

SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 1997

5:30 P.M.

AGENDA

1. Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance
2. Authorize the Town Council Chairman to Present the Town Council Budget to the Mayor
3. Consider and Approve a Transfer of Funds in the Amount of \$1,950 for the Installation of Telephone Service at Fairfield Boulevard

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

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6:30 P.M

A Special meeting of the Wallingford Town Council was held on Tuesday, March 4, 1997 in the Robert Earley Auditorium of the Wallingford Town Hall and called to Order by Chairman Robert F. Parisi at 5:36 P.M. All Councilors answered present to the Roll called by Town Clerk Rosemary A. Rascati with the exception of Councilor Papale who arrived at 5:37 P.M. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. was present for Item #1 and left the meeting at approximately 5:50 P.M. Town Attorney Janis M. Small was also present. Comptroller Thomas A. Myers was absent from the meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given to the Flag.

Motion was made by Mr. Rys to Move Agenda Item #3 Up to the Next Order of Business, seconded by Mr. Centner.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

ITEM #3 Consider and Approve a Transfer of Funds in the Amount of \$1,950 for the Installation of Telephone Service at Fairfield Boulevard

Motion was made by Mr. Rys to Approve a Transfer of Funds in the Amount of \$1,391 from Pool Maintenance Acct. #4001-560-5110 and \$559 from PT Video Technician Acct. #1303-101-1000 for a Total of \$1,950 of Which \$1,391 is Transferred to Phone System Acct. #4001-999-9903 and \$559 is Transferred to Relocation Acct. #1303-999-9905, seconded by Mr. Centner.

There is \$6,786 set aside collectively in the Youth Service Bureau, Recreation and Government TV budgets to cover the cost of the phone installations at Fairfield Boulevard.

Mayor Dickinson explained that the Town bid the phone sets and installation for the recreation center and the low bidder and second lowest bidder could not make performance bonds. The low bid was \$5,550; the second lowest, \$6,400. New England Communications was the next in line with a bid of \$8,734. They also supplied the phone system at the Fire Department and are able to present the Town with a performance bond. The bid exceeds the amount budgeted for the service by \$1,950, hence the request for the transfer tonight. In order for the departments to move in on schedule and have a phone system up and running we need the money available to complete the contract and facilitate the installation.

Ms. Papale stated that a few months ago the Council held discussion on waiving the bid for the phone system at Fairfield Boulevard, was

that something different?

Mayor Dickinson responded, yes, that was for the Town to stay on the CENTRAX System with SNET and to transfer the system up to Fairfield Boulevard.

Mr. Zappala asked, how many people bid on the project?

Mayor Dickinson responded, ten responses were received on the bid.

Mr. Zappala stated, he had heard that over seventeen companies wanted to bid on the project but because of the way the specifications were written some companies were unable to bid. He had heard that the Town was requiring \$1 million motor vehicle insurance coverage on the vehicles of the firm that would be performing the service. Is this true?

Mayor Dickinson responded, I am not familiar with that information.

Mr. Zappala stated that he is in possession of information from one of the companies that was unable to bid due to this specification. The demand for insurance was too steep.

Mayor Dickinson stated, I am assuming that it is the same motor vehicle liability insurance requirements expected of all contractors working on our premises. The limits would have been specified by the Risk Management Office and incorporated into most, if not all, of the Town's bids. It is very difficult to make any exceptions to the bid specifications once they are sent out for they indicate what everyone must comply with.

Philip A. Wright, Sr., 160 Cedar Street asked, why are there no account numbers listed on the agenda for the transfer?

Mayor Dickinson stated, the information was not yet available as to where the transfer would occur at the time of the posting of the meeting. He asked the Town Council Secretary when the notice was posted?

Town Council Secretary, Kathryn Zandri explained that Joan Stave contacted the Town Council Office on Friday to pass along general information about the transaction that needed to take place. No account numbers were provided to her at that time, therefore she posted the meeting without them.

Mayor Dickinson explained, the decision had not yet been made as to where the funds should be coming from at that point in time.

Mr. Wright stated that he would like to see account numbers included on the agendas in the future.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

Mayor Dickinson left the meeting at this time.

ITEM #2 Authorize the Town Council Chairman to Present the Town Council Budget to the Mayor

Motion was made by Mr. Rys, seconded by Mr. Centner.

Chairman Parisi distributed copies of his proposed budget to the Council that he planned on submitting to the Mayor, upon approval by the Council. Without the Council's approval the budget will have to be revised, he stated. The budget shows a reduction in hours from thirty-five to nineteen (19) for the secretary position which would result in a salary figure of \$19,355. The budget also reflects a reduction in the Purchase - Professional Services Acct. Other than that the budget basically stayed the same, Mr. Parisi stated. The total budget would be \$69,405.

Mr. Doherty pointed out that there was also a reduction in Account #1400, Overtime by \$240 to \$0.00.

Ms. Papale asked, on what page of the budget would the reduction in pension and health benefits associated with the cut appear?

Mr. Parisi was not sure.

Town Council Secretary, Kathryn Zandri responded, the reduction would be reflected in the Personnel Department's budget.

Mr. Zappala stated, I have a problem with a nineteen hour secretary position. I personally feel that the secretary is very helpful to any Councilor and, in fact, has been very helpful to me not only as a newcomer in the position but in providing information which the Council needs during different times. I think it is vital to have a secretary full-time, that way when any Councilor needs information at a particular time the information is available to get to. With a part-time secretary there is no way of telling when that individual will be working which will result in a disadvantage to Councilors who need to acquire information when it is needed. I realize the Chairman is trying to monitor finances but I am sure that there are other ways to reduce expenses. The secretary seems to be the link between the Councilors and the public and I do strongly feel that the position should remain full-time. It is very helpful and I would hate to see the position cut to part-time.

Mr. Renda stated, I agree with Tom (Mr. Zappala). There are a lot of things that I have been involved with that I was not sure about. I called up the secretary and she was right there to give me all the information, all the help, she steered me in the right direction. I believe the job should remain a full-time job. I

am not going to support cutting the job, I will not support the budget and if we are going to make cuts then let's stop the wasteful spending in this town. I am sure we can save millions. That is all I have to say.

Mr. Parisi stated, we have to make clear that this is a position consideration, not an individual. I think that needs to be very clear right up front.

Ms. Papale commented, years ago we did have a part-time secretary that worked in the Council Office. I am sure the job was done but if I remember correctly there was work that had to go into the Mayor's Office; the Mayor has left so he cannot answer to that; but I remember Ruth Kenny doing work that came out of the Council's Office and I remember some work being sent to the Town Clerk's Office and that showed me then that a part-time secretary was not enough. I don't know if the same type of work is performed in the office but if we cut this to part-time and work has to go somewhere else it does not make sense to me to cut it if someone else is going to have to do the work. I don't know if that would happen or not. We would not know until the time came. When I was Chairperson of the Town Council we had a different Town Council than what is sitting here now. A lot of work went through the office at the time. At that time we had a majority of democrats and a republican Mayor and it seemed that the democrats were very busy trying to get information. Years from now or maybe next term it may happen again. These are the reasons that I am leery of this situation of cutting the hours. These are things that must be taken into consideration.

Mr. Parisi commented, this is a proposal, that is all this is. Where it goes, I could not tell you. It may not get past this table tonight. Let the majority speak. It may go past this (table) and that is the majority speaking. It is a proposal as I saw it.

Ms. Papale stated, I just want people to know what happened when there was a part-time secretary and to remember that as the Council changes every two years the work may change in the office. These are things that can happen.

At this time Kathryn Zandri, Town Council Secretary approached the Council with a formal statement.

Mrs. Zandri referred to Mr. Parisi's comment "this is a decision based on the position and not on the individual", and asked Mr. Parisi to think about the comment very carefully for this decision should not be based on the (needs of the present) Council as individuals but in relation to the (needs of the) legislative bodies to come as well. This Council should be careful not to be short-sighted in making a decision effecting this position on its

(the Council's) needs now. On January 11, 1990 a committee was formed to investigate the need to hire a full-time secretary for the Town Council due to the problems the Council was experiencing with regards to reliable part-time help. Three Councilors were appointed to that committee, Edward Bradley, Albert Killen, Robert Parisi. The committee reported its findings to the Council at the March 13, 1990 Town Council meeting and voted that evening to establish a wage group and step for the position. The entire Council voted in favor of hiring a full-time secretary and approved the wage group and step proposed for said position. Until tonight, no Councilor has ever disputed the need for a Town Council secretary publicly.

This position was created for the purpose of:

Providing continuity in the management of information in the office for the purpose preserving an historical file of all Town business as it pertains to the Council. This position remains constant while individuals change with the ongoing election process. Due to that process information and continuity can be lost as Councilors vacate positions while unfinished business remains behind. This position bridges the gap between Councils so that issues that have been initiated or tabled by a previous Council are not lost or forgotten unless a Council so wishes them to be. This position protects the flow of information through the office to Town departments, Councilors, public, etc. The Town could potentially find itself with a new Council, Town Clerk and a new part-time Council secretary. Who is going to know the proper requirements to follow? A possibility exists that you may have an individual seeking Council appointment to the Town Clerk's position who knows nothing of the workings of not only the Town Clerk's office but the requirements of the Town Council and its standing committees. This position was created to assist the Councilors in obtaining expedient replies to constituent inquiries and concerns. The Town Council secretary handles all requests made by her Councilors almost immediately by referring to information on file in the office without having to place calls to separate departments to obtain said information unless absolutely necessary. This relieves the Council of mundane and time-consuming tasks required of them at times as they serve in their positions such as typing correspondence, returning phone calls, performing research, scheduling meetings and conference rooms, obtaining information from other offices, etc., otherwise Councilors would have to contact individual departments with their questions and await a time that is convenient for that office to process their requests. Each department would have to prioritize that request according to their particular work load or project list. At their employer's time and expense Councilors would have to make and receive telephone calls to and from Town departments and obtain the same information that I now provide for them. This position also helps to protect the anonymity of those Councilors who wish to

obtain information without creating an atmosphere of animosity with department heads. This position was created to ensure that all meetings conducted of the Town Council and its standing committees meet all State Statute guidelines with regards to the Freedom of Information Act. This individual oversees the work of each standing committee and the Council to be sure that all notices are properly posted, recordings are made and catalogued for storage, motions and minutes are typed and filed in accordance with State laws, records are properly filed and stored until such time as they meet preservation requirements and are ready for destruction and takes responsibility for processing retention schedules to be forwarded to the State for permission to destroy historical Council records. This position took the burden off of the Mayor's Office to perform Council-related duties. Ruth Kenny, former Town Council Secretary and later Mayor's Aide carried a lot of the burden, herself. She was known to take Council work home on the bus with her to protect the continuity of the work. She worked in the position and knew how valuable that aspect of it was. When this position was created the Mayor's Office boasted a staff of three secretaries. Upon the retirement of Ruth the vacant position, to this date, has never been filled because this position took work out of the Mayor's Office. The Town Council and Mayor's Offices are two separate branches of government. Each office should retain control over its own duties, they should not be shared or relinquished. The Mayor's Office does not relinquish control over any of its work to the Council Office, rightfully so. If administrations change the power should remain consistently allocated to each individual office otherwise a struggle ensues to gain back duties that rightfully belong to each branch of government. One must imagine the worst case scenario. If both offices were occupied by opposing political parties, the workload of the office can change depending on the philosophies involved. Again, this Council should not be short-sighted in its actions to cut the position. If the philosophy of a legislative body and/or administration is to maintain an accurate, consistent flow of historical information in the office, maintain an open-door policy to the taxpayers of this community and to leave open for inspection any and all records on file pertaining to Town Council proceedings, then there should be total support to maintain this position at thirty-five hours. If the philosophy of an administration or the majority of a legislative body is to restrict or control the powers of the body, itself, by cutting off the flow of information to and from the Council and public, then the fastest and most effective way to do so is to eliminate or cut this position. By doing so an administration can instruct departments and/or personnel to be selective in the information it releases to Councilors or the legislative body as a whole. The availability of information to the public would also be greatly restricted by the fact that the office would be staffed fifty percent less of the time. It is a fact that there are several years of bound Town Council Minutes currently in the Town Clerk's vault which are absent of the required yearly index that is a valuable tool in quickly

locating action taken by a Council in a given year. This occurs in the 1960's and 1980's. Those indexes have not been done and are still waiting to be done. There are several Town Council Meetings that have no minutes on file, only motions due to interim, part-time staffing conditions that existed at the time in late 1989 early 1990. Those minutes are waiting to be typed. The 1991 through 1996 Town Council files await binding of the minutes and interdepartmental filing of all backup material. That has yet to be done. There are cases where a standing committee of the Council is in violation of F.O.I. guidelines for there are no minutes filed for meetings held. That condition exists because a Councilor has made the determination that it is not necessary for the Town Council secretary to perform the work that is required by the job description. What happens with the part-time secretary position if it has met its required nineteen hours for the work and special meetings are called? What incentive is there for an individual to drop everything and be available for special and emergency meetings? A worklog has been kept for only thirty days on this position. That is not a true reflection of the variety of duties that arise during different times of the year, budget being one. You have before you a memo from Stanley Seadale, Personnel Director, who in 1992 recommended an increase in labor grade to this position by two levels. He based his recommendation on the demanding work and time requirements of the position. No one disputed that recommendation. It is my opinion that no one will perform the duties of this position in a more efficient, professional, dedicated, thorough, expedient and comprehensive manner. If this position is cut to nineteen hours and special meetings similar to the four or five called in December of 1996 take place, what does the Council intend to do to cover the extra workload? One of the major problems experienced in the past with part-time individuals was the reliability factor. There was no incentive to sit night after night at budget workshops nor to be available at the Council's whim for special and emergency meetings. This is my argument for the position of Town Council Secretary. It is a very important position. I ask that you do the right thing for future Councilors and the constituents and residents of the Town of Wallingford. Thank you for your time.

Mr. Doherty stated, as the secretary indicated, an individual was hired by three Councilors back in 1990 and it is my understanding that it was done because a full-time person was needed because of problems with the part-time secretary or secretaries that we had at that particular time. We have had seven years of job experience with an individual in the position and I have never heard anyone beforehand say that the position should be cut in hours. Also, we may be facing some legal problems. There is an arbitration hearing set for April 7th according to the Personnel Director dealing with the secretary's hourly pay. There may also be labor actions filed because of some of the things that have been going on. There have

been clear incidences where efforts have been made to take work away from this office, phone calling and taping have been done that normally would be done by this particular office. It creates the perception that we are making some sort of reprisal against the worker in this office because she has joined the union or because of salary problems. We have two different branches of government in this town; there is no third branch; an executive and legislative branch. A legislative branch needs its own staff as long as we are part-time individuals up here we need someone who is here all the time to do research. Maybe at this time there is not much research going on but last year there was research going on with regards to an ice skating rink and at other times on various other issues. These records must be kept properly, indexed properly...you are running into F.O.I. problems on some of these particular dates. It is not fair that one party controls both branches of the government, that this particular branch has to "rubber stamp" everything that the executive branch wants. I don't care for the interference by the executive branch for how we collect our mail. That is our own business. More studies should be done on this position, not one month's log. You have to study the position for an entire year to look at it accurately before you make a decision on this, especially since we have gone six years with no one making any indication that we need to cut the position at all. I think this proposal tonight should be defeated.

Mr. Parisi stated, I will make one comment about the phone calls because I believe it was directed at me even though you did not use my name.

Mr. Doherty responded, I got a phone call from the minority leader as well so two individuals were involved. Those phone calls would normally come from the secretary.

Mr. Parisi explained, those calls were made at approximately 9:00 P.M. and they were made because I held off as long as I could to determine whether or not we could have a special meeting a week prior to this. Joan Ives made those calls for me to let the Councilors know we could not have the meeting. It was done nine o'clock at night and it was, to a degree, a matter of convenience and that was clearly explained. I don't even understand..trying to take away the work from anybody.

Mr. Doherty asked, what about the taping of the Finance Committee meeting? Why shouldn't the secretary be there to do the taping? Why should the Councilors have to be doing the taping?

Mr. Parisi answered, first of all I am not on trial here. Secondly, I don't mind answering the question. That was left up to the Chairman of the committee as to what he wanted. He asked me and I said, "you do what ever you want to do, if you want to tape it, what ever your choice is you can do that." I don't

dictate to committees as to how they have to operate. All I tell them is to do it legitimately. That is all I have done. I don't tell them that they have to operate one way or the other, maybe I should, I don't know, but I don't. I thought that was explained, maybe it wasn't explained. The phone call was the one that I want to pick up on because I think I know the instance and I thought that was explained, maybe it wasn't.

Dave Canto, 4 Meadows Edge Drive stated, usually I am all in favor of downsizing. Usually when I am thinking of downsizing usually its from five (people) to four, four to three or three to two. This situation is a little strange. I am trying to ask myself, why was this position in the first place moved from part-time to full-time. From what I can remember, although Bert Killen would be the best person to answer that question because he was the Chairman at the time, I understand it was because we could not get anyone satisfactory on a part-time basis. I guess we tried a number of temporaries (secretaries) and that did not work out.

Mr. Parisi responded, I don't think we could find a person. I was on the committee I remember.

Mr. Canto commented, I think there was at least an agreement back then that there was a workload necessary to increase the position to full-time. The next obvious question is, has there been a substantial reduction in workload in the position itself? I asked the Council Secretary this question before on the phone and she responded, in her opinion, there has not been. The question, objectively, has to be, has there been any kind of research done into what she is doing during the day and has the amount of work decreased or has the requirements decreased? Does anyone know?

Mr. Parisi answered, this Council is made up of nine people and it is obvious that there are differences of opinions.

Mr. Canto asked, no one has a consensus as far as what you want this individual to do or what kind of workload this person should have?

Mr. Parisi answered, there are opinions as to what should be done, yes. I don't say which key to press at which time.

Mr. Canto responded, if the secretary were sitting there half the day with nothing to do or something then it may be easy to say let's cut the position to part-time again but I don't see any evidence of that. I have not heard any information which leads me to believe that the workload has been reduced.

Mr. Parisi stated, we have the worklog which has been referred to and there are individual opinions, that is all, that is really what it is.

Mr. Canto stated, someone's workload is a pretty objective thing. Either you have the work or you don't. It is a little difficult to say, that in my opinion this person has the work and another individual says that the person doesn't have the work. If there is an objective job description or objective list of duties that the secretary is doing and she is either doing them or she is not doing them and if the list....if the Town Council Secretary has a certain list of duties and for re-engineering or re-organizing or what have you, supervision has determined that they can improve the efficiency of the office by reducing this list of duties from ten to five and now after doing that we have determined that she only needs to do five duties instead of ten and we can live with the part-time position instead of a full-time, that may be one thing but I don't see evidence of that.

Mr. Parisi answered, there can be opinions that perhaps reflect the thinking that maybe a lot of what is done does not have to be done.

Mr. Canto responded, that is for the Council to determine, you are the end-user, you would know more than anyone whether or not you need the secretary to do what she is doing for you or not or whether or not the Council is willing to do the work that the secretary is currently doing for the Council yourselves or off-load it to another department in Town or what have you. Usually, if you are going to downsize that is what you look at, the amount of duties, how many hours are required and if there is a legitimate reduction in work load. On another matter, I don't know whether the article was accurate or not, but I am going to tell you, just reading that thing in yesterday's paper is very disturbing if those things are true. If they are not true some of that stuff should not have been printed. It raises a lot of questions that should not be raised if they (statements) are not true or accurate. I would think very carefully....you are the end users of the secretary's services and you have to determine for yourself whether or not there is an objective reason to reduce the hours no matter who is occupying the position.

Mr. Parisi stated, it is the position and I don't want to hear any more references to "her". It is the position.

Mrs. Zandri stated, I need to state for the record that the accusation that I am opening sealed, inter-office Council mail that is going to Councilors homes is totally false.

Peter Gouveia, 39 Lincoln Drive Extension stated, as you know I am Kathy's (Mrs. Zandri's) friend and a friend of her husband, however I need to tell you that I am not here to speak on behalf of Kathy, I am here to speak on behalf of the Council and the position that Kathy occupies for the Council at this point. Any democratic government, the pillar of that government has to be based on a strong need for checks and balances and therefore our Charter

I believe provides that we have the Mayor as Mr. Doherty stated who is the executive half of government and therefore governs and puts into practice the policies of this government and we have the legislative branch of government which is you (Council), all of you. When I served on this Council as Chairman of the Ordinance Committee and as a Councilor there were many a time when I needed to get independent information. I feel it is extremely important for any Councilor to get independent information when any issue is being debated because if you don't and you only accept the information given to you by the administration and all of you have become of one mind then actually, to be quite frank with you, we don't need the nine of you or all of you become nothing more than puppets therefore as I was stating before, when I was on the Council there were many a time that I needed to get information. Any time any issue was discussed I felt I was always prepared for that issue. I never really cared whether or not people agreed with what I stated but I always was very careful to be sure that the people who were listening knew that I was prepared for those issues. Now most of the time I didn't have the time to research those issues. There were many a time I sacrificed my personal time and my family time but I made it very clear even before I ran for the Council that I would never sacrifice my employer's or client's time and there were many a time that I needed information and I called the Council secretary to gather the information for me. When ever we debated an ordinance, whether it was the leash ordinance or a rubbish removal ordinance or a litter ordinance, I wanted to know what other municipalities were doing. I wanted to know where the pitfalls were so we could avoid those pitfalls. I wanted to know what the State Statutes were on the matter and as you know each time you call the State you are put on hold for quite a long time. I could not have made those calls, I have to call the Council secretary to get those calls. I have to call the Council secretary to survey the other municipalities and to have sent to us information on a given ordinance. That takes time. I think it is because of that it is essential that you maintain this so-called separation of power so that the legislative branch, individually, can gather all the information dependably so that they can make an independent decision on any given issue. I think nineteen hours per week...I know that there were weeks when I probably used nineteen hours myself, I know that I had months that I did not use hours at all but I know that I had times when I, myself, used nineteen hours and you need to keep the full-time position.

Mr. Parisi thanked Mr. Gouveia for his comments and stated, the only statement I will make is that I strongly disagree that there are any "rubber stamps" up here. That is the only comment I will make.

Mr. Gouveia stated, it was not an insinuation, what I am saying is, the feeling is that, obviously, every time there is an issue if there is only one way information coming from upstairs down to here then you have no other way to verify that. I must quote one of my

least favorite presidents who said, "Trust but verify." That is what he said about the Russians and I always took that position with my administration, I will trust but I want to verify for myself. When ever I had to do some digging about electric rates or any information about electricity, I call Raymond Smith but I have to verify the information.

Mr. Parisi responded, I am not disagreeing with that I am just making one comment about the "rubber stamp". I don't believe that there are any "rubber stamps".

Mr. Gouveia stated, if you don't have the time to do the research then you have nothing else to rely on except the official information provided to you. This is the point that I am getting at. If you have nothing else to rely on, you are going to have to vote based on the information that is provided to you.

Mr. Parisi answered, right, and if you do your own research that is another situation entirely, an individual situation.

Mr. Gouveia responded, I am sure it is an individual situation. I am sure there were people that never did any research and I am sure there were people that did a lot more than I did but I think as someone stated before, it is not just this Council, it is all of the Councils, future and past. It is extremely important that they have a way to verify information that is handed to them or to gather new information so that they can make a rationale decision when it comes to voting on any issue.

Reginald Knight, 21 Audette Drive asked, you say you had a quick and dirty study of the secretary's job and that it could be reduced in hours, was a study done on any one else through the system? Was this across the spectrum or was it just that one position?

Mr. Parisi responded, I would ask you to re-qualify your question.

Reginald Knight asked, did you call in a professional group?

Mr. Parisi answered, no, we didn't.

Reginald Knight asked, is this the only position that has been thought about or talked about? Have they looked at other positions on the staff.

Mr. Parisi responded to Mr. Knight's second question, no, not to my knowledge.

Reginald Knight stated, all of a sudden we are looking at this one job whether it is being required to be full-time.

Mr. Parisi stated, I would not say, all of a sudden. I would say

that this job has been looked at.

Reginald Knight stated, after seven years I think it is all of a sudden.

Mr. Parisi stated, this Council does change.

Reginald Knight stated, you can say what you want about no "rubber stamping" but there seems to be.....

Mr. Parisi asked Mr. Knight to make his point.

Reginald Knight asked, if this person's job is cut down is the employee now classified as a part-time employee with no benefits?

Mr. Parisi responded, yes, I believe so.

Reginald Knight stated, so the secretary would now become a person with no benefits. What kind of work do you expect to get out of a person like that? A full-time employee is a person who has a vocation, someone who cares about the work. You know and I know that someone who works a part-time job does not have the feeling for their employer or anything else. I do see this, I see that after all these years, all of sudden, this person is being put out without a proper study. At one time before I retired I was in this business of looking at work and the quality of it and time involved. When ever necessary we called in someone like Price Waterhouse and they studied the jobs, overall. We did not come to one individual job, we studied the overall picture. I think that there should be a lot of thinking here. The secretary does not seem to have anyone here (Councilor) who is a brother-in-law or crony, or friend, etc. so she does not have any leverage but for goodness sake, we had this situation before where you threw out a perfectly good Town Clerk whose office was in terrific shape doing wonderful work as you agreed, to put in someone you favored. That is a historical fact that you do not have to argue with. Let's not do it again. Thank you.

Philip A. Wright, Sr., 160 Cedar Street stated, as a member of the public I find that when I need information it is always there and available. I think that I have never seen an office that was any more professionally-run and I have seen a few of them. The filing system is great. It came, I assume, through the efforts of the full-time employee; there may be another one hundred and one other employees that can do the same thing. It's great. It is a great resource for citizens in this town to be able to call, stop in and get your minutes any time you happen to be uptown, get the agenda information. I think you are cutting the public short by reducing the hours. Is there a plan as to how the office would run, Bob,

if you cut it down to nineteen hours?

Mr. Parisi responded, obviously, there would be a re-focus on exactly what is to be done.

Mr. Wright asked, would the office be open from noon to five o'clock?; from nine to one o'clock, what is the plan? How would you serve the rest...

Mr. Parisi answered, I don't know that there would....it is obvious that there would not be the same level of service. It is obvious that if it (the job) is nineteen hours the office would not be open every day. Because on the night of a Council meeting the time there would have to be balanced off with the hours for the week.

Mr. Wright stated, therefore anyone in the public that needs any information has to, regardless of their own particular job and alike, have to fit along with the schedule that you determine?

Mr. Parisi stated, either that or it depends on what is wanted. It may be available at the department level. If it is a Public Works Department question that (information) may be available at Public Works.

Mr. Wright stated, it would be much less convenient is what you are saying?

Mr. Parisi answered, you could say that probably, yes. I can't tell you exactly how it would work out.

Mr. Wright asked, then you really don't have a plan?

Mr. Parisi commented, there is a general idea because I did make a proposal. There is a general idea, yes, as to how it would work.

Mr. Wright asked, you don't have a finite plan?

Mr. Parisi answered, I have a plan, yes. To tell you that it will work exactly the way it should work, I can't do that. I also can't tell you specifically what the items are that would have to be focused on for that would not be solely my decision, it would be the decision of the Council. It is not just that I rule here at my own will, I don't. I have brought this budget to this Council tonight for their approval. If they don't approve it, that is the end of it. I mean, fine, I do what they say.

Mr. Wright stated, I guess if I were sitting there I would have a tough time looking at anything other than dollars. I don't know that anyone has gotten any dollar figures yet. We are talking hours. What do you think you are going to reduce the budget by?

Mr. Parisi responded, approximately \$18,000 or \$19,000 dollars. Not counting benefits.

Mr. Wright asked, do you feel that this is a justified reduction in cost to the Town and taxpayer?

Mr. Parisi stated, I feel that this is a judgment that I made in my mind as to workload and what I think or what I believe that we should focus on out of that office. It would obviously be a change from what the focuses are now. It is an opinion.

Mr. Wright stated, you must also look at the consequence that someone who is in need of a full-time job may not stay there if it is cut.

Mr. Parisi stated, that is a consequence, yes.

Mr. Wright stated, that is pretty realistic isn't it?

Mr. Parisi answered, I went through that consequence myself this summer, yes I do know what it is.

Mr. Wright stated, it is very likely that the person who currently is there will no longer be there.

Mr. Parisi answered, I don't know that. I am not going to say yes or no.

Mr. Wright stated, but it is very likely, isn't it?

Mr. Parisi responded, I am not going to say because I'm not going to limit...you are not going to tell me that the person is going, I wouldn't want to say they are or they are not.

Mr. Wright stated, it is a pretty reasonable assumption.

Mr. Parisi stated, that is your assumption to make, I am not going to make that assumption.

Mr. Wright stated, I think it is a fool hearty way to try and save the amount of money that you are proposing. I believe that the public and the Councilors will be much poorer served with a reduction. It will make it more difficult for anyone because of the fact that the hours will be reduced, the days of the week. We pay pretty good taxes in this town for some service and I think it is unfair to those of us who really have an interest in what is going on to curtail our availability of the information. But I don't vote, you (the Council) will be voting and we will vote, eventually.

Mr. Parisi stated, I think that you also expect us to exercise our

judgment either professional or personal.

Mr. Wright stated, I come up here time and again and I just hope that you would be as assiduous and studious about all expenditures as you seem to be on this one.

Frank Wasilewski, 57 N. Orchard Street stated, I agree with all the things that have been said about retaining this position as full-time but I would like to hear from the Councilpeople that don't want it a full-time position. While we are here I think they should speak up why they don't want it a full-time position.

Mr. Parisi responded, this is the first phase of the budget process. This is the submission of the budget to the Mayor. This is not the final decision on the budget. The budget will go to the Mayor and it will come back to the Council.

Mr. Wasilewski asked, do you have a certain date by which your budget has to be at the Mayor's Office?

Mr. Parisi answered, not really, we had a date that we were given but we were also given an extension.

Mr. Wasilewski stated, I asked the same question of the P.U.C. and they said their budget had to be in last Friday.

Mr. Parisi stated, the large departments have to be in, we are so small they said we could turn ours in within a reasonable time past the date.

Mr. Wasilewski asked, supposing your proposal gets to the Mayor and he approves it. There is no way that will change for the next year.

Mr. Parisi stated, oh, yes it can.

Mr. Wasilewski stated, I doubt it very much, not the way the Council is formed. You will not be able to change it for as long as the Mayor has been in office we have not been able to override a veto yet.

In an effort to determine the true cost savings to the Town Mrs. Zandri asked Terrence Sullivan, Personnel Director, if this position is cut back to nineteen hours am I given a layoff slip or a slip of some sort and will there be unemployment benefits paid?

Mr. Sullivan responded, I thought we were going to be talking tonight or hearing tonight about the position, not so much the individual. If you want to ask those questions privately I would be glad to respond. A reduction in hours is generally not a layoff. I would ask you to look at your labor contract to see what

language is there regarding that matter.

Again, so that the Council would have a true idea as to how much would actually be saved by cutting the position, Mrs. Zandri asked, if I were to "bump" someone and someone lost their job, would there be a cost to the Town for unemployment benefits if they had no position to go to?

Mr. Sullivan responded, I am not going to discuss bumping rights or issues of collective bargaining agreement publicly.....

Mrs. Zandri stated, I am just trying to figure out if it is going to cost the Town.

Mr. Sullivan continued....if an employee was laid off and there was no work they would be eligible for unemployment benefits.

Mr. Farrell asked the Town Attorney, you have heard what has been proposed this evening, do you have any qualms about potential legal liability for the Town?

Attorney Janis Small responded, speaking generally, an employer has the right to make a decision as to the number of hours which a position should have. That decision should be based upon an objective determination based upon the facts that, in this case, a full-time position is unnecessary for the work to be performed. Certainly, if there is any consideration it should be based upon an objective view of the facts that lead you to conclude that a full-time position is unnecessary. Additionally, someone had mentioned the idea that work would somehow go to another person. If that is a possibility, I do believe that creates some legal problems. One, that certainly would be evidence that the objective determination that the full-time was not necessary was not entirely accurate and two, the person who would then be assigned the work would have an argument that, in fact, they would need to have some further negotiation with respect to the position. Terry (Terrence Sullivan) shook his head in agreement with that. I don't guarantee that any legal action does not come down the pike.

Mr. Farrell asked, what is an objective determination?

Atty. Small answered, that is for you to decide. Viewing the facts, viewing the position as it has been, what your expectations are, taking into consideration of work performed, you make a factual determination that you don't view the position as requiring the thirty-five hours that are presently being served. I would hope that would be based on facts that are existing before you. You make that determination.

Mr. Farrell asked, would the objectivity be strengthened by a third

party assisting us (Council) in that?

Atty. Small asked, having someone else view it? If that is your desire then, I don't have a problem with that.

Mr. Farrell stated, for instance there is what is known as a time and motion expert. It is someone who comes in and evaluates whether or not a position should be eliminated or reduced.

Atty. Small stated, if you need outside assistance to make that objective determination, the determination is yours. It certainly should be based upon actual facts. If you don't feel that you can objectively evaluate the needs of that position then certainly outside assistance is the proper thing to do. It has to be your determination that there are facts sufficient to support a reduction in hours.

Steve Knight, Councilor, stated, obviously this is a very difficult decision because potentially an individual that we have worked with for a long time is effected. Having said that, however, I would like to mention the fact that some of the people that are arguing for retention of this as a full-time position are the same people that will be coming in front of this body meeting after meeting after meeting saying, the taxpayers have had enough. You cannot have it both ways. The fact is that most of the budget of the Town of Wallingford is made up of salaries and it is our responsibility to make sure that the money that we spent for our operation here in this building is justified. We review every line of the budget every year but on a day to day basis the responsibility for putting that budget together and seeing that every dime is spent properly is the executive branch's except for two or three people. One of which happens to be the secretary for this Council. It is our direct responsibility to see that we expend only that amount of money needed to perform the duties of that office. The issue was raised earlier that we are taking work away from someone. Are we going to get into the area where I have to think at home at seven o'clock at night whether or not I can make a phone call to somebody because it may be the purview of the Town Council Secretary? Have we gotten to that point? Is the tail going to be wagging that dog? What we are doing here tonight and what we should do every time we sit up here is to determine whether every dollar is being spent to its maximum effectiveness. If we don't feel that it is then it is our responsibility to make changes to see that that happens and that is what we are doing here. That is why I am voting in support of this budget.

Mrs. Zandri stated, then I challenge those members of the Council that feel the same, committed to the philosophy that you need to control costs associated with salaries, that you think about the fact that it was not long ago that a motion was made to take the raises or increases of certain employees and give them in the form

of a bonus instead of adding them to the base pay and letting them compound and compound and compound. That motion did not pass with a past Council on which some of you sat and were opposed to. Look very carefully because the amount of money that this Council would save on an action like that for salary costs would far outweigh the \$16,000 in salary cost you are trying to save in cutting this position.

Philip Wright, Sr., 160 Cedar Street stated, I know this is budget time and I know that it is possible to cut budgets, everyone ought to do it. I am not as convinced as Councilor Knight seems to be that you, as Councilors, always look at those things line by line and item by item but, in any case, if you do not reduce the hours in this budget and if you find through a real study that it is possible to reduce the hours, there is nothing to say that you cannot reduce the hours of the position one month, two months, three months from now. I just don't feel that it is necessary to take a precipitous action at this time just because the budget is there. If you do not change it I suspect that the Mayor will approve it as he always seems to; not only yours but most of the others; so I don't believe that it is necessary to take an action at this point in time. If economy is truly what you are after you can do that anytime you have proven that it is possible.

Reginald Knight, 21 Audette Drive agreed with Mr. Wright. This does not have to go in with the budget, it can go in at a separate time later on after a decent worthwhile study. If we are talking about saving time and money, a little while back we spent many, many hours of the Council's time, the Police Department's time, the public's time with a lot of emotion, a lot of dollars on the issue of roller skating. A couple of weeks ago there were two youngsters who had skated right up past the Town. Their pictures and names were in the paper, did any one of you after considering the amount of time and money spent on that issue do anything to follow that up? Any one of you? Shouldn't we have them flogged or something considering the Town had spent so much money on it? Maybe we could do with a study through City Hall, but let's study all the positions that are here and see who is doing the real work.

Mr. Farrell stated, I have sat here trying to keep an open mind on this issue and I think that many of the points that have been brought up for keeping the position full-time are good. I also do feel that there has been a lot of merit in the arguments that have been put forward that the position is a convenience to us as opposed to a necessity for the Town and if we want other departments to cut back we have to set an example. The problem, of course, is that it is extremely difficult to be objective. The position is the only one in our department. The person who holds the position is a real live human being who we like and has done a good job for us. It is hard for me to lead the parade to cut the

position under those circumstances. What I would suggest is somewhat of a compromise; that we allow the Chairman to submit the budget as proposed but in the time between now and when we hold our budget hearings that we do employ what is known as a time and motion expert, someone who would look at whether or not the position is meritoriously full-time or whether it should be part-time. I spoke with the CT. Business and Industry Association this morning and they told me that this type of expert has routinely been employed both by private companies and government entities to evaluate whether or not a position should be reduced or eliminated. They promised to call me back tomorrow and put me in touch with the experts that they have used. I also believe that given the fact that litigation may eventually be brought over our actions that a report of a third party is helpful. As we know from previous experience if you are going to take action in labor matters, the more you can document and objectively justify what you are doing, the better off you are legally. I don't think that we have done that as of yet. I don't think that we have sat down and looked at the position in the kind of detail that we should. Unless we do that my only feeling is that we are opening up ourselves and the Town to legal action. If we take the route I am suggesting and legal action does ensue I think that we would be in a much stronger legal position for having spent the time and energy to bring a third party in to look objectively at this issue. It is penny wise and pound foolish not to spend some money trying to protect the Town in this situation. For that reason I am offering the following amendment to the motion that is on the floor:

Mr. Farrell moved that the Chairman be allowed to submit the budget as proposed and that a time and motion expert be employed to determine if the position is full or part-time and report back to this Council before it votes upon the entire budget of the Town, seconded by Mr. Centner for discussion.

Mr. Parisi stated, I will make two observations, one; I think that, Mr. Farrell, you assume that people have not paid attention to what we are trying to do here which I don't believe is really fair. I think some people have paid attention. Secondly, the time and motion study is not as easy as you may think it is. This Council will have to make a decision as to what they determine the focus of the job should be, both in a full-time capacity and a reduced capacity. Then and only then can a time and motion person go to work. They cannot go to work before that is established.

Mr. Farrell asked, is there currently a job description for the position?

Mr. Parisi answered, there is always a job description but job descriptions are written very unspecifically.

Mr. Farrell asked, wouldn't the job description be the basis for the study?

Mr. Parisi answered, no, it would not be. Having worked with this type of situation several times and I think others on the Council might have too. I think they will agree that the job description is not specific. I am not trying to discourage the amendment or to support it, I just want to explain that it is not a case of two or three days work and it is done, there is more that would have to be done. As long as the Council wants to do it, that is fine but they have to understand that if they decide to do it, they have to do it. That is the difference.

Mr. Farrell stated, I just think that the money that would be spent on it would be money well spent. I am concerned and even more concerned after Atty. Small's answers of where the Town stands on this, legally.

Mr. Parisi stated, maybe I missed something in her answer. What did she say that put us at such great risk?

Mr. Farrell responded, I am concerned about the objective determination end of it. I do think that it is terribly difficult for us to be objective under the circumstances.

Mr. Parisi stated, I would say though, my only disagreement with your statement is that you may feel that you have difficulty being objective but I would not say "we" have a difficulty being objective because those that are not supporting the budget I am sure feel they are right in their statements to support the position of a full-time secretary and there may be some of those who are supporting the reduction in hours and feel that they have been objective and are proper in their support.

Mr. Farrell stated, if I had the Town as my client sitting in my office I would tell them, it is fine what you think but in terms of bolstering your legal position and protecting yourself that getting the opinion on record of the third party is always a very good idea.

Mr. Parisi stated, were are not asking for free...I am not asking for free legal advice either.

Mr. Farrell stated, I am not giving free legal advice. I am just offering an analogy of how I look at it.

Mr. Parisi answered, that is fine, I don't have a problem with that. I am just trying to make it clear that you should represent solely your feelings and maybe you are not aware that you are kind of representing that we are all are unsure of what we are

doing.

Mr. Farrell stated, I am just representing my own feeling that I don't feel expensed.

Mr. Zappala stated, I know what Mr. Farrell is trying to do, but regardless of what this company would come up with as a solution to our situation, I still feel it would be dreadful that a Councilor would not be able to get a question answered when he really needs to have that information. Regardless of what we do, just the thought of not having someone there when you want them, I think it is a bad position. I, myself, would find, and I am sure that most of the Council would find, that when they need the service, regardless of who is occupying the position, it is very important for us to know that somebody is there to ask our questions of and to get an answer from. Regardless of what conclusion the company you may hire arrives at, I still think the position should be full-time for the need of the Councilors.

Mr. Parisi stated, you have to decide whether or not to support the amendment for that is the first vote.

Ms. Papale stated, Mr. Farrell mentioned that this person would come in an review the job by the job description to which you disagreed, Mr. Chairman. What concerns me, and I mentioned it earlier, you, as Council Chairman now and what goes through that office, I can certainly understand your judgment why you feel it is time to make this a nineteen hour job. When I was Chairman if anybody told me that this office could be run efficiently with a part-time person I would say, no way. Things change so I think that the job description would have to be very important if the time and motion person were to review the position. It is a very difficult decision to make because any time the Council changes every two years, what is going to be going on and into the office will change. Councilor Knight mentioned that responsibilities have to be justified; thinking back and thinking what can happen in the future, I feel that I would not be doing my responsibility if I voted for a nineteen hour job here. I think I gave a very good reason why I feel that way. We are trying to make an exception here starting with our office, I don't think this is where we should start making cuts. We are laypeople. I don't feel that I should get on the phone at nine o'clock at night to ask people for this or for that when I have someone in the office to do that for me. When I come home from work; I just got beeped now from work at 7:00 P.M. and the only people that have my beeper number is my workforce and I resent that. I feel that we have a full-time person in the position and if you have to call her once a year or once a month or once a week, the service is there. I don't think that we should start making these cuts in our budget in our office. I changed my mind, I change my mind from day to day.

Mr. Parisi stated, I don't have a problem with that but I am just....

Ms. Papale stated, you cannot go by what is going into the office today.

Mr. Doherty asked Mr. Farrell, if you hire this time and motion person to do the study, basically we have to vote on the budget by the first week in May. You have half of March and all of April left, is that going to be an accurate enough time and motion study on the position here or is six months a more accurate way to look at the position? Can we look at one and one-half months or two months and be accurate?

Mr. Farrell stated, I am no expert on it. The idea came to me last night casting about for the right thing to do. My first thought was that we should appoint a committee of the Council to look at it a little more in-depth. The more I thought about it that would be even more difficult but again, we get back to the objectivity issue. We all have different views on what the Council secretary should be doing. I cannot offer an answer to that, I wish I could. I attempted to find that out today but to no success.

Councilor Knight stated, with regards to the hiring of a time and motion person to study the possibility that perhaps the Council should be served with a part-time secretary, what we are attempting to do is determine whether the workload is sufficient and if it is done on an efficient basis. Now, to extend that to its "Alice in Wonderland" logical municipal government conclusion can you picture this, think about the possibility that every time a manager wants to make a change in the hours of one of his employees here in the town government; wants to reduce a position or shift responsibilities around; that we now have to adjudicate this with the union by hiring a time and motion person. Take it one step further, we have an arbitration system in Hartford where we have an arbitrator picked by the Town, one picked by the union and a third arbitrator that is supposedly neutral. Is this the next step? We won't have one time and motion man, we will have a union time and motion man; we will have a management time and motion man and we will have a middle time and motion man. I am sorry, I know this sounds crazy but in the world of municipal government mixed up with union negotiations, this is not far-fetched. I am afraid that I think this is absurd.

Mrs. Zandri stated, with regards to the time and motion study; I can't perceive how that can be accomplished over a short amount of time and the reason for that is, how many of you are aware of the time constraints with regards to State Statute and tonight's minutes? When we hold a regular Town Council meeting the minutes have to be filed within seven working days. If we have a special meeting those minutes have to be filed in three working days. You

can technically have, and have had many times, a Town Council Meeting scheduled on a Tuesday and a special meeting scheduled two days later. While that time clock is running for those first seven days on the first set of minutes, now three days of those seven are consumed by the special meeting requirements. In December we had one regular and four emergency/special meetings. It would be difficult for a time and motion study person...how can one predict how many special and emergency meetings are going to arise that will dictate the work flow?

Mr. Parisi responded, they would make a judgment based on history that I would not guarantee would always be 100% accurate.

Mrs. Zandri added, the same applies to Council budget workshops. One Council may dedicate a lot of time, another may not. In looking at history, God knows how many workshops we have had and how long they have gone as opposed to now.

Mr. Parisi stated, it would be difficult but it could be done every day in some of the craziest instances.

Mrs. Zandri stated, I think it is a great suggestion because then it would be objective but, it would have to involve a long time period.

Mr. Parisi stated, that I am not sure, how long it would take.

Dave Canto, 4 Meadows Edge Drive stated, the time and motion study is usually done when you want to bring someone into a department and it is usually more than one position. It is usually a whole group or department. You would still have to have an objective list of duties or some specific list of duties for the person to examine so that he can time the duties or evaluate them. I don't think you have that and secondly, it is a little late to do that. I don't think there is enough time between now and the end of the budget process to do an objective time study on this. If you are going to do it and it has not been done by now, it is a little bit late to do so now. If anyone had any doubt as to objective criteria for trying to change the position and I was sitting where you (Council) are and I was not totally sure there was objective criteria for reducing the position, I would vote no against the proposal. Regarding Councilor Knight's comments that you are saving money, yes, you are saving only \$19,000 here but I was looking at the audit report and the biggest increase in employment was not in the general government or Town Council Office, it was in the Board of Education and the number of teachers. That is the area which reflects the greatest amount of dollars and growth in salaries and benefits and that is the area you need to concentrate on if you want to get real savings, in my opinion.

Reginald Knight, 21 Audette Drive stated, for the last twenty-five years before I retired I was one of these people who spoke about time and motion studies, that was my job. We did not just study one individual, we moved into departments and would see who was doing what and where. You can time a lot of things, not just by standing there with a clock but there are set times or motions, such as typing a letter of so many words, etc., etc., and filing; walking back and forth to files; this would be good data to take and cut anyone's time. If you were in a work shop in a factory and you cut someone's time the union man would be there like a shot looking for some backup. We were always told, no matter what the problem was, you have data, you have backup and show what you are talking about and you prove it. A secretary is not just someone who types, there are a lot of other things involved that comprise the job; integrity, going the extra mile, researching, doing many things that people do not even realize are going on. I think it would be very difficult over a short period of time for anyone to check out just this one job for one week she may have some leeway and one week she may be overrun. It would take a considerable period of time. It is not like a mechanical job where you would put something in the machine and after a time period you take it off the machine. A secretary is a more time-consuming job. Without good backup material to cut that job I don't think you have a leg to stand on. I am saying that as a time and motion study person. I know that most of you have no idea of the service, the time and motion person can tell you how long it would take to paint the wall behind you at the proper time.

VOTE ON THE AMENDMENT: Farrell, aye; all others, no. Motion failed.

The motion was read back as follows: Authorize the Town Council Chairman to Present the Town Council Budget to the Mayor.

Mr. Parisi asked that the language "as presented" be added to the motion.

VOTE: Centner, Knight, Parisi and Rys, aye; Doherty, Farrell, Papale, Renda and Zappala, no; motion failed.

Mr. Parisi stated that he will make the assumption that the Council wants the budget submitted as it was in the past year with the addition of the dollars that were deleted.

Mr. Zappala made a motion to have the Council Chairman Submit the Town Council Budget in the same amount as was submitted last year with the addition of dollars that were deleted, seconded by Mr. Doherty.

Frank Wasilewski, 57 N. Orchard Street asked, if you submit the budget it does not mean that the Mayor can't cut it right?

Mr. Parisi responded, it does not mean that he can. Just like all the assumptions made about tonight that this would pass were not true. I hope that we have all learned something tonight that there are not "rubber stamps" up here. I am very proud and very pleased with this Council because I think that everyone voted their feelings. And I will make this statement now, in no way was this ever personal and I told Mrs. Zandri on the telephone that I would go down to the altar at Holy Trinity Church with her. It is not personal. I want to clear that up. There are no feelings in this other than a professional judgment and I think that I am a professional manager. I feel better making that statement.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

Motion was made by Ms. Papale to Adjourn the Meeting, seconded by Mr. Doherty.

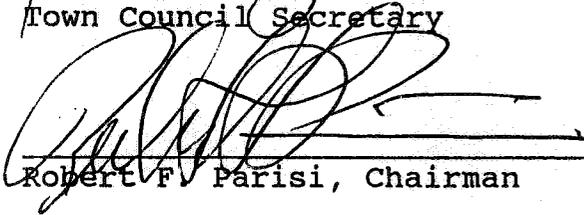
VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:20 P.M.

Meeting recorded and transcribed by:

Kathryn F. Zandri
Kathryn F. Zandri
Town Council Secretary

Approved by:


Robert F. Parisi, Chairman

March 25, 1997
Date

Rosemary A. Rascati
Rosemary A. Rascati, Town Clerk

March 25, 1997
Date