

**TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Town Council Chambers**

February 11, 2014

RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES

The Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Town Council was called to order at 6:35P.M. The Opening Prayer was offered by Reverend Margaret Jay of the First Congregational Church of Wallingford, and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were as follows: Chairman Vincent Cervoni, Thomas Laffin, John Letourneau, Christine Mansfield, Larry Russo, John Sullivan and Vincent F. Testa, Jr. Councilor Craig Fishbein and Robert F. Parisi had excused absences from the meeting. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr., Town Attorney G.E Farrell, Sr. and James Bowes, Comptroller were also present at the meeting.

Chairman Cervoni introduced two Boy Scouts, Nick Juliano and Derrick Socca, who are in attendance for the meeting. The Scouts are working of their Merit badges.

3. Consent Agenda

- 3a.** Consider and Approve Tax Refunds totaling \$6,311 (#504-52 6)
Acct. #1001001-41020 – Tax Collector

- 3b.** Acceptance of Funds and Appropriation in the Amount of \$80 for *Youth and Social Services Special Fund STEM ACADEMY* from *Registration Fees* to Donations Acct # 2264002-47152 and to Expenditures Acct # 22640150-58830 – Youth and Social Services

- 3c.** Acceptance of Funds and Appropriation in the Amount of \$80 for *Youth and Social Services Special Fund STEM ACADEMY* from *Registration Fees* to Donations Acct # 2264002-47152 and to Expenditures Acct # 22640150-58830 – Youth and Social Services

- 3d.** Acceptance of Donation from *Friends of Kendrick Park* and Appropriation in the Amount of \$5,253 to Misc. Grants & Donations: Revenue Acct # 250-TBD and to Kendrick Park Project: Expenditures Acct # 250-TBD – Parks & Recreation

- 3e.** Consider and Approve an Appropriation in the Amount of \$99,000 Special Revenue Fund 212 to Narcotic Forfeiture Fund-Revenue Grant Acct # TBD and to Police Equipment Acct # TBD – Police Department

- 3f.** Consider and Approve a Budget Amendment in the amount of \$20,000 to Treatment Equipment Acct #46300332 from Chemicals Acct # 46100641 – Sewer Division

- 3g.** Approve Minutes of Regular Town Council meeting of January 28, 2014

- 3h.** Consider and Approve Transfer of Funds in the Amount of \$10,000 from Contingency-General Acct # 10019000-58820 to Professional Services – Specialists Acct # 10010300-56714 - Law Department

MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 3a. - 3h.

MADE BY: LAFFIN
SECONDED BY: LETOURNEAU
VOTE: (7) AYE; (2) ABSENT
MOTION PASSED.

4. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda - *NONE*

5. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

Geno Zandri, 9 Balsam Ridge Circle, commented on street light reporting.

Bob Gross, 114 Long Hill Road, commented on a news article regarding merging the town's two high schools.

6. Report from the Administration on the status of the Dog Pound Trust, to include a discussion of expenditures from the Trust, revenues added to the Trust, and the bequest from the estate of Susan Juul – Councilor Vincent F. Testa, Jr.

Councilor Testa stated that he brought this item forward for informational purposes and not to suggest anything in particular. He reported on a conversation he had had with Shirley Gianotti, former Animal Control Officer, about her recollections regarding the intentions of Charles Clulee, and his daughter, Susan C. Juul, in the care of animals at the Town's Animal Shelter.

Comptroller James Bowes discussed the Trust's financial report which was handed out to the Council. He reviewed the history of the account since 2007, the revenue to the account and the Trust's expenses. The worksheet balance as of June 30, 2013 was \$736,061. The account's interest income is rolled back into the account. The revenue includes approximately \$31,000 in funds from sources other than those from the Juul Estate. Some of the expenses have included fencing, painting, bedding and unusual animal surgeries. An upcoming expense of \$56,900 will be used for new kennels. Councilor LeTourneau requested periodic reports from the Comptroller. There was discussion with regard to the intent of the will and the interpretation of that intent with regard to expenses. Interpretations differ on use of the funds for fencing, painting and electrical.

7. Discussion and Possible Action regarding how to proceed with selection of a public accounting firm for Town's Annual Audit – Comptroller James Bowes

Mr. Bowes' memorandum to the Town Council and the Mayor reports that the contract with the public accounting firm of Blum, Shapiro and Company ended with the completion of their last audit for June 30, 2013, which was issued in December of 2013. He said that pursuant to the Town Charter, he is requesting the Council to designate an independent firm of public accountants to provide auditing services to the Town. He asked for the Council's guidance in the method of selection, offering three options.

1. Put the service out to bid.
2. Waive the bid procedure and authorize using the RFP method.
3. Authorize the Comptroller to negotiate pricing from the current firm for their possible retention. This would eventually result in a bid waiver and vote to re-hire the current firm based upon the result of the negotiated pricing.

Mr. Bowes described Blum, Shapiro and Company as one of the top three companies in New England who provide 51 audits to 169 town in Connecticut. He reported that their government clients are second to none. They change their managers thereby keeping the integrity of our town's audit. He also reported that they have partnered with the Town in solving many of the managerial comments over the years to the point where the last one had no comments. Mr. Bowes said that when negotiating, Blum Shapiro is assertive in their pricing and that he is a good negotiator. He would be looking at a three-year contract.

The Council learned that this firm has been with the town about eleven (11) years over three contracts, one contract for five years, and two contracts for three years each. After discussion on the benefits of each process, the Council expressed a desire to use the RFP process for its transparency, out of fairness and to see what's out there, even though the town may end up selecting the same accounting firm. The RFP process would describe the technical aspects of the town, including the prospective firm's audit experience with this size of town and with the variety of utilities and with the size of the Board of Education. When asked which is the better approach, the RFP or negotiation, Mr. Bowes commented that negotiation would end up being a cost equal to or less than what the town is now paying. He said that the RFP process is a risk over negotiation in that it could end up costing the town more.

MOTION TO PLACE THE SEARCH FOR A PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM FOR THE TOWN'S ANNUAL AUDIT USING THE RFP PROCESS.

MADE BY: SULLIVAN
SECONDED BY: MANSFIELD

ROLL CALL VOTE:

FISHBEIN:	ABSENT	RUSSO:	NO
LAFFIN:	YES	SULLIVAN:	YES
LETOURNEAU:	YES	TESTA:	YES
MANSFIELD:	YES	CHAIRMAN CERVONI:	YES
PARISI:	ABSENT		

6-AYE; 1- NAY; 2 ABSENT
MOTION PASSED

8. Executive Session pursuant to §1-200(6) (D) of the Connecticut General Statutes with respect to the purchase, sale and/or leasing of property - Mayor

Withdrawn

MOTION TO ADJOURN

MADE BY: LAFFIN
SECONDED BY: SULLIVAN
VOTE: 7-AYE; 2-ABSENT
MOTION PASSED.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Weekes
Secretary to the Town Council
Meeting digitally recorded

Wallingford Town Hall, 45 South Main Street

Vincent Cervoni, Chairman Date

Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk Date