

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Budget Workshop

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2009

6:30 P.M.

The following minutes are a record of the Special Meeting of the Wallingford Town Council held in the Robert Earley Auditorium of the Wallingford Town Hall on Tuesday, April 21, 2009. The Meeting was Called to Order at 6:35 P.M. Responding present to the Roll Call given by Town Council Secretary Sandra Weekes were Councilors Mike Brodinsky, Nick Economopoulos, Jerry Farrell, Jr., John LeTourneau, Robert F. Parisi, Rosemary Rascati and Vincent F. Testa, Jr. Councilor Vincenzo M. DiNatale arrived at 7:08 P.M. Councilor Michael Spiteri was absent from the meeting. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr., and Comptroller James Bowes were also present.

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence, the Pledge of Allegiance and the Roll Call.

2. Chairman's Report - Chairman Brodinsky explained how the Budget Workshop and the Public Hearing of April 29 would be conducted.

3. **BUDGET WORKSHOP**

Board of Ethics

Excused

Public Works

Henry McCully, Director, Public Works
Edward Niland, Superintendent of Public Works
Raylene Hendricks, Executive Secretary

Mr. Farrell began by asking about *Line 1400-Overtime*-the actual was for 2008, the actual for January 2009 and the Mayoral approval and said that there is an additional \$20,000 beyond the actual. Mr. McCully said that the budget for overtime is based traditionally on a 5-year average. Mr. McCully stated that in 2003-0 it was \$254,000, and 2004-05 it was \$327,000

In answer to questions from the Council, Mr. McCully responded regarding the following areas:

Line 5700-Continuing Education & Training that they always have \$2,000 budgeted to take advantage of quality safety seminars when they are offered. The tree warden has to keep up with continuing education credits. He added the seminars are different each year.

Line 7990-Meetings, Seminars and Dues that amounts are budgeted in Lines 5700 & 7990 that are not always completely used.

Line 9014-Purchased Professional Services – Custodial Services, noting an increase of \$9,000 from the 2008-09 fiscal year. Mr. McCully said that covers all the buildings that Public Works

is responsible for, not including the Electric Division; that all contracts are bid for outside contractors for three to five years.

Line 9023-Purchased Services-Tree Contracts that this is a contract bid for removal and planting of trees. *Line 9027-Boom Truck Testing* as hydraulic testing for two trucks by a licensed, outside company. Public Works is not licensed.

Line 6120- Equipment Rental as rental by Mr. Niland for one-time use of equipment, as example, an excavator or a special roller

Line 9020-Purchased Professional Services-Hazardous Waste Wallingford's contribution to the regional collection of hazardous waster

Line 9026- Purchased Professional Services-Flagman is at a zero budget as Public Works is now providing newly trained and certified Public Works flagmen.

Line 9111-Capital-Class 8 Plow truck w/equipment & Accessories two trucks at \$175,000 each, provided the funding remains in the budget. 4 trucks are 21 years old, and 9 trucks at 16 years old. He said that a truck replacement program would replace one truck a year rather than having a fleet that ages together. There are 26 of this type of truck in the Public Works fleet. Mr. Niland said that they provide continual maintenance and that at some point maintenance cannot be justified because of cost.

Line 8270-Vehicle & Property Damage Deduction- this account is not always used, and the current balance in the account is approximately \$3,000.

Line 4100 Materials & Supplies-cost is still running at the current price and that there will be a marginal increase according to the supplier; Public Works usually has a bid that goes out in August to have deliveries in October; storms cost approximately \$65,000 and that in this year's budget the cost is based on a five-year average; budget covers about 8 storms in an average year; 84 tons per storm for a total of 3154 tons; the budget for salt is \$265,000 in the total budget line of \$353,250; the reason that the Public Works Department does not use the state bid as that it is just salt, and Wallingford is using 'pre-treated salt' that does not need to be sprayed.

Line 9011 Stormwater- According to state -law testing is performed in six, random storm drains, especially in industrial areas twice a year, and testing results are reported to the State; placement of decals on storm drains, if drain water connects to Long Island Sound; and report to State on the use of salt instead of sand. Except for one mechanic who moved to the Electric Division, Public Works is at full-staff.

*9022 Purchased Professional Services-Waste and Compost-*John Street composting run by a private contractor, senior citizen landfill coupon project coupons,

*9021 Purchased Professional Services- Recycling Contract-*a different contractor runs the recycling area

2009-10 projects- some of which are Little League field refurbishments, fencing, soccer field nets to separate from the Little League fields, Rolling Mills, Timberlane, Saw Mill Drive, spot paving, some curbs and corner seeding repair

Engineering

John Thompson, Town Engineer

In answer to questions from the Council, Mr. Thompson responded to the following areas of the Engineering Department budget-

Line 9040- –Purchased Services-Engineering Consultant-For wetlands-soil scientist or be under \$1,000, use of a licensed land surveyor for legal matters outside the expertise of the Engineering Department.

Line 9901 Survey Van/Vehicle-Department has a 1993 Suburban, 130,000 miles, that needs replacing according to the assessment of the Public Works garage foremen, and that a hybrid van does not meet needs of the department.

Line 2210 Utilities-Traffic Signals-Funds used for the cost of electricity for traffic signals, 22 out of 30 signals are metered and the others are estimated.

Line 0024-Sidewalk Install/Repairs-Engineering follows a 13 ‘zone’ program for the town for sidewalk work, work is bid, easy to monitor, \$8 square foot

Line 9030-Purchased Professional Services CBYD (Call Before You Dig) for excavation before service

Line 0021 Sidewalk Snow Removal-Reimburse Program -adoption of policy to respond to complaints instead of engineering and police monitoring, reporting directly to the Police Department and that this seems to be working, fewer complaints this year

Line 0001 Curbing Repairs-Engineering provides only concrete curbing and the black bituminous repair is done by the Public Works Department

Sidewalks – Risk of falling and tripping addressed but not sidewalks that pose no risk, due to use of salt, no notice of sidewalk cracking or flaking

Capital & Non-Recurring/Capital and Non-Recurring Fund/ Capital Projects/Six-Year Capital

Henry McCully, Director, Public Works

John Thompson, Town Engineer

The status report list (April 9, 2009) prepared by Comptroller James Bowes was reviewed with some of the projects given detailed attention. The status report included old projects, new projects and continuations of projects and the budgets of the projects and those that qualify as reimbursement projects. They discussed phases of the Hall Avenue project, Williams Road, Williams Bridge, West Dayton Hill Bridge, South Cherry Street sidewalks the parking lot near Brothers Restaurant (the downtown loop), Reskin Drive status and its cost, North Branford Road to Rt. 68, and then on to Whirlwind Hill Road and the Whirlwind Hill Road Projects Phases, Grieb Road, Cook Hill Road, Wallace Avenue and the discussion with Mr. Thompson of the concerns regarding the mapping of the location of utilities (gas, water, communications, sanitary) before temporary work is commenced to improve part of the Wooding Caplan property. Mr. Thompson said that he would report to the Council, following the report of the Police Station architect. Disturbing concerns were raised by Councilors Testa and LeTourneau in that they do not support the idea of the Police Station on this site, considering that nothing has been settled for this property. Mr. Testa expressed that the installation of utilities at this point to be premature and a waste of money. Mayor Dickinson said if we going to do

something with the property that it makes sense to put down utilities and that he doesn't see the Police Station as the most intensive user. Discussion continued that focused on paving the parking lot at a minimal cost for the near future to be about \$16,000 for road, parking lot, curbing, sidewalks and seeding. Mr. LeTourneau said that after several improvement suggestions to improve Wallace Row to the Wooding Caplan property were turned down, he is still looking at \$75,000 in the budget and that the \$16,000 estimate is far away from \$75,000. He said that he wants to see the lot where 390 Center Street building used to stand cleaned up and the barriers gone. He added that his biggest fear is that the Council will be talking about a barren lot again next year. He said spruce it up with some of the money in the 390 Center Street area.

MOTION
RECESS

Mr. LeTourneau made a motion for a recess. The motion was seconded by Mr. Parisi. All Councilors present (8) voted Aye. Mr. Spiteri was absent from the meeting. The recess commenced at 8:11 P.M.

Chairman Brodinsky reconvened the workshop at 8:20 P.M.

MOTION

Mr. LeTourneau made a motion to remove \$75,000 line item be taken out of from the 2009-10 budget which is designated for Wallace Avenue construction. Mr. Farrell seconded.

Mr. LeTourneau stated his reasons for the motion. He said that he is looking at temporary paving, that there are questions about the Police Station, that it isn't known where the utilities are going to go- there are too many variables and the funds can be used elsewhere. He thinks that this money can be returned when some of the questions have been answered. Mr. McCully said that there is about \$4,000 for minimal upgrades. No problems were expressed from Mr. Thompson and Mr. McCully. The Mayor said that the money will stay in Capital and Non-Recurring. Chairman Brodinsky said that he doesn't want to see the area go unaddressed for the next fiscal year. Mayor Dickinson said that he doesn't want to see a skim coat because it doesn't last past one year, and that it is not advisable. He said that landscaping is easily dealt with.

Chairman Brodinsky asked what event could trigger the Council to discuss this issue again. Mr. LeTourneau said that it would be the Police Station location and what the architect's report reveals. It was said if it was recommended by the architect that the Police Station be located on the Wooding Caplan property, then that would need to be addressed, especially in light of the fact that not all Councilors agree that this would be the best plan. There are too many variables. The money could be used for perhaps sidewalks within the Cap and Non budget. Mr. Testa said that if you take the money out, then nothing will happen. He wants to see parking provided. Mr. LeTourneau said clean-up the interior with some crushed stone for temporary parking, and he doesn't think that this would be in the \$75,000, which was earmarked for widening Wallace, putting in the sidewalk. He said that he thinks there are design drawings on this project. Mr. Thompson said that there have been several designs that Chairman Brodinsky has seen that show parking on one side, then one on the other side, and one for angle parking. Mr. Thompson addressed that the \$75,000 is only for the front 150 feet of road. He said that no funds were contemplated for internal improvements. Mayor Dickinson said that this is Capital program and shouldn't be for temporary repairs but for some permanence to use of the money. He said the money for temporary repairs would be for landscaping that Mr. McCully indicated could be accomplished in his budget. He said that Capital and Non-Recurring should be for capital projects that have a pretty good life expectancy, 10 to 20 years, to them. Mayor

Dickinson said that Mr. McCully indicated to him that if there is \$75,000 that isn't for this project then he could use it in one of the other projects.

Mr. Farrell said that he was still looking for the answer as to whether there will be grass. Mr. McCully said that grass can be done under his existing budget. Mr. DiNatale asked if there is an urgency of safety issues with Wallace Avenue as it now exists. Mr. Thompson acknowledged safety issues for vehicles that come out of Wallace Avenue against the wall of the liquor store and that you cannot see pedestrians walking on the Center Street sidewalk. He also added that it is not an urgent issue. Mr. DiNatale said that while waiting some immediate action should be taken to remove the safety issue before someone gets hurt.

Chairman Brodinsky addressed the conversation regarding the \$75,000 recommended to the Cap & Non-Recurring stating that as he understands it, the first 150 feet or so of Wallace Avenue would be constructed so that it would be ready for whatever may occur in the back area. He asked what the cost would be of installing utilities underneath of the \$75,000. He turned to Mr. LeTourneau and said that you are against this part of the cap and on-recurring because you are worried that it will be spent in utility infrastructure that may not be needed or which may lead to an unstoppable momentum for the police station. Chairman Brodinsky asked Mr. LeTourneau if this is the rationale. Chairman Brodinsky is worried that it is possible that nothing will be done and that it could be for years and years. He said that he is not satisfied with removing the \$75,000 as it has a negative impact on downtown and that it is a revitalization issue.

Ms. Rascati asked if the funds are taken from this project, what happens if the Council decides to go forward with the project, and the funds are not there because they have been reassigned to another project. The Mayor reminded the Council the Cap and Non-Recurring budget is adopted through an ordinance and that amendments would need to be addressed if the funds still exist. Mr. Parisi asked if in consideration with the architect if there is any kind of timeline as to where the town is going with this project. Mayor Dickinson said that within the next several months the expectation would be some idea of what the future holds and the ability to improve that area and to not create a problem that would conflict with a possible use on the property. The conversation turned to leaving the funds undesignated. The Mayor said that it could probably be represented as unallocated at this point, which would allow it to be allocated given recommendations from administration and Council action at a future time.

Chairman Brodinsky asked for a five-minute recess.

Mr. Parisi asked if he was comfortable with the timeline estimate of about one year. Mayor Dickinson said that it is based upon assumptions. He hopes that the town would have something from the architect by August, and then the ability to arrive at a consensus from the Council as to what direction we are going. He thinks that is possible within one year's time.

MOTION RECESS

Mr. LeTourneau moved for a recess. Mr. Parisi seconded. All Councilors present (8) voted Aye. The recess commenced at 8:45 P.M. and Chairman Brodinsky reconvened at 8:55 P.M.

Chairman Brodinsky summarized the issue and stated that he will vote no on the issue because he thinks that between Public Works, Engineering and the mayor that a solution can be found to move forward on the Wooding Caplan problem and do what is reasonable and necessary without undo waste. He wants to dress up the place and to make the downtown more attractive. He said that to remove this from the budget would be a blow to that goal. He said that he thinks

that everyone on the Council is interested in having something happen with the Wooding Caplan property.

a yes vote would be to remove \$75,000 from the Wallace Avenue project and a no vote would allow the funds to remain in the project.

ROLL CALL VOTE

DiNatale – ABSTAINED; Economopoulos – ABSENT; Farrell – Yes; LeTourneau – Yes; Parisi – No; Rascati – No; Spiteri – ABSENT; Testa – No; Brodinsky – No
Yes – 2; No – 4; Abstain – 1; Absent- 2

The motion failed.

Following the vote, Mr. Parisi addressed the Mayor saying that he hoped that every effort would be made in the next year to have some kind of movement with this project based on what Mr. McCully and Mr. Thompson stated here. Mayor Dickinson said that he stands by what he said earlier. Town Attorney Small said that if funds are leftover from a cap & non-recurring project they must stay in the cap and non-recurring account.

Public Utilities- Water Division, Sewer Division

George Adair Director, Public Utilities
Roger Dann, General Manager, Water & Sewer Divisions
William Phelan, Business Manager, Water & Sewer Divisions
Robert Beaumont, Chairman, Public Utilities Commission

Discussion included staff counts, size of workforce in relation to the service provided, vacancies, health benefit and pension with regard to vacant staff positions, budget covers full staff, liens and interest rates, utility rates and increases, new hires, spillway at MacKenzie Reservoir, imbalance of wage freeze and hiring, replacement cycle of department computers and software and telephone system, the budget obligation and requirements of the Uniform of System Accounts, a state standard, in regard to account names and the actual expenditures that occur under them.

Special funds related to any of the above – not taken up

Capital Appropriations Reserve – not taken up

Costs, Consequences & Issues: Re: “No Funding for General Wage Increases”

MOTION

Mr. LeTourneau said on behalf of himself, Councilor Farrell and Councilor Parisi, made a motion to have Terry Sullivan, through the Personnel Department, bring forth to all town employees the option of furlough days in lieu of pay freezes.

Mr. Parisi seconded.

Mr. LeTourneau stated that in relation to pay freezes with possible employee layoff, the Town of Wallingford is not unlike a large corporation. He said that he highly values is the town’s work force. He thinks that the most fair and equitable treatment of these employees would be the option furlough days. He said that there are many unions in town and within those unions some of the contracts are in arbitration, some of the contracts have not been negotiated as of yet. He said it is very, very complicated. Over the past few special meetings on the budget, the Council has discussed freezing on the management because it falls out of sync with the rank

and file. Furloughs would help to simplify a confusing issue. He said that this would be equal treatment from the Mayor to the lowest paid town employee and encompasses those employees on the government side as well as those on the Board of Education side. He said that it is another option that others have used including Hamden and the [State of Connecticut](#). He said that a lot of thought and research went into this option suggestion. He said this is the most fair and equitable for the employees, and they don't know how many days. He said that they have run some estimates on a worksheet that each Councilor has. (*Appendix J*) It could be 3, 4 or 5 days depending on the number that the town is looking to plug, which is anywhere from \$1.8 million to \$2.1 million. He said that is the goal they are trying to achieve is to fill the gap. It achieves that same goal as pay freezes and is more equitable to the employees and the town. He addressed how furloughs could work. He said that furlough days could be taken over holidays when the town is closed. For the Board of Education, furlough days could be taken on spring vacation, etc.

Mr. Parisi said that they worked on this together and that his motivation was in his family. He said that his wife gave three days back to the State of Connecticut. He said their research made this look workable, and that this is the job of the department heads, the administration and the superintendent, right down the line, those people who have to deal with this to make it work. This is another option, another thought, a suggestion. Other towns are incorporating this idea, and it can satisfy the financial needs of the town. It is worthy of consideration.

Mr. Farrell commended Mr. LeTourneau as he was the starting point in developing this option. He said that as a state employee, he has already taken furlough and there are more days to come. He said that this is a reasonable alternative.

Mr. Letourneau invited other Councilors to join with them in this motion and to make it a truly bipartisan effort.

Mr. Testa likes the idea and is in favor of anything that will enable us to get the type of cost savings that the town is trying to achieve and to avoid any type of layoffs. He said that his only comment is that it is only an recommendation but a good one. He hopes that this would be uniform. Mr. LeTourneau said that all employees would agree to this to make it fair. Mr. Parisi said that their research and the numbers that they derived would require the participation of everyone.

Mayor Dickinson said that it is inappropriate for him to discuss since contracts are in negotiation.

ROLL CALL VOTE

DiNatale – ABSENT; Economopoulos – ABSENT; Farrell – Yes; LeTourneau – Yes; Parisi – Yes; Rascati – ABSTAIN; Spiteri – ABSENT; Testa – Yes; Brodinsky – Yes
Yes – 5; No – 0; Abstain – 1; Absent- 3

The motion passed.

MOTION

Mr. LeTourneau made a motion, seconded by Mr. Testa, to adjourn. All Councilors present (8) voted Aye. Mr. Spiteri was absent.

The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra R. Weekes
Town Council Secretary
Meeting recorded by Sandra Weekes

Chairman, Mike Brodinsky

Date

Town Clerk, Barbara Kapi

Date