

**TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**TUESDAY
MAY 18, 2021
6:30 P.M.**

RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 was called to order at 6:30 p.m. There was a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Craig C. Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, Gina Morgenstein, Joseph A. Marrone, III, Christopher K. Shortell, Christina Tatta, Vincent F. Testa, Jason Zandri and Chairman Vincent Cervoni. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. and Town Attorney Gerald E. Farrell, Sr. were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Discussion and possible action regarding Mayor's veto on May 14, 2021 of the 2021-2022 Budget adopted by the Town Council on May 11, 2021 – Councilor Zandri

**MOTION WAS MADE THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL CONSIDER A VOTE TO
OVERTURN THE MAYORAL VETO AND RESTORE THE TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET.**

**MADE BY: ZANDRI
SECONDED BY: TATTA**

Councilor Zandri shared a spreadsheet to aid in the discussion of the Mayor's veto. He stated he's referred to this spreadsheet in prior meetings going back to the 2003-2004 budget and would like to implore the Council to reconsider its decision. He pointed out in 2005-2006 there was a \$9.2 million allocation and said we need to look at what we actually spend. He asked all Council to consider their original votes and those that voted no to reconsider their position. He stated we have the ability to put money aside for community pool and there is an element in there for pickleball courts that will get lost if we let this veto ride. He went on to say this budget lowered the tax burden by \$1.5 million and noted we have the ability to ease the tax burden on the residents of Wallingford.

Councilor Tatta feels the veto should not be viewed as the Mayor vs. the Council. She reviewed the three amendments to the budget and indicated the vote boils down to a mill rate of 28.85 for the Mayor's budget and a mill rate of 28.52 for the Council budget. She went on to state a vote to veto the budget is a vote for lower taxes and a vote to uphold the veto is a result in higher taxes.

Councilor Fishbein is against earmarking money for the community pool. He stated we are locking up that money that could be used for other things. He feels this is not a responsible way to deal with reserves that are in Cap and Non and there should be some portion of the budget that the Council has to do something with reserves not just let that money linger.

Chairman Cervoni stated while he is not at all opposed to the redevelopment of the community pool park he agrees with Councilor Fishbein about allocation of pilot money as the Council's budget does that.

Paul Ciardullo, 2 Bayberry Drive, is disappointed we are not talking about eliminating tax increase completely. He asked the Mayor how he can justify increasing the expense budget by \$4 million. He feels that's extremely high and stated we are in the middle of a pandemic.

The Mayor explained the budget is built upon projected expenses for the coming year. He stated we did not shut down any of our services and we had to spend money in order to provide those services. He is waiting to find out details on how we can spend that money. The Mayor said the town has a duty to maintain a credit reserve and it's a safety net.

Mr. Ciardullo said fundamentally the numbers don't add up. He supports overriding the veto. He would like to recommend someone on the Council make a proposal to zero out any tax increase and reduce expenditures accordingly. Chairman Cervoni said they can't do that tonight it would violate the Charter.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked if the budget has to be adopted tonight. Chairman Cervoni explained the budget was to be adopted last Tuesday and the Mayor had 10 days to veto, the Mayor exercised that veto on Friday and that gave the Council 10 days in which to respond. The Mayor's veto overturns the Council's budget. Tonight the Council will attempt to overturn the veto and restore the Council's budget and that would be the final budget.

Mr. Gross asked when the state is giving the final analysis of ways the town can spend money. The Mayor said we are using that money to cover loss revenue due to the pandemic and we are continuing with the amount we expect to receive. Mr. Bowes said that is part of a request in the upcoming budget year and the funds will come from special revenue not the general fund.

Mr. Gross asked if we have a shortfall of \$4 million. Mr. Bowes responded it will not be anywhere near \$4 million.

Mr. Gross feels the Council should override the budget because there will be millions of dollars in surplus.

Mr. Bogert, 12 Meadowland Road, said he can't think of a more appropriate time to dip into our \$129 million in reserves. He asked the purpose of having a rainy day fund if not to aid us in these challenging times. He stated if Councilor Fishbein doesn't vote to override this budget he is voting for a bigger tax increase.

Councilor Riley O'Connell, 30 Northford Road, agrees with Mr. Bogert and stated he is disappointed with Councilor Fishbein's choice to presumably vote not to overturn this veto. He then remarked when will be the right time for the pool.

Councilor Fishbein stated pickleball and the improvements to Harrison Park are not hampered by the Town Council budget not passing.

There was discussion between Mr. Gross and Mr. Bowes.

Councilor Shortell stated tonight's vote does not impact the future of the pool and a vote tonight is a vote against pickleball. He went on to say we cannot access money in the budget without the Mayor coming to us and asking for it.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION

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

ROLL CALL VOTE:	SHORTELL: YES
FISHBEIN: NO	TATTA: NO
LAFFIN: YES	TESTA: YES
MARRONE: YES	ZANDRI: NO
MORGENSTEIN: YES	CERVONI: YES
6 - AYE	
3 - NAY	
MOTION: PASSED	

MOTION ON VETO

ROLL CALL VOTE:	SHORTELL: YES
FISHBEIN: YES	TATTA: YES
LAFFIN: NO	TESTA: YES
MARRONE: YES	ZANDRI: YES
MORGENSTEIN: YES	CERVONI: NO
6 - AYE	
3 - NAY	
MOTION: PASSED	

- 4. Presentation by GotSPACE LLC regarding the possible development of Data Centers in Wallingford – Economic Development Commission

In Attendance: *Attorney Len Fasano*
Mr. Thomas Quinn

Attorney Fasano explained the Legislature passed a House Bill 6514 through the House and Senate. He stated it gives businesses the advantage to get data centers in Connecticut. He went on to say the buildings house network computers that are in a physical location for central storage management of data. It gives certain tax incentives and there is property, personal and real tax exemptions for municipalities that enter into a Hosting Agreement negotiated with the town for fees. Generally these are 20-30 year investments and a minimum of \$50 million and up to \$200 million. He spoke further about policy and Hosting Agreements. He said the state set up tax implications under total local control that is 100% regulated to the town.

Mr. Quinn stated this is a good opportunity in Connecticut in what would be considered a new corridor for data in the region. He spoke about land control and a Hosting Agreement. He addressed height, aesthetics and noise. He mentioned the building is very secure and a quiet facility. The buildings will be put in industrial zone areas and the town has no obligation to upgrade sewers or any electrical infrastructure whatsoever.

Mr. Quinn gave an overview of details of the development of data centers.

Ed Bradley, 2 Hampton Trail, feels the data centers being proposed have issues that come along with them. He said they use a lot of electricity and that will be a burden. He went on to say the generators are housed inside and asked where would the diesel fuel be stored.

Mr. Quinn said if you google New Albany Ohio Facebook and you look from google earth picture down it will tell you the story. He explained these generators are all contained in one big area and are up to full power in less than five minutes. He stated they are very efficient and very contained.

Mr. Bradley inquired about sound.

Mr. Quinn explained that the size of the land is a big piece and noted air conditioners are behind the walls and will exceed the noise ordinance. Federal Government has changed the way air conditioners are built to be more efficient and quieter. He went on to state a sound engineer will be brought in to measure decibels.

Mr. Bradley inquired about land use and mentioned Site 1 and Site 2 are close to residential areas. He stated that Site 1 is the water protection district of Wallingford. He asked Mr. Quinn why they picked Site 1. Mr. Quinn said it is an industrial zoned area, generators are allowed there and we intend to work with the town through the planning process and be set back at least 400 feet from the reservoir.

Mr. Bradley inquired about state tax control. Attorney Fasano explained there is a sales tax exemption on certain transactions that take place within these data centers.

Charlotte Stoppa, 1038 North Farms Road, has concerns regarding the Site 2 plan. She asked if the plans include a driveway and entrance on North Farms Road.

Mr. Quinn explained they are trying to stay off of North Farms Road. He said they have a new plan and intend to try to make an internal roadway through that larger site to take the traffic off that road. Ms. Stoppa mentioned Building 5 is close to her neighbor's house and asked if Building 5 will really be in that location when there are other locations that are untouched. Mr. Quinn indicated nothing is set in stone and said they are happy to move the building if possible.

Jeff Kohan, Whispering Pines Drive, asked if they have an application with P&Z or if they have to get approval from the Town Council. Mr. Quinn stated they posted plans for marketing purposes and they have not applied. He mentioned they did soil samples.

Mr. Kohn inquired about the letter of credit.

Attorney Fasano explained there is a Hosting Agreement being negotiated, Town Council at some point in time will have the opportunity to look at that Agreement and there will be a vote on that Agreement, from there that would be approved by DECD. He explained a letter of credit is protection against the town. Mr. Kohan indicated he doesn't want the town to be on the hook. Mr. Quinn said the town is not on the hook for any sewer usage or power usage or anything to do with fiber upgrades, road expansion or traffic lights needed.

John Christopher, 15 Putter Drive, asked Mr. Quinn his position on professional services. Mr. Quinn said that Mr. Christopher could contact him and indicated they want to keep this local.

Jessica Palanski, 1039 North Farms Road, wants to make it clear residents like privacy. She is concerned about entry on North Farms Road. She did research and said these units in other areas have become problematic. What would the light pollution at night be? Mr. Quinn said this is biometric security and infrared it sees in the dark. He stated they will do everything they can to minimize traffic on that road and to make residents satisfied and there are no plans to expand any roads.

Mr. Mirra stated it was mentioned that EDC is only concerned with tax revenue and indicated that is not the case they want to expand the income in the town.

Bob Gross asked if they are building eight data centers or looking for the best place to go at this time. Mr. Quinn explained they cannot even build six buildings at once. They would start a single building and hopefully a second building within six months. Mr. Quinn said there is almost a zero chance that you could build this many buildings at once.

Mr. Gross asked if these buildings are taxable or if you have to have a Hosting Agreement. Attorney Fasano said a Hosting Agreement is in lieu of property taxes.

Rob Crowell thanks them for considering moving building 5. He asked how high the buildings are and when the new plans will go online. Mr. Quinn stated the height of the building is just slightly over 35 feet for two stories and indicated the new plans will not go online too soon.

Councilor Fishbein stated he is very sensitive to this project and is in favor of the Bill that brought us here tonight. Ultimately, he will defer to the residents on this. He is concerned about screenings. He does not know if he would be in favor of a Host Agreement that did not prevent access from North Farms Road. He indicated a slow steady reliable approach would make him feel a lot better.

Councilor Tatta asked if there is any sort of environmental radiation emitted. Mr. Quinn answered no and stated just computers.

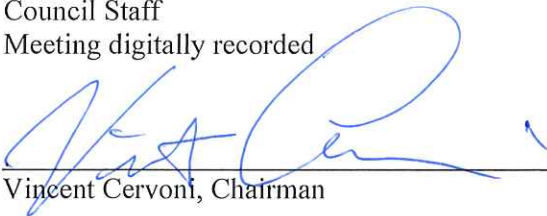
Chairman Cervoni indicated livestream on youtube can be watched. He asked Mr. Quinn if he would like to give contact information for people that could not be here tonight. Mr. Quinn said they can go to the Gotspace Website or call Mr. Quinn at 508-726-2600. He prefers email.

Chairman Cervoni thanked him for fielding questions.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Moss
Council Staff
Meeting digitally recorded



Vincent Cervoni, Chairman

15 June 2021

Date



Deborah McKiernan, Town Clerk

6.14.2021

Date

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 5-21-21
AT 4:30 AND RECEIVED BY
Deborah McKiernan TOWN CLERK