

**TOWN OF WINDSOR
HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
DECEMBER 12, 2019
TOWN HALL – LUDLOW ROOM**

APPROVED MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Nuchette Black-Burke called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with Councilor James Dobler and Councilor James Govoni present. Town Manager Peter Souza, Police Chief Don Melanson and Fire Chief, Bill Lewis were also present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Deputy Mayor McAuliffe stated he was in favor of increasing the value tax abatement for volunteer firefighters and emergency as he wants to recognize and encourage our volunteer service.

3. DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL INCREASE TO PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT VALUE FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL FIRST RESPONDERS

Town Manager gave an overview of the item stating the State Legislature recently adopted changes to the local option enabling legislation which allows municipalities to increase the exemption benefit amount. This item is presented to the committee to allow initial discussion of possible amendments to the current ordinance to allow a greater dollar benefit as well as to alter the benefit schedule.

Currently, the \$1,000 abatement offered to Volunteer Fire and Ambulance personnel results in a total of \$61,026 in foregone revenue. If the benefit was increased to \$1,500, it is estimated the foregone revenue would be approximately \$90,700. At a maximum abatement value of \$2,000, foregone revenue would total approximately \$119,500. The current budget has conservatively estimated a revenue reduction of \$118,500.

An eligible volunteer can earn up to the \$1,000 tax abatement value based on meeting various standards related to categories such as length of service, training hours, and percent of responses to calls.

In addition to adjusting the annual maximum benefit, there has been discussions about updating or refining the benefit schedule from what was adopted in 2000. A possible adjustment would be to require firefighters to attend at least 24 hours of drills per 6 month period versus the current level of 12 hours per 6 month period.

Also, the State enabling legislation allows the tax abatement benefit to be provided to a retired volunteer firefighter or emergency medical technician that has completed at least twenty-five years of service in the municipality. The fire department administration would like the Town Council to consider adopting such a provision as part of amending the current ordinance.

Committee members asked several questions and wanted to make sure the changes to the benefit schedule was not burdensome to volunteers. Chief Lewis stated the possible changes to the schedule would not be an extra burden as they are in line with the current department policies.

Committee members expressed their support for all the work and dedication of the volunteers and were supportive of bringing forth the amendments to the full Town Council.

4. DISCUSSION OF FY 19 TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT DATA

Donald Melanson, Chief of Police, gave an overview of the item which relates to the statewide report entitled *Traffic Stop Data Analysis and Findings for 2017*.

The Traffic Stop Data Analysis and Findings for 2017 did not indicate statistically significant racial and/or ethnic disparities Windsor's traffic stop data. Below are a few highlights from overall traffic stop information for the July 1, through December 9, 2019 period:

- A total of 6,590 traffic stops were made between July 1, 2019 and December 30, 2019. This is 56.0% greater than the 3,705 stops made during the same period in FY 18.
- Windsor residents accounted for 33.5% of the 6,590 traffic stops made, which is consistent with the previous fiscal year.
- Officers searched 91 vehicles, or 1.4% of the total number of stops.
- 82.4% of traffic stops were for violations such as red light, speeding, cell phone, and seat belt. 17.5% of stops were for equipment violations such as failure to display registration plates or defective lights. These percentages are within 2% to 3% of those for the same period in FY 19.

Windsor was identified as having one of the highest rates of traffic stops for municipalities in the state (ranked 5th). This is in concert with our efforts to reduce speed and improve traffic safety throughout town.

Committee members discussed the report highlights and asked several questions of Chief Melanson. Members noted that while the report did not indicate statistically significant racial and/or ethnic disparities in the reporting period, it is important that we all be aware of public perceptions.

There was no action requested of the committee as this report was for informational purposes.

5. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO PARKING ORDINANCES

Chief Melanson gave an overview of the item as follows:

Currently, Windsor police officers are limited to the types of enforcement they can take when dealing with parking violations in town. The Town of Windsor's *Code of Ordinances* Chapter 16, Article III Parking, provides only limited actions when dealing with parking violations.

In order to enforce parking violations not listed in the *Code of Ordinances*, officers need to utilize the *Connecticut General Statutes* to take enforcement action.

Utilizing state statutes to enforce parking violations requires an officer to issue an infraction to the operator of the vehicle, which can be time consuming and cumbersome. The current fine of the violation using a state infraction is \$92. Under local ordinances, vehicle drivers / operators do not need to be present to receive a citation. Most communities in the greater Hartford area have adopted town ordinances that mirror state statutes, giving police an additional tool to deal with parking violations in their community.

Staff is considering proposing a number of amendments to the *Code of Ordinances* to include the violations under *CT General Statutes* 14-251 and 14-252. This item is being present for informational purposes. Staff would work on drafting possible amendments over the winter months for committee and council review after the completion of the annual budget process.

6. STAFF REPORTS

Town Manager Souza reported the construction of the new police station was on schedule as was the design effort for renovations of the existing Safety Complex on Bloomfield Avenue. He stated that the new Public Safety Radio System project was on schedule with the goal of having it be completed in early to mid-summer.

An informational meeting on the Railroad Quiet Zone was scheduled for December 19th. Representatives from the Federal Rail Administration and CT Department of Transportation will make a presentation and answer questions residents may have.

The Town Manager stated that he and staff were looking into the possibility of petitioning the CT DOT to consider establishing a 'no truck route' on several residential streets in the Rainbow area of town as large tractor trailer trucks continue to use the local roads versus Route 20 to enter and leave the industrial area.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) August 21, 2019

MOVED by Councilor Black-Burke, seconded by Councilor Dobler to approve the unapproved minutes of the August 21, 2019 meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilor Dobler, seconded by Councilor Govoni, to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

Respectfully submitted by,

Peter Souza
Town Manager