

381

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

**HELD REMOTELY  
at GoToMeeting.com**

**TUESDAY  
MAY 12, 2020  
6:30 P.M.**

**RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES**

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 was called to order at 6:32 p.m. There was a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Craig C. Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, Joseph A. Marrone, III, Gina Morgenstein, Christopher K. Shortell, Christina Tatta, Vincent F. Testa, Jason Zandri and Chairman Vincent Cervoni. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr., and Comptroller James Bowes were also present **(BY TELECONFERENCE)**.

**AGENDA**

- 3a. Consider and approve Tax Refunds totaling \$853.51 (#894-909)  
Acct. #1001001- 41020 - Tax Collector
- 3b. Consider and approve Transfer to Suspense List totaling \$152,277.97 – Tax Collector
- 3c. Acceptance of Reimbursement funds from U.S. Secret Service and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1081.00 to Misc.- Revenue, Acct. #1009052-47040 and to Police Overtime, Acct. #10020050-51400 – Police Dept.
- 3d. Acceptance of STEM Academy donation and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$644 to Revenue, Acct. #2264002-47152 and to Expenditures, Acct. #22640150-58830 – Y&SS
- 3e. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$4,000 from Wage Differentials, Acct. #10020050-51450 to Police Operating Expenses, Acct. #10020050-58735 – Police Dept.
- 3f. Approve Town Council Minutes of April 28, 2020 and Budget Meetings of April 29, 2020 and April 30, 2020.

**MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 3a.-3f. as amended.**

**MADE BY:           LAFFIN  
SECONDED BY:    TATTA  
VOTE:              ALL AYE  
MOTION:           PASSED**

4. **Items Removed from the Consent Agenda:** *None*

5. Report from Stephen Civitelli, Director of Health, regarding COVID-19

Mr. Civitelli gave an update on COVID-19:

There are currently 354 cases and there have been 39 deaths (deaths = 1 community)

There have been 38 long term care deaths (97% = long term care deaths back from March).

March was community cases April was more long term care.

There have been 47 cases in May so far, 40 long term care and 7 community.

There have been a lot of questions on nail salons, food service and hair salons with the re-opening of Connecticut. Mr. Civitelli said we relicensed them and gave guidance to them.

The COVID Recovery Center at Quinnipiac Valley has no patients in that unit. It is a 30 bed unit (step down unit). Mr. Civitelli said we expect some people to be admitted this week.

We are in the planning steps for mass vaccination for residents.

Councilor Zandri would like more numbers available to know how many people are being tested and how many negative/positive cases there are locally.

Councilor Morgenstein stated the Urgent Care where she works is doing antibody testing. She said they have done at least 50-60 tests so far and one has been positive.

Councilor Shortell asked if we are trying to flatten or bend the curve. He commented on how we were trying to prevent hospitals from being full but now he never hears about how many hospital beds are full in our county.

Mr. Civitelli stated we did see a decline in Fairfield County in hospitalizations.

6. Consider and approve a Bid Waiver for Safeware in the amount of \$11,787 for facial masks – Fire Dept.

**MOTION WAS MADE TO MOVE TO APPROVE a Bid Waiver for Safeware in the amount of \$11,787 for facial masks.**

**MADE BY: LAFFIN**

**SECONDED BY: SHORTELL**

*In Attendance: Richard Heidgerd, Fire Chief*

Chief stated this is our fourth Bid Waiver purchase for safety equipment and tonight it is for surgical masks. We are supplying other departments through the Health Department. He then said we are building a Town Pod for an emergency with the Health Department.

<b>ROLL CALL VOTE:</b>	<b>SHORTELL: YES</b>
<b>FISHBEIN: YES</b>	<b>TATTA: YES</b>
<b>LAFFIN: YES</b>	<b>TESTA: YES</b>
<b>MARRONE: YES</b>	<b>ZANDRI: YES</b>
<b>MORGENSTEIN: YES</b>	<b>CERVONI: YES</b>

**9-AYE**  
**MOTION: PASSED**

7. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$11,787 from Contingency - General, Acct. #1001-9000-58820 to Fire-Operating Exps., Acct. #10020150-58735 – Fire Dept.

**MOTION WAS MADE TO MOVE TO APPROVE** a transfer in the amount of \$11,787 from Contingency - General, Acct. #1001-9000-58820 to Fire-Operating Exps., Acct. #10020150-58735.

**MADE BY: LAFFIN**  
**SECONDED BY: SHORTELL**

<b>ROLL CALL VOTE:</b>	<b>SHORTELL: YES</b>
<b>FISHBEIN: YES</b>	<b>TATTA: YES</b>
<b>LAFFIN: YES</b>	<b>TESTA: YES</b>
<b>MARRONE: YES</b>	<b>ZANDRI: YES</b>
<b>MORGENSTEIN: YES</b>	<b>CERVONI: YES</b>

**9-AYE**  
**MOTION: PASSED**

8. Executive Session pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(D) of the Connecticut General Statutes with respect to the purchase, sale and/or leasing of property – Mayor – *Withdrawn*
9. Discussion and possible action on the Mayor’s Veto, on May 8, 2020, of the Ordinance entitled “An Ordinance Appropriating \$625,000 for Community Pool Park Design Services and Authorizing the issue of \$625,000 Bonds of the Town to Meet Said Appropriation and Pending the Issuance Thereof the Making of Temporary Borrowings for Such Purpose.

**MOTION WAS MADE TO OVERTURN THE MAYOR’S VETO ON THE POOL PROJECT.**

**MADE BY: MARRONE**  
**SECONDED BY: TESTA**

Councilor Marrone remarked that the pool is about families. He asked Administration if they are considering layoffs or furloughs in the town to save money.

Mayor Dickinson explained there are a lot of things being considered. He said we may not be funding departments if funding is not in place. He went on to say it is more than \$200,000 a year to pay for construction and he does not see a quick end of COVID closing businesses.

Councilor Zandri stated he put a poll up on Wallingford Facebook and got over 500 responses in which 206 people did not support over-riding the veto and 230 did support it. He commented on the bond rates being at 2% and 2.07%, one of the lowest in years.

Councilor Testa spoke about how we are going to try to do a 0% tax increase this year and stated it seemed strange to say let's go spend \$7 million on a pool. He explained he is not of the opinion that we won't be well into recovery in two years from now when the payments start. He stated we will have to look at our budgets with a more careful eye. He feels this is a good project for the community and people are looking forward to this.

Councilor Morgenstein indicated there has been a large outcry in support of the project. She stated a member of the old pool committee said to her this is the third pool study in its 50 year history and this new pool design is more of a destination park.

Councilor Laffin agrees with a lot of what everyone has said and stated he is on the fence right now. He grew up using the pool and has never had a pool. He said at the last meeting he voted with the additional bonding and was not planning for a global pandemic and he's having a hard time with his fiscal conservative principles.

Councilor Laffin asked Mr. Savinelli if the current pool is able to be opened this year and Mr. Savinelli said the pool is not ready to be opened this summer.

Councilor Fishbein stated he does not think if we do not do this the pool goes away. He feels if we are going to spend \$7 million on a pool we all should be very happy with the project. He feels the project should be revisited.

Councilor Tatta stated she received correspondence from both sides. She is not looking at the pool project she is looking at discretionary spending during a depression crisis for several years to come. She stated she would not be surprised if Wallingford gets funds cut from the state going forward.

Councilor Shortell is a big supporter of this project and he appreciates Councilor Laffin's comments. He stated our debt service comes down as the pool numbers go up so he feels it's a moving target. He feels it's about optics. We were the last town hall to close because of COVID and no one can work from home. He feels there is a lack of technology at the town hall and we need to improve things.

Chairman Cervoni said he read all the emails and he is not against the renovation. He stated we are in reevaluation and he's not sure if we can keep the mill rate flat. He remarked that Councilor Shortell made a good point of debt services coming down and noted there are always projects to be bonded. He's said he's not saying this pool shouldn't be bonded but he cannot support this project right now.

Councilor Morgenstein remarked if we roll over on this where does this leaves us as a Council.

Councilor Marrone stated only in government can you plan something for three years and then say you were rushed. He went on to say we asked to be councilors to make tough decisions and we are always delaying decisions. He asked why the mill rate has to go up and commented we never cut anything in town.

Mr. Savinelli noted in 1989 we spent \$9 million renovating the pool. He stated the bids came in on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and we only had three qualified bidders and the oil prices were already low.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Daring, Sharon Drive, stated the vast majority of people want the pool.

Mr. Comerford, Broadview Drive, inquired about liability on the splash pad. Mr. Savinelli explained it's the same liability as the playground. Mr. Comerford said he commends councilor Tatta and he agrees with her.

Ben Martin, Ward Street, said the government should spend money when there is an economic depression to give the public something to help stimulate the economy and help created jobs, and take advantage of the town cost supplies.

Larry Morgenstein, South Main Street, thanks all the people who contributed to this project.

Paul Ciardullo, Bayberry Drive, supports the Mayor's veto and feels we are going into a deep depression/recession. He said he doesn't think we ever did a cost analysis of the old pool with a new pool.

James Hine stated he appreciates \_\_\_\_\_ reading his email. He remarked you can't talk about what the economy is right now it's a 20 year bid.

Ms. Rys been a resident for 47 years and she feels it's not the right time now.

Jared Liu, Curtis Avenue, thanked everyone for their support and especially Councilor Zandri and Councilor Marrone for their leadership. He stated this moment is not about COVID it's about elected officials.

<b>ROLL CALL VOTE:</b>	<b>SHORTELL: YES</b>
<b>FISHBEIN: NO</b>	<b>TATTA: NO</b>
<b>LAFFIN: NO</b>	<b>TESTA: YES</b>
<b>MARRONE: YES</b>	<b>ZANDRI: YES</b>
<b>MORGENSTEIN: YES</b>	<b>CERVONI: NO</b>
<b>5-AYE</b>	
<b>4-NAY</b>	
<b>MOTION: FAILED</b>	

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Moss  
Council Staff  
Meeting digitally recorded

*Vincent Cervoni/DT*

Vincent Cervoni, Chairman

*5/26/2020*

Date

*Barbara Thompson*

Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk

*5/26/2020*

Date

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 5-15-2020  
AT 4:00 AND RECEIVED BY  
*Barbara Thompson* TOWN CLERK