget created a decrease in the budget.

## **CIVIL PREPAREDNESS**

*In Attendance: Richard Heidgerd, Fire Chief and Stephen Alsup, Deputy Fire Chief*

Councilor LeTourneau questioned why this is not incorporated into the Fire Department budget. Chief Heidgerd responded that the Mayor has appointed him the head of Civil Preparedness but in a true emergency, Chief has to be able to run the Fire Department. He then went on to say we have to have a person who is tasked to run the Civil Preparedness unit, and that is why we pay someone to do that. Mayor Dickinson stated that State Statute indicates that we have to have this and we receive a grant from the State for \$22,000 and \$13,000 of that is reflected in the payroll line item.

## **CAPITAL APPROPRIATIONS**

*In Attendance: James Bowes, Comptroller*

Councilor Sullivan inquired about the Civil Preparedness Generator and asked if we get any grant money from the State for that. The Mayor responded that we get a portion back for it.

Councilor LeTourneau stated that questions have arisen about money that has been appropriated and then not used in a fiscal year. Jim Bowes explained that it depends on what projects the money has been earmarked for and once we put it in the Capital Budget, it has to stay within that line item. The Mayor notes that we can plan another project under that same line item category to use the remaining funds.

Councilor Testa Inquired about Page 89 and asked if all these items are things that can be done this year but can also be done in the future? Jim Bowes answered yes. Councilor Testa asked how much money is left over from projects that have been completed and Mr. Bowes says he does not have that figure right now.

Councilor LeTourneau then inquired about page 84, Police Storage Sign Shop. Mayor Dickinson stated this is all to improve the storage area by SCOW and move it to the Police yard so that it will free up the space at SCOW. This will allow SCOW to expand.

MOTION TO ADJOURN  
MADE BY: LETOURNEAU  
SECONDED BY: LAFFIN  
ALL AYES

Meeting Adjourned at 7:40 PM

Submitted by: Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk

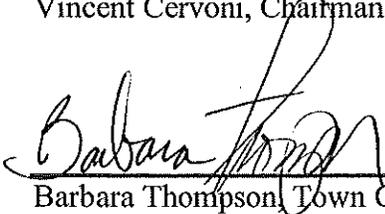
RECEIVED FOR RECORD 4-19-17  
AT 1:30 AND RECEIVED BY  
Barbara Thompson TOWN CLERK



Vincent Cervoni, Chairman

10/MAY 2017

Date



Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk

5-9-17

Date

*In accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act- Individuals in need of auxiliary aids for effective communication in programs and services of the Town of Wallingford are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance Coordinator at 203-294-2070 five days prior to meeting date.*