

**Town Council
Council Chambers
Windsor Town Hall
November 21, 2016
Regular Council Meeting**

APPROVED MINUTES

1) ROLL CALL

Mayor Trinks called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Present were Mayor Donald Trinks, Councilor Randy McKenney, Councilor Alan Simon, Councilor Jill Jenkins, Deputy Mayor Jody Terranova, Councilor Donald Jepsen, Councilor Kenneth Wilkos, Councilor James Govoni, and Councilor Bernard Petkis.

2) PRAYER – Deputy Mayor Terranova asked for a moment of silence to reflect on that for which we are grateful.

3) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Deputy Mayor Terranova led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4) PROCLAMATIONS/AWARDS – None.

5) PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

John Dunn of 15 Strawberry Hill asked if there is anyone tonight representing the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC). He questioned who from Windsor approved the MDC's decision to seek a \$650,000 contribution from Windsor to an MDC reserve fund in consideration of Hartford potentially not being able to pay its sewer service charge assessed by the MDC. Mr. Dunn spoke against Windsor contributing to the MDC reserve fund.

Michele Vannelli of 1152 Poquonock Avenue spoke against Windsor contributing to the MDC reserve fund. She spoke in favor of Hartford going bankrupt. She spoke in opposition to Niagara water using MDC water.

Ann Mazur of 47 Mayflower Road spoke out against Windsor making a reserve fund payment to the MDC in consideration of a potential Hartford default on its ad-valorem sewer payment. She asked several questions about MDC and the City of Hartford.

Bradshaw Smith of 23 Ludlow Road said the bonded projects listed in item 12a must be audited and that audited surpluses must be used to pay off the bonds. He spoke of the state-mandated spending cap on municipalities in Fiscal Year 2018.

Jeff Doolittle of 82 Robin Road spoke against the MDC's proposed budget increase. He went on to request an explanation of the MDC's proposed budget.

6) REPORT OF APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

a) Public Building Commission (PBC): PBC member Gary Johnson provided highlights of the animal shelter relocation project, public safety complex design study, Clover Street

School roof partial roof replacement design, Clover Street School Heating and Ventilation Project, Transfer Station office and garage building, Town Hall lighting upgrade project, LP Wilson restroom and emergency shower project, Windsor High School door and fire alarm project, and Oliver Ellsworth School HVAC replacement design.

Councilor Simon asked about variances of the projected animal shelter construction costs. Mr. Johnson said the project might be able to come in under the previously stated estimated cost.

Councilor Jenkins asked if the smoke detector replacements are included in the allotted project budget for the high school door and fire alarm replacement project. Mr. Johnson answered yes.

Mayor Trinks asked if Councilors can see the latest designs of the animal shelter. Town Manager Souza answered yes.

Councilor Wilkos asked if the initially proposed animal shelter generator size has been scaled down. Town Manager Souza said he would look into any reduction in power. Mr. Johnson said he believes it has been reduced in size and power generation.

7) TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Successful Light Bulb Swap

Eversource reports that the light bulb swap held at the Caring Connection on Saturday, November 12th resulted in 3,195 LED bulbs provided to 639 Windsor households. In addition to refreshments, posters highlighting the excellent service provided at the Caring Connection were on display and staff distributed marketing materials and answered questions about the program. Many residents said they were impressed with the facility and its offerings.

Winter Parking Rules Began November 15

A reminder for residents that from November 15th to April 15th of each year, there is no parking on Windsor streets between the hours of 1:00 AM and 6:00 AM. Also, there is no parking on any street during a snow or ice storm that has been in progress for one hour or more. Residents are asked to not leave their vehicle on the street in such a position that it impedes snowplowing operations or the free flow of traffic. When the snow arrives this year, remember to keep outside exits, walks and stairs free of snow and ice. Don't forget there is a town ordinance that requires all property owners to clear snow from the sidewalk (and fire hydrants if there is one on your property) within 12 hours after a storm.

Social Services Offers New Assistance to Veterans

In late December, the Windsor Social Services office will become a "Vet Center Access Point" to provide counseling for Veterans. This new service is in partnership with The Hartford Veterans Center. The office will be open every Friday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, by appointment only. Appointments are scheduled by the Veterans Center. They will help Veterans and their families and provide counseling on a wide range of topics. There

will only be about five of these “community access point” offices in the state. The counseling is provided by VA trained & licensed professionals. We have already been able to assist a WWII veteran gain access to services as a result of this partnership. For more information call 860-285-1839.

Bridge Builder Award Ceremony

The Bridge Builder Award ceremony, sponsored by the Human Relations Commission, will be held Wednesday, November 30th at 6:00 PM in the town hall council chambers. Twenty-six individuals/businesses have been nominated for awards that include a Chairperson’s Award (selected by the chairperson), a Legacy Award, Youth Service Award, Public Service Award, Arts and Culture Award, Volunteer Award and Cultural Diversity Award. RSVP by calling 860-285-1984. A \$10.00 donation is requested.

Northwest Park Manager Appointed

I am pleased to announce that Ms. Marilyn Smith has accepted the position of Northwest Park Manager and will begin her employment on Monday Dec. 5th. In this position, Ms. Smith will oversee park operations, land management planning and education programs. Furthermore, Marilyn will develop and facilitate a variety of partnerships for the continued success of the park. Marilyn comes to Windsor with experience in environmental education, land management development, nature center and park operations, and financial responsibility. Ms. Smith’s prior experience includes working for the Cincinnati Park Board as an Interpretive Naturalist, the National Audubon Society in Greenwich, Connecticut where she provided oversight of operations at a 522-acre environmental education facility, and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden as Director of Children’s Education. We received 56 applications from 7 states.

Accountant

I am also pleased to announce that Ms. Jennifer Mighty has accepted the position of Accountant with the town’s Finance Department. Jennifer has a range of finance and accounting experience in the private sector over a period of 13 years. She held a variety of positions at UTC – Hamilton Sundstrand including the positions of Financial Planning and Analysis Specialist and Accounting Specialist. Prior to that, she was a Senior Accounting Analyst at Cigna for several years. She has a degree in Accounting from Eastern Connecticut State University as well as an MS in Accounting from the University of Hartford-Barney School of Business. Jennifer will be joining our Finance team the week of December 5th. Her responsibilities will include, but not be limited to, general accounting duties, general ledger reconciliations and reporting, assisting with budget preparation, preparing financial statements and schedules for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). We received 40 applications from 4 states.

Councilor Simon asked how the Town accounts for a Northwest Park Manager that lives at the house on the Northwest Park. Town Manager Souza said the new Northwest Park Manager hire will not live on-site and that a different staff member may rent the house at market rates.

8) COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor McKenney provided details of a recent program he attended called “Love Your Muslim Neighbor – A Sacred Conversation” that First Church put on over the course of three weeks. He said that he thinks the program was well worth the effort.

Councilor Petkis wished all residents a Happy Thanksgiving. He reminded residents to lock their car doors and homes and to not leave items in their cars.

Councilor Simon spoke of instances of bigotry he has heard about occurring after the presidential election. He said that such behavior would not be tolerated in Windsor. He encouraged prominent members of the Windsor to speak out against any such bigotry that might occur in Windsor in the future.

Councilor Govoni expressed his support for volunteer firefighters in Windsor. He reminded people to change their smoke alarms.

Councilor Jenkins echoed Councilor Simon’s comments. She said that threatening comments aimed at others will not be tolerated in Windsor. Councilor Jenkins said the vast majority of people in Windsor are wonderful people. She encouraged people to speak out when they see something that is wrong.

Councilor Wilkos extended his congratulations to Windsor volunteer firefighters. He thanked the public for speaking about the MDC. Councilor Wilkos said Town Manager Souza has kept the Town Council very well informed of the MDC’s budget situation. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Deputy Mayor Terranova encouraged interested people to reach out to the Windsor Chamber and encourage contributing to Project Santa.

Councilor Jepsen wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and encouraged them to hug a firefighter.

Mayor Trinks expressed his appreciation for volunteer firefighters, police officers and EMTs.

9) REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Town Improvements Committee – None

Health & Safety Committee – None

Joint Town Council/Board of Education Committee – None

Personnel Committee – Deputy Mayor Terranova said the Personnel Committee met last week to discuss potential nominations.

Special Projects Committee – None

Finance Committee – Deputy Mayor Terranova said the Finance Committee met November 14th to review General Fund financials for the first quarter of FY17, as well as financials for the Caring Connection and Discovery Center through the first quarter of FY17. Deputy Mayor Terranova summarized the financial performance of the two enterprises through the first quarter. She said Finance also reviewed debt projections based on future CIP spending as well as proposals received from consultants concerning the review of the Public Works Department.

Councilor Simon asked Deputy Mayor Terranova what her thoughts are on whether or not it is too late to have a conversation about the orderly dissolution of the Caring Connection during the budget. Deputy Mayor Terranova said she thinks the discussion should take place once the Caring Connection's second quarter results are available for review and as the Council starts to look at its budget assumptions for next fiscal year – around February.

10) ORDINANCES – None

11) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Approve a bond ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$305,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$305,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION.”

Councilor Jepsen MOVED and Deputy Mayor Terranova seconded that the reading into the minutes of the text of the ordinance entitled “AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$305,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$305,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION” is hereby waived, the full text of the ordinance having been distributed to each member of the council and copies made available to those persons attending this meeting; and the full text of the ordinance be recorded with the minutes of this meeting.”

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Councilor Jepsen MOVED and Deputy Mayor Terranova seconded to approve a bond ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$305,000 FOR COSTS IN CONNECTION WITH STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$305,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION.”

Town Manager Souza provided the projected borrowing terms.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

12) NEW BUSINESS

- a) Close out capital projects

Councilor Jepsen MOVED and Deputy Mayor Terranova seconded that the projects listed on "Attachment A" either be fully or partially closed out, and that the amount indicated for each account be transferred to the Capital Projects Fund Assigned Fund Balance.

Town Manager Souza provided a description of the request to close out the various projects. He said that the total amount requested for transfer is \$177,974.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- b) Accept an easement at 240 Prospect Hill Road

Item tabled.

- c) Authorize Town Manager to sign Prospect Hill Road Phase II right-of-way project authorization letter with Connecticut DOT

Item tabled.

- d) Discussion and direction regarding MDC 2017 Proposed Budget

Town Manager Souza provided background information about the water and sewer side of the MDC's budget. He also discussed the proposed ad-valorem budget increase that would impact the Town of Windsor. Town Manager Souza also provided details of the MDC's proposed creation of a reserve contingency fund that would be utilized in the event of a future ad-valorem sewer payment default by the City of Hartford and how Windsor might fund its contribution towards the reserve account.

MDC's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) John Zinzerella, Legal Counsel Bart Halloran, and MDC Commissioner Tim Curtis answered questions from the Town Council.

Councilor Jenkins asked what happens if Windsor says no to the creation of the reserve account. Attorney Halloran explained the financial implications of the MDC failing to realize its plan of converting \$113 million of bond anticipation notes (bands) into bonds by December 1st.

Mayor Trinks asked for more information about bands. CFO Zinzerella said bands are bond anticipation notes that are a short-term debt. He went on to explain that Hartford contributes about 16% of all annual ad-valorem revenues paid to the MDC by member towns. CFO Zinzerella discussed the rating agency's downgrade of Hartford's credit. He said bond holders want to know how the MDC will be able to fund its sewer operations.

Councilor Simon asked for further clarification about the use of the band funds. CFO Zinzerella provided clarification.

Councilor Simon asked if the MDC's proposal to create a reserve account is a far less costly alternative than the cost resulting from the MDC not being able to accomplish its long-standing plan to roll over \$113 million of short-term notes into long-term bonds. Representatives of the MDC answered yes.

Councilor Simon asked for confirmation as to whether the Town of Windsor is not being asked to disperse money into a reserve account, but instead to essentially guarantee that the money is available if needed. Town Manager Souza answered yes, and clarified that if the MDC needed to access reserves then the MDC would access those reserves in consideration of its FY2017 operating budget.

Councilor Jenkins asked what plans are in place to bring down future costs since there is a high possibility that Hartford will go bankrupt.

Attorney Halloran said there is no ability in the middle of the fiscal year to do a supplemental budget because a community does not pay its ad-valorem share. He said the MDC cannot borrow for operating expenses. Attorney Halloran said if the proposal for a reserve account is not established, then the MDC will not be able to convert the bonds to bonds. Attorney Halloran said the MDC would first try to collect against Hartford should it not pay, and after that, the MDC would access the reserve fund.

Mayor Trinks said failure of MDC member communities to put money in a reserve account now will result in higher bond rates which member communities will pay for in the future.

CFO Zinzerella provided details of how the bonded monies would be used.

Mayor Trinks asked what can be done to prevent this problem going forward into future fiscal years. Attorney Halloran said there is an option to go to a sewer user charge. Mayor Trinks said something has to change because Hartford's financial hole is irreparable.

Mayor Trinks asked if Windsor's contribution to the reserve account set-up in consideration of a possible Hartford default on its ad-valorem contribution would be a loan, or lien able or interest-bearing. Attorney Halloran spoke of the possibility that the MDC could be a general creditor if Hartford goes bankrupt.

Councilor Simon said some people have verbalized the MDC's establishment of a reserve account as a favor or bailout to Hartford, which is not accurate because Windsor could be hurt financially if the proposed reserve account is not created. He said the creation of the reserve account is in Windsor's interest because it minimizes the possible financial harm to the people of this Town.

Councilor Jepsen said Windsor will be on the hook this year, but that legislative fixes need to be pursued. He suggested doing away with the MDC Board and having representatives directly elected and proportioned on the basis of the ad-valorem charges. Councilor Jepsen suggested charging Hartford 18% interest for failure to make its ad-valorem payment on time. He also suggested that the MDC bill residents directly for sewer costs and by utilizing a storm water authority. Councilor Jepsen spoke of the need to bring accountability to the MDC.

Mayor Trinks left the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Councilor Wilkos asked what the MDC's General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance is. CFO Zinzerella answered \$14.5 million. Councilor Wilkos asked where the Unassigned Fund

Balance comes from. CFO Zinzerella said it comes from the sewer operation. Councilor Wilkos spoke of the need for the MDC to lower its annual operating costs as a way to fund its borrowing needs.

Councilor Govoni asked the Town Manager if the Town can earn interest on the money in the reserve amount at the same rate interest is being earned now. Town Manager Souza answered yes, and said that the payment to Hartford from the reserve funds would not be made by Windsor unless Hartford defaulted. Councilor Govoni asked if any lost interest would be paid back by Hartford. Town Manager Souza answered no. Councilor Govoni said the problem that Windsor is facing will tie us up from a business perspective.

Councilor Jenkins suggested that a task force be assigned from each town to deal with the issue. She said she is still not hearing how Windsor would get its money back if payment to the reserve fund is utilized by Hartford.

Councilor Simon said the MDC should rescind the discount it offered to Niagara to establish a bottling water plant in Bloomfield and never offer another discount again.

Councilor Simon spoke in favor of the Windsor Town Council being a part of a discussion concerning re-organizing the MDC.

Deputy Mayor Terranova asked if Windsor would get paid back if Hartford does not pay and if the MDC issues a tax warrant against Hartford and gets money from Hartford via the warrant. Attorney Halloran said the plan would be for the MDC to pay back Windsor.

Deputy Mayor Terranova asked why member towns would be billed without the taxpayers consent. Attorney Halloran explained how the MDC Charter lays out payment for water and sewer use. He said that the MDC's budget is voted on by representatives from the member towns following public hearings.

Councilor Govoni asked if the Department of Public Utilities Commission regulates the MDC. Attorney Halloran answered no.

Councilor McKenney said people should stop accusing Hartford of mismanagement because 53% of the Grand List is non-taxable.

Councilor Jepsen asked if the MDC's utilization of the reserve funds in consideration of a Hartford default could be shown on our books in such a fashion so that our credit rating is not hurt. Town Manager Souza said there potentially could be an opportunity to reflect the money paid into the reserve fund as future potential revenue to Windsor. Town Manager Souza said the establishment of a reserve fund would impact Windsor in Fiscal Year 2018.

Councilor Jenkins asked if high volume users have been asked to help out with the financial situation. Attorney Halloran said Niagara Bottling has not begun operating yet. He said that if the MDC repeals the high volume discount to Niagara, then it could put the MDC member towns at an economic disadvantage against non-member towns.

Mayor Trinks asked what the advantage is to have a high volume user. Attorney Halloran explained that high volume users can reduce cost increases that are spread across many users.

MDC Commissioner Curtis said that no Commissioners want to go back to their community and ask to establish a reserve account.

Councilor Simon asked if the Governor's appointee Helene Shay is still an MDC Commissioner. Commissioner Curtis answered no.

e) Authorization to submit open space grant application

Councilor Jepsen MOVED and Councilor Wilkos seconded to authorize the Town Manager to submit an open space grant application to the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for the purchase of 147 Pigeon Hill Road.

Councilor Jepsen spoke of the benefit of preserving the property at 147 Pigeon Hill Road. Councilors Petkis and Wilkos echoed Councilor Jepsen's sentiments.

Councilor Simon said he is skeptical of the project, but the Town should apply for the grant.

Councilor Govoni spoke in favor of applying for the grant and seeking direction from the taxpayers in the future.

Councilor Jenkins said she is skeptical of the project, but thinks the town should pursue the grant opportunity. She said her support of pursuing the grant does not mean she supports pursuing the project given all of the other financial considerations the Town is facing.

Councilor Jepsen said any land acquisition would ultimately go to a Town Meeting for approval.

Councilor McKenney asked for a timeline of the grant. Town Manager Souza said he expects the grant awards to be announced in the summer or fall of 2017.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

13) RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS – None.

14) MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

a) Minutes of the November 7, 2016 Regular Town Council meeting

Councilor Jepsen MOVED and Councilor Jenkins seconded to approve the unapproved minutes of the November 7, 2016 Regular Town Council meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

15) PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

John Avedisian of 11 Parkwood Drive spoke against the MDC's proposal to create a reserve fund in consideration of a possible Hartford default on its ad-valorem payment. He spoke about the possibility of MDC member towns forming a united front to block the MDC's current budget proposal. He also was critical of Windsor's representative to the MDC. Mr. Avedisian also criticized the City of Hartford's management.

16) EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

17) ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Jenkins MOVED and Councilor Wilkos seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Motion Passed 9-0-0 at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Luiz
Assistant Town Manager