

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT  
**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers  
**October 22, 2024**  
**6:30 P.M.**  
**AMENDED RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES**

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, October 22, 2024 was called to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Autumn Allinson, Craig Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, Christina Tatta, Samuel Carmody, Vincent Testa, Christopher Regan, Jesse Reynolds and Chairman Joseph A. Marrone III. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Assistant Town Attorney Geoffrey T. Einhorn, Comptroller Timothy Sena and Town Clerk Kristen Panzo were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call

Brief Presentation regarding Red Ribbon Week Campaign/Coalition for a Better Wallingford.

Dianne Mark, Executive Director of Coalition for a Better Wallingford and Liz Davis, President of Coalition for a Better Wallingford reminded the council that Red Ribbon Week will take place on October 23, 2024 through October 31, 2024. Ms. Mark gave a rundown of what Red Ribbon Week is. It is the largest drug prevention campaign in the United States. Red Ribbon Week aims to promote a drug free society. The Coalition for a Better Wallingford will be hosting Red Ribbon Week this year. They are collaborating with Town Communities to schedule events for the week.

3. Consent Agenda
  - 3a. Consider and approve Tax Refunds totaling \$36,380.20 (#238-366)  
Acct. #1001001- 41020 - Tax Collector
  - 3b. Acceptance of Federal/State Highway Safety grant funds "2023/2024 Comprehensive DUI Enforcement Program" and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$5,1222 to Revenue Highway Safety, Acct. #1002001-45208 and to Police Overtime, Acct. #10020050-51400 – Police Dept.
  - 3c. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$600 from Contingency – Misc. Expenses, Acct. #10019000-58820 to Animal Control Exp. – Telephone, Acct. #10020100-53000 – Animal Control
  - 3d. Consider and approve new Health Educator/Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator – Human Resources

- 3e. Consider and approve Merit Review Board (2) – Human Resources
- 3f. Consider and approve Appointment of Stephen DeBaise to the Housing Authority for a five year term to begin on November 1, 2024 – Chairman Marrone
- 3g. Approve Amended Minutes of September 24, 2024 Town Council Meeting and Minutes of October 8, 2024 Town Council Meeting.

**MOTION WAS MADE to approve Consent items 3a-3f, 3g was removed.**

**MADE BY: TATTA**

**SECONDED BY: FISHBEIN**

**ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR**

**4. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda**

**5. PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD**

John Beecher of Seiter Hill Road asked about the safety precautions in place for Election Day. Mayor Cervoni stated that his office along with other offices have gone through training for this in connection with this Election. He will be having follow up conversations with the Public Safety Agencies to look at what is appropriate for pro trolling on Election Day.

Leslie Williams of Woodhouse Avenue explained as a poll worker at some locations it is very hard to get cell service so if there was an incident at a polling place, calling 911 might be difficult. She wanted to thank the council for accepting the donation from the Wallingford Little League. Wallingford Little League and Yalesville Little League have combined now. They are looking for upgrades at Parker Farms. The ARPA money that the Little League Received was used for upgrades at the Vietnam Fields.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive was doing a follow up on the assessment of the Town owned buildings which went out to bid earlier this year. From what he understands a large amount of these reports are within the town and should be able to be viewed by the public through an FOI request. The response that was given to him was that reports are marked draft for discussion purposes only. He thought a draft report would fall under the FOI requests and he would have been able to obtain it. He read the FOI requirements that he had printed out. This information was given to him by the Public Works Director and that he was told that the Mayor's Office and the Law Department will not be allowing these documents to be released because they are a draft. He thinks that the Town Council should of gotten a copy of this draft report. He discussed what was in the bid document. He mentioned the last time a draft report was mentioned was when the former mayor was in office and had a press conference where the draft report was discussed. He made a point to question why no one can see the draft report until it becomes the final report. He mentioned that the council should ask for the draft report.

Mayor Cervoni explained that the draft report is currently under review to determine if the public should be allowed to view it or not as is. Once that determination is made they will be subject to release. The draft reports are being reviewed by the Public Works Department, the Law Department and the Mayor's Office.

Jason Michael of Meadow Street asked if the town has a standing policy for FOI requests and how to execute them if a member of the public asks for something. He also asked if the Department Head or someone else in town makes the determination how to proceed with answering the FOI requests. He gave the example of asking the Comptroller's Office the balance of the Pragemann Park Endowment total and then asked for a 10-15 year history of how that endowment made its money. He asked why he has to make an FOI request in writing if he requested this information over the phone.

Chairman Marrone stated the first request was just asking for a number and the second request is asking for a history of figures which takes research and time to get the information.

Mayor Cervoni stated that the Freedom of Information Act pertains to documents. He said that if a member of the public calls a department and asks a question and gets an answer that is different then making an FOI request and the production of documents.

Mr. Sena said the reason for the FOI request in writing is to make sure that the information being gathered is the information being requested.

6. Discussion of old business – Chairman Marrone

(a) Update on Hidden Brook Lane

Assistant Attorney Einhorn stated that he was briefed on this matter by Corporation Counsel Small that the developer had suggested an alternative solution, which has been rejected by the staff and they are waiting on a call back from their attorney to discuss the matter further.

7. Discussion and possible action regarding Auditor Committee Selection – Comptroller

Tim Sena, Comptroller said this item is to appoint another auditor for this current year. Last year it was mentioned by Councilor Fishbein to create a commit for the process of choosing an auditor.

Chairman Marrone asked if there were any councilors willing to sit on this committee. Himself, Councilor Fishbein and Councilor Carmody are willing to be on the committee.

Councilor Fishbein said he has been through this before. He is ok with the team of councilors for the committee. He is just looking for the bidding process to be handled correctly by reviewing the bids, scoring the bids, etc. He wants to make sure that the process

is followed correctly.

Chairman Marrone appointed himself, Councilor Fishbein and Councilor Carmody to be members of the Auditor Committee.

8. Discussion and possible action to approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$61,000 from Revenue Federal Grant, Acct. #2391002-45200 to ARPA-Municipal Pragemann Park, Acct. #23940320-58830-AM032 – Recreation

**MOTION WAS MADE to approve item #8.**

**MADE BY: TATTA**

**SECONDED BY: ALLINSON**

Kenny Michaels, Park & Recreation Director was present to speak about this item.

Councilor Fishbein discussed the backup information the council received. It was stated that an estimation for a court at Pragemann Park and it was significantly different than what came in. He wanted Mr. Michaels to explain. Mr Michaels stated that the pricing that was used was based off of forms that were submitted in December of 2022. The new pricing was as of October of 2024. He also mentioned that post tension concrete and construction costs have gone up since 2022. They added a sidewalk to the project so there will be a sidewalk going from the parking lot all the way to the basketball court which is included in the price. The sidewalk was not accounted for in the first price. Councilor talked about the topography and the condition of Pragemann Park compared to Doolittle Park where the estimation came from. It was the tennis courts at Doolittle Park that were re done not the basketball courts. The condition of Pragemann Park being a wet park as a whole was discussed. Mr. Michaels said the west side of that park is much more wet, then where he is looking to put the basketball court. Mr. Michaels does not think that the water at Pragemann Park will be an issue for the basketball court and holding up.

Councilor Tatta asked if the contractor was the same person who installed the Courts at Doolittle Park. Mr. Michaels said it is a different contractor. This will Be the third contractor the town has used. R.S. Site & Sport did the Tennis Courts, Classic Turf did the basketball courts and Hinding Sport got the bid for Pragemann Park basketball court. They also did the re-surfacing at Harrison Park. The increase of the \$61,000 is due to the increase in the post tension concrete. It is supply and demand. She asked if the town can do asphalt courts. Mr. Michaels said they could but the maintenance of them would not be worth the money. It would cost more to buy and upkeep compared to the post tension concrete courts. The use of the basketball court at Pragemann Park was discussed. She asked about the balance of the endowment for the park. Mr. Sena stated it was \$164,000 as of September of this year. The usage of the endowment money was discussed. Mr. Michaels said as long as the park remains in the name Pragemann Park there will continue to be a quarterly deposit made to the endowment. The money can be used for

anything at that park. The back stops were replaced with that money. The fence was replaced with that money. There are talks about the expansion of the dugouts for sports. The amount of the quarterly deposit was discussed. It varies from quarter to quarter.

Councilor Laffin explained that the money from the endowment is being used to fix up the park. He asked if there were any benches at this basketball court. Mr. Michaels stated no, but that there is three picnic tables with seating on either side of them.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked what the reason was at Doolittle Park for the failing of the court? Mr. Michaels said the structure did not fail and that the contractor could not put his figure on exactly what happened. The contractor did a series of tests to see what the problem was and could not come up with anything. He called it an anomaly. Mr. Comerford said he talked to the contractor who told him that a different material was used then what was in the bid specs. He said that the material that was used did not adhere properly. He talked about the Material Data Sheets that would have been sent to the town showing that a different material was used than what was originally in the bid specs. The water factor at Pragemann Park was mentioned. The tennis courts and cracks in them were discussed. He thinks the town should have a plan for all of the parks and then inspect them before courts or such are installed. He wants to know what is the rush in trying to fix the courts now instead of doing an inspection to find out what the other courts around town are failing.

Jason Michael of Meadow Street talked about spending \$161,000 for a 20 year warranty for a post tension concrete basketball court surface where an asphalt surface costs about \$45,000 with a shorter life span. He says the town can do three asphalt surface basketball courts with a warranty of between 10-12 years per court for the amount of money being spent on the one basketball court at Pragemann Park. He mentioned the two basketball courts at Doolittle Park cost \$327,000 in total. The tennis court at Doolittle Park was \$267,000 and that court is what the estimate for the basketball court at Pragemann Park was based off of. He also witnessed crakes on the courts. He talked about having no amenities for younger kids at Pragemann Park if your older brother or sister is there playing a game on the field. He mentioned that Pragemann Park floods when it rains. He agrees with Mr. Comerford that the town should have a plan first for all of the parks in town, assess what they have, fix the issues then build the courts.

Councilor Regan asked how much the walkway is going to cost. Mr. Michaels said it will cost \$7,950. He mentioned that after doing research he found online that after 25 years of installing and maintaining post tension concrete courts the cost is 20% to 30% lower than using asphalt for the courts.

Councilor Testa mentioned he did his own research and found value with using post tension concrete for the basketball court at Pragemann Park. He is ok with going forward with the post tension concrete and the increased cost for the product. He asked if the coating of the court is any way related to the construction of the court. Mr. Michaels explained that the contractor did not have a pin point answer as to why some of the

courts had failed.

Councilor Fishbein mentioned that they had heard from a member of the public about the cracks on one of the courts that could be covered by the warranty. He wanted to know what the procedure was for inspecting the courts. Mr. Michaels said generally a member of the public contacts the Park & Recreation Department to complain about a problem. He does have a part time maintainer. Councilor Fishbein is concerned about the lack of inspections being done at the parks around town. There was a discussion of the Parks & Recreation Commission and how often they meet and then maybe having then get involved more.

**ROLL CALL**

**ALLINSON: AYE**

**CARMODY: AYE**

**FISHBEIN: NAY**

**LAFFIN: AYE**

**REGAN: AYE**

**REYNOLDS: AYE**

**TATTA: NAY**

**TESTA: AYE**

**MARRONE: AYE**

**7- AYE**

**2- NAY**

**MOTION: PASSED**

9. Discussion on Town Wide Paving Progress – Councilor Reynolds

Rob Baltramitis, Director of Public Works was present to speak on this item.

Councilor Reynolds mentioned an article in June in the Record Journal about the fall planning to pave roads in town. A short time after that he received some inquiries about that.

Mr. Baltramitis discussed that the town primarily gets its money for paving from the pilot program from the Electric Division that is based on a formula and that money has always gone into the cap-non recurring fund. It is usually \$1.7, \$1.8 million. Typically \$1 million of that money goes to roads. He said because of the good weather this past winter they were able to prep the roads for paving which means going out and looking at catch basins, looking at the storm drains. He spoke to the mayor back in early spring telling him that they have more roads prepped than they have money for to pave them. The mayor was able to give Public Works \$500,000 extra to help. It came from the new debt financing account. Public Works is paving about 3.5 miles of road this year. There was a discussion of doing a paving road mile study that Public Works wants to do. He mentioned that this study is 10 years old and he wants to update it. He mentioned that \$1 million a year will not cut it anymore. They will need more money to be able to pave the roads. He thinks they should be in the \$3 million or \$3.5 million range. Part of the study is finding a way to extend the life of the paving process so paving

can happen less as long as the roads are properly sealed after paving. Chip sealing as a method was discussed. It has not been used in decades though.

Councilor Fishbein asked about Leigus Road. Mr. Baltramitis said there is a blip in the road that causes problems.

10. Discussion and possible action regarding LOSAP Agreement – Councilor Allinson

Mayor Cervoni stated that the Tax Abatement Ordinance that is part of the LOSAP Agreement has not been noticed for a public hearing so that portion of the backup cannot be acted upon.

Jim Buck, Fire Chief, Paul Silada, Chief for Company 8 and Tim Wall, Chief of North Farms Road were present to speak about this item.

Councilor Tatta stated she was recusing herself from this item.

Fire Chief Buck explained what the LOSAP Agreement is. It is the Length of Service Awards Program for the volunteer Fire Fighters. It is compliant with both Federal and State Regulations regarding the pension side and compensation side. It is a very small way they can insure their volunteers are being properly reviewed and appreciated for the service they provide.

Councilor Fishbein wanted to know what backup documents the council was not dealing with tonight. The Tax Abatement ordinance will be discussed at a later date and time. He mentioned they last conversation as to when the stipend would go into effect. He suggested it go back to 2020. He asked why the backup document dates only go back to January of 2021. Chief Buck stated the reason the January 2021 date was used is because the LOSAP Committee did not meet until late 2020 and they felt using January 2021 was appropriate. Councilor wanted to know why his suggestion, having no pushback at a previous meeting, was denied in the end. Chief Wall said the LOSAP Committee was established in late 2020 and their first meeting was held in March of 2021. He mentioned that he can work with Chief Buck to include the 2020 year. Councilor asked if when a volunteer takes an exam to become a career firefighter do they get any benefits in that testing process. Chief Buck says yes, they are. Councilor had a discussion about certain sections of the LOSAP Agreement. He asked if the volunteer fire houses sustain a financial budget. Chief Buck says they have capital funds for upkeep of the firehouses.

Councilor Laffin had a question for Mayor Cervoni about the expenditures required under the implementation cost to retroactively fund the numbers and what type of motion would this require. The time frame to receive the retroactive pay was discussed.

**MOTION WAS MADE to approve LOSAP Agreement.**

**MADE BY: LAFFIN**

**SECONDED BY: MARRONE**

Councilor Reynolds asked if the amount of money that the volunteer fire fighters get is enough to continue hiring volunteers or does this amount need to increase. Mayor Cervoni said the LOSAP Fund sits next to the Pension Fund and is not part of the General Fund. When the town makes a contribution to the Pension Fund it is going to the LOSAP Fund as well. Chief Wall talked about the 3year term to have the volunteer firefighter meet all of the requirements. Once they do that then they get the \$1,000. There was a discussion as to if the \$1,000 can be increased and if the 3year term can be decreased.

Councilor Regan stated that he would be in support of raising the dollar amount from \$1,000 to \$1,500 and also reducing the number of years from 3 years to 2 years.

**MOTION WAS MADE to go back to 1/1/2020 increase the benefit from \$1,000 to \$1,500 and decrease the years from 3yrs to 2yrs.  
MADE BY: REGAN  
SECONDED BY: CARMODY**

Chairman Marrone stated that the Chief came to the council with a proposed plan for the second time and they want to increase the benefits which isn't bad but they should look at the original plan the chief is proposing.

**MOTION WAS MADE amend retroactive pay go back to 2020, increase the benefit from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and keep the 3yrs.  
MADE BY: FISHBEIN  
SECONDED BY: NO ONE SECONDED**

**ROLL CALL FOR AMENDED MOTION**

**ALLINSON: NAY**

**CARMODY: AYE**

**FISHBEIN: NAY**

**LAFFIN: AYE**

**REGAN: AYE**

**REYNOLDS: AYE**

**TATTA: RECUSED HERSELF**

**TESTA: AYE**

**MARRONE: NAY**

**5- AYE**

**3- NAY**

**1- RECUSED**

**MOTION: PASSED**



**ROLL CALL FOR ORIGINAL MOTION**

**ALLINSON: NAY**  
**CARMODY: AYE**  
**FISHBEIN: AYE**  
**LAFFIN: AYE**  
**REGAN: AYE**  
**REYNOLDS: AYE**  
**TATTA: RECUSED HERSELF**  
**TESTA: AYE**  
**MARRONE: AYE**  
**7- AYE**  
**1- NAY**  
**1- RECUSED**  
**MOTION: PASSED**

11. Discussion and possible action regarding a Skate Park – Councilor Testa

Councilor Testa discussed his desire to have a skate park in the downtown area of Wallingford.

Kenny Michaels, Director of Park & Recreation explained that having a skate park in the downtown area would not work because there is not a good place for it to be installed.

**MOTION WAS MADE to encourage the planning, design and construction  
of a Skate Park in Wallingford.**  
**MADE BY: TESTA**  
**SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS**

**ROLL CALL**

**ALLINSON: NAY**  
**CARMODY: AYE**  
**FISHBEIN: AYE**  
**LAFFIN: AYE**  
**REGAN: NAY**  
**REYNOLDS: AYE**  
**TATTA: AYE**  
**TESTA: AYE**  
**MARRONE: AYE**  
**7- AYE**  
**2- NAY**  
**MOTION: PASSED**

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Panzo  
Town Clerk

Meeting digitally recorded

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Joseph A. Marrone III, Chairman

Date

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Kristen Panzo, Town Clerk

Date

*In accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act- Individuals in need of auxiliary aids for effective communication in programs and services of the Town of Wallingford are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance Coordinator at 203-294-2070 five days prior to meeting date..*

*Wallingford Town Hall, 45 South Main Street*