

**TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING
FY 2018-2019 BUDGET WORKSHOP
Town Council Chambers
April 9, 2018
RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES**

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, April 9, 2018 was called to order at 6:11 P.M. There was a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were: Chairman Vincent Cervoni (left at 7:30), Craig Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, John LeTourneau (arrived at 6:25), Gina Morgenstein, Christopher K. Shortell, Vincent F. Testa (arrived at 7:16) and Jason Zandri. Councilor Joseph A. Marrone, III was absent. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr., Town Attorney Gerald Farrell, Sr. and Comptroller James Bowes were also present at the meeting.

1. Moment of Silence
2. Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call
3. PUBLIC HEARING:

Chairman Cervoni reviewed the procedure for the evening.

Mayor Dickinson made the following remarks regarding this year's budget:

He stated that personal income rose 1.5% in Connecticut and remarked that's the lowest in all of the northeast. He mentioned that we are promised certain grants from the State but we cannot rely on that money.

Our Grand List decreased by six tenths of a percent this year, 6.2 million of reserves is being used to balance this year's budget. We are delaying the purchase of a fire truck. We are increasing our Public Works budget for salt by \$82,000 because the State is decreasing our grant share by \$82,000.

It is important to maintain our credit reserve. We are increasing our bonding debt services by \$800,000. We are hiring two police officers this upcoming budget. He went on to state that there is a 2.8% increase in taxes. 22% of the student population is getting free or reduced lunch at school and that says something about the financial situation of the residents.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

*In Attendance: Dr. Salvatore Menzo,
Roxane McKay, Chairman, Board of Education*

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked how we are looking at moving towards a study for one high school. Dr. Menzo replied t they are doing an RFP to explore that and his goal is to get it out by early May.

Mrs. McKay stated that the study is also for the middle schools, not just for the high schools.

Rocco Mattarozzo, 431 North Main Street, inquired about resource officers. Dr. Menzo explained that they ask each year and they would have to be funded through the Police Department. He stated that it is still on the table for discussion.

Mr. Mattarozzo asked if it is looking positive.

Dr. Menzo stated at this point, we need to adjust some numbers and went on to state that this is not just a Board of Education Topic.

Mrs. McKay stated it is high on our priority list. She was glad to see the mental health added.

Dr. Menzo stated community support has been great and that some have suggested doing some fundraising to help.

Molly Whitehouse, 30 West Dayton Hill Road, advocates for social workers in the school. Dr. Menzo stated we are putting them in place.

Sarah Vining, 399 North Main Street, asked since the budget was reduced, where would the money come from for resource officers? Dr. Menzo replied when we broached this three years ago, he knew this would need to be a collaboration. He stated the Police Chief would pay for the officers, not the Board of Education.

Mayor Dickinson stated that SRO is a difficult concept. The police officers cannot solely be in the schools because they may need to be called out to an emergency at any time of the day. He indicated if you need someone there all the time, then you should hire a security guard. Dr. Menzo disagrees and stated they want to build a relationship with the police officer.

Jen Chapman, 15 Lincoln Avenue, stated that mental health workers and social workers are needed in elementary school through high school.

Erin Corso, stated she has respect for Mayor Dickinson but she disagrees with him on the resource officers. She thinks it can be useful.

Mr. Gross inquired about medical insurance waivers and remarked that amount is getting lower. He asked Dr. Menzo for an explanation.

Dr. Menzo explained that it's now a little over \$500,000 a year, it basically amounts to employees who opt out of taking the health insurance and receive a stipend instead.

April, South Main Street, asked if the SRO is exactly what we want or is an armed guard just as good. Dr. Menzo stated we have more data to bring back to the Board on this. April then asked if the consideration would be an SRO or nothing and Dr. Menzo answered yes.

CAP & NON RECURRING

Mr. Ciardullo believes it should be a sur tax and not a cumulative expense/tax.

Mr. Bowes stated Mr. Ciardullo is correct that it is on the expense side but he explained it is also on the revenue side so it's a wash. He is not sure if it is statute or charter that says we must account for it.

ELECTRIC DIVISION

In Attendance: *Richard Hendershot, Director, Public Utilities*
Antonio Bucceri, General Manager, Electric Division
Thomas Sullivan, Office Manager, Electric Division

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked if Wallingford is looking to do anything solar or anything Green. Mr. Hendershot replied that Connecticut is not required to do anything like that and they have not analyzed anything like this.

Bob Gross commented green in the future is the way to go and asked don't you buy your futures on natural gas. Mr. Hendershot answered no.

Mr. Gross then asked how CMEEC affects our rates. Mr. Hendershot stated that the costs have washed through our rates already.

Alida Cella, 231 North Whittlesey Extension, stated she is in the solar business and she does think that it would be a benefit to Wallingford to put it on some of their properties. She would be happy to leave her information and do a no-cost estimate for the town. Mr. Hendershot thanked her and said he'll take her information.

FIRE

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

Bob Gross asked how do you figure out how much staff you need on call and on each shift. Chief Heidgerd responded we analyze our call volume and staff accordingly.

Mr. Gross asked if they keep a log of calls. Chief Heidgerd responded that they do but they do not statistically track where they go on a daily basis.

Paul Ciardullo, 2 Bayberry Drive, asked for an idea of a mix of calls, medical and fire. Chief Heidgerd answered there are a lot of mixed calls where a fire truck goes but so does an ambulance. We have been doing EMS since the 70's and the volunteer service has dropped over the years.

PARKS & RECREATION

*In Attendance: John Gawlack, Director, Parks & Recreation
Michelle Bjorkman, Superintendent of Recreation*

Mrs. Cella, 241 North Whittlesey Ext., stated the pool is still funded but it does not address the future of the pool.

Mr. Gawlack stated the maintenance comes out of the Public Works budget. He mentioned they are putting out a survey with their next program to see what the public's thoughts are.

PUBLIC WORKS

*In Attendance: Henry McCully, Director, Public Works
Steve Palermo, Foreman
Kathy John, Executive Secretary, Public Works*

Mrs. Cella asked if Public Works is funded for repairs for the pool and chemicals. Mr. McCully answered yes and stated as long as it is not major repairs.

Larry Morgenstein, South Main Street, asked what would happen if we needed major repairs. Mr. McCully replied that we would have to evaluate the pool.

Mr. Palermo stated when we go to open the pool, we will start to see if there are issues and that will be mid-May.

SCOW

In Attendance: Maria Harlow, Executive Director

Mr. Gross asked what the DACA program is. Mrs. Harlow explained that it grants legal status for certain illegals. Mr. Gross then stated we hear from our President that it is going away and that must make you unhappy. Mrs. Harlow replied very unhappy. Mr. Gross thinks we should talk to our representatives and try to get things done.

FINANCE

In Attendance: James Bowes, Comptroller

Mr. Gross inquired about the Pilot Program

PENSION

Mr. Gross inquired about pensions.

Mr. Morgenstein, Mrs. Tatta, 71 North Farms Road, and Mr. Gross all discuss the impact of what companies we invest in and the social issues related to them (guns, opioids, etc.).

The Council adjourned the meeting at 8:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Moss
Council Staff
Meeting digitally recorded

Vincent Cervoni, Chairman

Date

Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk

Date